



## Report back from the Information and Knowledge Sharing Sessions

Oral intervention by  
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6 November, Session  
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UN-REDD PROGRAMME  
THIRTEENTH POLICY BOARD  
MEETING

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3-7 November 2014

Arusha, Tanzania

## **National REDD+ Strategies**

This session focused on the results from the regional workshops on national REDD+ strategies that took place between July and October in Ecuador and Nairobi, as well as on the conclusions from the Cambodian workshop on preparation for addressing the Warsaw Framework.

After an introduction by UNDP, Cambodia, Ecuador and Zambia presented general conclusions from the workshops and their country experiences. An Indigenous Peoples representative presented the experience of civil society and Indigenous Peoples engagement in the development of the Philippines national REDD+ strategy.

In its opening remarks, UNDP presented an overview of countries' progress towards finalising their national REDD+ strategies based on the results of a survey conducted with 30 countries in Africa and Asia. A rating system was used to rank a country's progress towards finalising national strategies. The average amount of progress so far sees countries ranked on step 2.3 out of five – whereby background analytical work and consultations are ongoing. Average progress was higher for countries receiving in-country support from UN-REDD, measuring an average of 3.1. Asia and Africa have generally the same number of more advanced countries. Two Asian countries are expected to be ready to publish their national strategies this year, while a total of six from Asia and Africa are expected to do so by 2016. The main area where REDD support was expected is related to designing the financial architecture for results-based payments, closely followed by help in linking specific technical work streams.

The session then counted with rich and insightful presentation on the Cambodian, Zambian and Ecuadorian on the regional workshops and their own experiences.

Cambodia mentioned the REDD+ Strategy is a policy to show to different donors that a credible path to achieve results has been put in place. The country's process for developing its strategy is based on domestic consultations with stakeholders, including 4 technical teams, consultation group and the Cambodia REDD+ Taskforce. Cambodia intends to present its National REDD+ Strategy in Paris. Zambia mentioned that as REDD+ is integrated in nature, a range of land-based activities such as energy and agriculture needs to be connected in the strategy development process. In order to do this successfully, strong leadership is needed as well as a clear identification of what, how and why. Ecuador also stressed the need to take into consideration other policies in place in the country and to ensure that benefits from REDD+ will be distributed according to priorities defined nationally in consultation with national stakeholders.

As challenges, panelists mentioned the existence of many different policies domestically already addressing drivers of deforestation which need to be reconciled with a REDD+ strategy

The need to take a cross-sectoral approach and work with the relevant ministries when addressing drivers of deforestation and the need for a single institution to lead work on developing a national REDD strategy was furthermore emphasised.

## **Reference Emissions Levels and Forest Reference Levels**

This session was introduced as an opportunity to exchange experiences on the creation of reference levels and how data sets can be improved.

The latest guidance on Reference Emissions Levels and Forest Reference Levels can be found in the Warsaw Framework, covering what forest definition are used, to what extent information is transparent, how historical data has been taken into account and whether assumptions related to domestic policies have been taken into account.

Following this, a new publication was presented that examines how countries are going about setting reference levels: “Emerging approaches to Forest Reference Emission Levels and/or Forest Reference Levels for REDD+: Trends and Challenges”. The publication covers ten country examples and considers their methodology for coming up with a reference level, the datasets used, and the level’s scope.

Regarding the methodology, six out of 10 countries are using historic average reference levels, with three using adjusted or project level and one using unique approach. In terms datasets, we learned how most countries use free medium resolution imagery, while countries such as Mexico are experimenting with rapid eye. In terms of scope, we heard how only Brazil started with a national forest reference level, whereas others used sub-national references that can be built on in future. Mexico is also taking a national approach to counting, based on its national databases.

As part of the process of moving towards a national reference level, Zambia noted how a sub-national reference level allows for roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined, as well as for safeguards and benefit distribution to be more easily monitored. The country is now gathering biophysical and socio-economic data on its forest areas. REDD will feed into LULUCF that will in turn feed into national reference levels for the Zambian economy

In terms of challenges, Tanzania pointed to how re-measurements can need to take place, as stakeholders proposed for every five years following consultations in the country, yet data and financial capacity can be lacking. No international guidelines are in place in order to carry out a re-adjustment of reference levels, it was pointed out – what is important is rather to be transparent as to how this is done.

## **Tenure**

In the opening remarks of the Tenure session, we heard that full clarity on carbon rights is not a pre-requisite to having rules on tenure, which is a highly political issue that absolutely must be addressed at national level: there can be no UN REDD blueprint or guidelines for this.

