UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Asia-Pacific Lessons Learned
ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

Governance

Photo by Jim Holmes, UNCDF, Viet Nam

The UN-REDD Programme has integrated activities on anti-corruption as a core element in its five-year Programme Strategy. Activities include facilitating multi-stakeholder REDD+ Corruption Risk Assessments; developing the capacity of stakeholders to jointly mitigate corruption risks; guidance on promoting access to REDD+ information; guidance on institutional frameworks for equitable, transparent and accountable benefit distribution systems; strengthening the integrity of fiduciary systems for receiving and disbursing of funds; and coordinating anti-corruption activities at the national, regional and international level, including with programmes supporting law enforcement actors.

In Asia-Pacific, activities started with Regional awareness raising events in October 2011. The Kathmandu workshop brought together anti-corruption specialists, while the Bangkok workshop targeted REDD+ Government and Civil Society Practitioners to build a shared understanding of the corruption risks in REDD+ in the Asia-Pacific, create measures to address risks, and the key role of REDD+ and anti-corruption actions for an effective and equitable REDD+.

Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Philippines have initiated REDD+ Corruption Risk Assessments since 2012. Indonesia has made anti corruption a key element of its recently concluded Participatory Governance Assessment; Viet Nam has integrated anti corruption in its phase 2 National Programme; and Nepal is making transparency and accountability key elements of its work on identifying drivers of deforestation and degradation and options for fund management systems.

What is corruption?

Corruption - the misuse of entrusted power to private gain

Types of Corruption

Petty corruption - low level contacts between citizens, businesses and officials and generally takes place where public policies are being implemented

Grand corruption - bribery or the embezzlement of huge sums of money by those at the highest levels of government

Political corruption - refers to the misuse of political power for private gain for preserving or strengthening power, or personal enrichment, or both

Forms of Corruption

Bribery - the act of offering someone money, services or other inducements to persuade him/her to do something in return*, i.e., bribery to overlook a violation of REDD+ regulations*

Cronyism and Nepotism - the favorable treatment of friends or family and associates in the distribution of resources and positions, regardless of their objective qualification*, i.e., cronyism when hiring REDD+ personnel*

Embezzlement - the misappropriation of property or funds legally entrusted to someone in their formal position as an agent or guardian*, i.e., the embezzlement of REDD+ funds*

Extortion - the unlawful demand or receipt of property, money or sensitive information to induce cooperation through the use of force or threat *, i.e., extortion to allocate land rights*

Fraud - an intentional misrepresentation to obtain an unfair advantage by giving or receiving false or misleading information*, i.e., fraud in reporting carbon MRV results*

State capture - individuals, groups, or firms influence the formation of laws, rules and regulations to serve their own private interests*, i.e., private interests influence REDD+ policies*

THE UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Lesson 1: Top 5 corruption risks for REDD+ in Asia-Pacific. A perception survey of participants at the Bangkok workshop indicated that the top 5 corruption risks for REDD+ in Asia/Pacific are:

- Fraud related to the distribution of benefits from REDD+ revenues
- Undue influence and bribery of public officials who are responsible for implementing REDD+ to ignore routine breaches of REDD+ regulations
- Undue influence and bribery of public officials to create fraudulent licenses, land titles or carbon rights
- Collusion between political elites and the private sector to incorporate national circumstances in a way that favours certain types of activities (such as plantations) or socio-economic elements to the benefit of these actors
- Corruption that results in weak REDD+ safeguards and standards within the national context

Lesson 2: Perceptions differ between government officials and civil society. For all corruption risks listed in the survey, civil society participants assessed the risk as being greater than did government officials. However, both groups of participants ranked the corruption risks relative to each other very similarly.

Lesson 3 : Men and women perceive and experience corruption in the forest sector differently. In an online anonymous survey conducted in the Philippines, for example, women estimated the risk of diversion of funds as very likely, while most men deemed it little likely. Similarly, women overall estimated that the corruption risk of fraud in purchasing farm equipment and fraudulent claims to carbon rights were likely, while most men deemed these risks as unlikely.

Lesson 4: Measures to address corruption risks are common to multiple risks. Despite a wide diversity in corruption risks, measures to reduce those risks tend to be quite similar. Such measures include:

- Effective awareness raising for a wide range of stakeholders, such as local civil society, local government (including forest officials) the media, faith-based organizations, other non-governmental leaders, and the judiciary.
- Ensuring free access to information, including budgetary information. A centralized "clearing house" that is easily accessible to all stakeholders should also serve as a registry of REDD+ actions and information on the MRV and BDS systems. The implementation of laws on access to information can provide valuable lessons on how best to make information accessible and usable.
- Reviewing and, where necessary, amending laws and regulations to eliminate ambiguities, which can often generate loopholes, or which may allow prosecution on less serious charges than are really justified. This process can also address measures to provide legal assistance and protection to those reporting corruption.
- Developing and implementing policies and measures to create an environment more conducive to addressing corruption.
- Developing an effective "whistle-blower" system to report and raise the alarm about corrupt practices. This can also take the form or regular, institutionalized "early warning" dialogues between governments and civil society stakeholders

Photo by Joseibarras Angeles, UNDP

For more information, please visit **www.UN-REDD.org** or contact:
Ms. Metta Kongphan-apirak, Communications Officer, E-mail: kongphan-apirak@un.org