

Quarterly Community Forestry Network (CFN) Meeting for the OM CF REDD+ Project



Samraong Pagoda, Oddar Meanchey

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1. Background

The informal Oddar Meanchey Community Forestry Network (CFN) was initiated in 2004 supported by different non-governmental organization (NGOs) such as Children's Development Association (CDA), Oxfam GB, Community Forestry International (CFI), and Pact. There are 15 members in the CFN management structure, including an elected chief, sub-chief, administrator, and finance officer. The CFN is made up of representatives from each of the thirteen community forestry groups in Oddar Meanchey province.

The CFN normally conducts quarterly meetings at the provincial level. These network meetings are held to strengthen the capacity and cooperation of the thirteen CFMCs in implementing community forestry management and enforcement. The CFN serves as a platform for CFMC leaders to share their experiences, challenges, success stories and results, and then work together collaboratively to propose new strategies to existing challenges. The agenda of the meetings vary depending on and the challenges and issues the CFMCs are facing.

This CFN meeting was supported by co-funding between CDA and Pact. The meeting had the following objectives:

- Provide an opportunity for all 13 community forestry groups management committees (CFMCs) to provide updates on their CF forest management activities
- CF groups are able to learn from the successes/challenges of the other CF groups
- The CF groups, with the coordination of the CFN Chief, can work together to develop joint solutions to problems they are facing
- Staff from the project team (FA, Pact, or CDA) can provide an update on the status of the REDD+ project
- CF groups can work together in developing a Work Plan for the CFN – for the next quarter (May-July,2013)

2. Location and Participants

The meeting was conducted in Samroang Pagoda, Oddar Meanchey province, with 26 participants¹ (Annex 1: Participants list).

3. Meeting minutes

A. Background of the CFN by the CFN Chief, Mr. Sar Tlay

Mr. Sar Tlay presented a background on the CFN:

- Background of CF, 13 CF (size: 64318 and CF members: 17968), established since 2004, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) formalised the areas on 19 November 2008, CF agreement on 4 May 2009. Community Forestry Network first had 5 members, when it was established on 15 Feb, 2005. On 6 May, 2009, CFN restructured and held an election, and 14 members were selected. On 10 Feb, 2012 CFN had another election, and 16 members were chosen.

During this presentation, Sar Tlay raised some challenges and suggestions:

¹ 3 of the participants were women

- CFN requests Pact and CDA provide updated information to all thirteen community forestry groups, including CF membership, the size of CF area, and other useful information. This will enable CFN to disseminate to other stakeholders and also to use for advocacy purposes.
- Over the last three months the relation between OM FA cantonment and CFN has not been very good. The OM FA cantonment accused the CFN Chief of not being aware of the forestry law, and not understanding the legal procedure in dealing with illegal land encroachment. This is partly related to the issue that recently occurred in Ratanak Ruka CF (for more information about this issue please refer to the CFN minutes and report).
- Mr. Lim (Prey Sros) Chief of CF. The CFN must share information to members and CFs; our CFs should learn from the Monks CF.
- Mr. Chief Boreth, chief of CDA provided some ideas that the CFN has been supported by CF members and the law of CFs. CFN should explain to local authorities about the CFN.
- CFN members want to register the CFN as a formal institution, Mr Boreth, CDA executive, provided experience on NGOs, or association registration with the Ministry of Interior, he provided the pros and cons to the participants. Boreth mentioned that the CFN should be independent thus there is no need to register, if the CFN attempts to register it will have to follow the rules of the government. He added that each of thirteen CFMC are already registered as a formal entity. Participants agreed that the CFN should remain informal.
- Mr. Um Vorn, Samaky CFMC suggested to the Project Team to support and restructure Samaky CF. He mentioned that the *“CF area has been cleared by the Chief of CF. What should we do for Chief of Samaky CF who sell and clear forest in CF?”* Mr. Sa Thlay replied that we are conducting CFMC elections again this month, and that they have discussed with her and other members on this CF election.
- Mr. Chea Choung, chief of Ratanak Ruka CF, said that local authorities have not recognized the CFN and CFs. So all CFs should be recognized by local authority.
- CFN members suggested to the CFN Chief to share important information regularly to all thirteen CFMC and CF members. The chief of CFN should introduce their roles to local authorities and work closely with the CFMC.
- Mr. Delux presented an update on the mobile law enforcement unit. FA national approved the TOR of the two mobile law enforcement unit teams, the Samroang team and Along Veng team. These teams comprise of different stakeholders with representatives from the military police and other local authorities, with the FA as the head of each team. The CFN and CFMC will be sent the approved TOR of the enforcement teams with the contact numbers.