Meanwhile, we heard that thirteen countries have already expressed an interest in working on tenure in REDD, while five are submitting requests. Many will start with an assessment using the Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) as a guiding framework.

We also got a refreshing perspective from an environmental research and global knowledge institution, which argued that local tenure rights and exclusion rights need to be formalised.

Five reasons underlining the importance of tenure being addressed by governments before implementing REDD were highlighted. Firstly, REDD after all aims to identify the right holder to REDD+ rewards, but also who the bearer of responsibility is for managing forests. Secondly, it was argued that proponents must ensure that no one suffers unduly from competition to access REDD+ benefits. Community tenure was furthermore underlined as often being essential for motivating the sustainable management of forests, while not only positive incentives were seen as being needed for stakeholders, but also enforceable rights of exclusion to protect against outside interference. National and provincial levels of government were furthermore seen to need to ensure that expansion of agriculture or infrastructure does not enter into conflict with commitments made regarding forests.

During an in-depth survey carried out in 2013, proponents were asked to rate factors related to REDD at every scale of governance. Tenure was revealed as the number one challenge to

implementing REDD – seen as being even more challenging than the current disadvantageous economics of REDD.

While tenure could be seen as an obstacle to implementing REDD+, REDD also creates an opportunity for dialogue so that tenure creates the right conditions for REDD.

In Malawi, the success of the country's strategy is also seen as being intrinsically linked to clear tenure rights being in place – especially regarding the duration of access to land. The country therefore hopes to clearly define carbon rights so as to avoid conflicts and ensure that compensation for carbon sequestration are shared fairly. Most land is held at customary level in the country, yet this is also where the most deforestation is taking place as land is cleared for other activities. Important social and gender issues must be understood in order to deal with deforestation in the country, it was noted. And again, the challenge exists of land and forestry policies being dealt with by different ministries.

Civil society representatives went on to stress that REDD must be about handing rights back to local communities, building the capacity of indigenous local governments and harmonising policies with other industries such as agriculture and tourism. REDD was seen as having created a platform for debate on a set of rights that are shared and disputed and often taboo.

A clear call subsequently came from the floor for tenure to be addressed by the Programme's 2016-2020 strategy.

Following a survey carried out among participants during the session, enabling control of deforestation drivers were seen as the main reason for addressing tenure in the context of REDD+. Avoiding conflicts over REDD+ benefits and incentivising more safeguards are also seen as important.

More than half of survey participants rate addressing tenure issues as extremely important and an overwhelming majority believe that tenure issues must be addressed right at the start of the REDD+ process - no later.

### **SNA Budget Revision**

This session introduced the proposed revision of the SNA 2015 budget amount of USD\$ 6,995 000 submitted to the Policy Board for approval at PB13.

It was stressed that SNA support and National Programmes are mutually complementary. For example, targeted support and backstopping fills gaps for all countries benefitting from National Programmes, while targeted support reaches 66% of countries with National Programmes. Countries without National Programmes can also access targeted support for specific readiness needs.

The revision aims to secure funds for additional targeted support in 2015 in streams of work described as being priorities by countries. It is also aligned with findings from the UN-REDD external evaluation and the Warsaw Framework.

The largest part of additional support would fall under outcome 1 - MRV and monitoring, supporting the preparation of forest reference emissions levels and forest reference levels and work on REDD+ governance including tenure, and national REDD+ strategies. If approved, participants heard that country specific support would make up 59% of the 2015 budget.

The Secretariat was congratulated for coming forward with a conservative budget in July and then proposing an addition. A call also came from the floor for joint country-CSO support requests. A further call came from the floor for the Programme to move more towards National Programmes with the budget revision, to which it was noted that current funding would still allow the Programme to invite around three new National Programmes. It was stressed that the proposed revision is contingent on the availability of additional funds. Targeted support is need to bridge gaps where they exist and complement National Programmes, it was underlined.

Clarification was furthermore provided on community funding and what finance was in place for this. UNDP provided an update on the delivery of CBR+ in the six pilot countries. The country plans are expected to be approved by the end of 2014. Most grants are expected to be disbursed early next year, following CBR+ tech advisory committees being established involving a wide range of stakeholders. Consultations for this will take place over next two weeks, with a validation meeting scheduled for mid-December. In Paraguay, the country plan will be put out for wider consultation in November. As delivery moves forward, the UN-REDD Programme will assess the experience and how best to scale up to other countries, it was noted.