Picture 1: Chief of CFN presents on the CFN background

B. Update on OM CF REDD+ Project by Chhun Delux, Pact's consultant

Mr. Delux provide an update on the OM CF REDD+ project to all participants. His key points were:

- Background to the OM CF REDD+ project
- Steps of the OM CF REDD+ project development and achievements
- OM CF REDD+ project verification update
- OM CF REDD+ project marketing update
- Recent buyers offers on the international market

During this discussion, the Venerable Bun Saluth said that Nepal have sold carbon 2 years after they started the project, and that their government supported the carbon project. He stated that the Cambodian government is late in selling credits for carbon projects.

Several questions and suggests were raised:

- Mr Boreth, CDA. Why is the FA late to decide the sale of OM CF REDD+ credits? Why does TGC sell the OM CF REDD+ credits without informing the community, why is the process of TGC selling credits faster than the FA?
- Mr. Chea Choung, Ratanak Ruka CF. As the OM CF REDD+ credits have been sold on the international market, the revenues from the sale should be invested first to improve

land use planning, and land tenure. He believes that if these issues are going to be in the first phase of project implementation the other issues such as conflict on CF boundary, conflict over user rights, and illegal land encroachment will be addressed at the same time.

- H.E Kun Kim, the Chief of Military Commander consulted with MCF in order to ask for a part of MCF area where it doesn't have forest cover (degraded land) for the military and landless people. Venerable Bun Saluth responded that he would not agree with the request.
- Mr. Chun Delux explained that the project needs to prepare legal counsel for the Emissions Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA) which we are working on. Before selling carbon, we need to discuss with stakeholders, government, FA, community and other partners. TGC can sell carbon because 7 % of the credits are owned by TGC, as per the agreement with the FA. They sell the carbon support their work on the project.



Picture 2: Mr. Chhun Delux provides an update on OM CF REDD+ project

C. Discussion on the proposed strategy to improve communication, and information dissemination

Due to the lack of access to information and weakness of information dissemination amongst stakeholders in OM CF REDD+ Project, the question of “ *How can we improve the current system for sharing information on the project?* “ was asked to participants to gain feedback and develop a strategy. The participants defined communication tools that workable in the community such as regular reporting (hardcopy), telephone, radio program, regular meetings (community meeting among CFMC and CF members and

CFN meeting, other relevant meetings supported by CDA or Pact), radio communication, and local newspapers.

CDA is supporting a one hour a week Oddar Meanchey radio program every Wednesday², the program will end in the next 3 months. CDA and CFN suggest Pact to continue supporting the program, CDA happy to provide more detailed information about the program.

Participants request community monitors (CM) to help them write reports on meetings and send report out to different stakeholders, and also suggest CM to prepare the logistics/materials of CF meetings in accordance with the agreed workplan.

In order to ensure that information dissemination is effective, participants suggest that:

- Should build community forestry information center in each of CF, it will be used to store all community forestry related document, and will be an information center people can come to learn about the project.
- Assign one or two people in the community to take responsibility for keeping records of all kinds of document.

D. The chief of the Monks Community Forest (MCF) presented his experience from a community-based REDD+ Project in Nepal

Bun Saluth presented his experienced from visiting the community based REDD+ Project in Nepal. The project is being implemented in collaboration between Community Forestry International and the community forestry groups. The community are the project implementer meaning that they are responsible for developing work plans, implementation, and evaluating the project. CFI provides capacity building, assistance to the community in selling the credits to potential buyers, and assist the community to be the owner of the carbon rights. The revenue from the sale went through the community steering committee facilitated by CFI and a proportion of the revenue was paid to the government as tax. The government provides addition services to the community such as law enforcement, the rights to community over forest and carbon, and provides funds for community development.

E. Present the challenges, success stories, and proposed strategies on CF management by representatives from the 13 CF groups

To understand the current challenges, achievements, and strategies, participants were divided into three groups based on geographical areas.

Group 1: Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF

Challenges	CF name	Proposed Strategy
The military has built a camp inside the CF areas	Dung Beng and Andong Bor CF	New village/camp must move from CFs
The military has used forest land and cut/cleared trees inside CF areas	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey	Implement forest laws and other laws

² FA representatives were invited to join this radio program, and answer questions from callers, but they declined

	Sros CF	
The military strictly limit access of CFMC and CF members to conduct forest patrol inside CF area	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF	FA and authority support for stopping illegal logging in the CF areas. Offenders must be brought to the court
CFMC can't crack down on illegal logging inside the CF area because the military are involved and are holding guns, they provide access to loggers to the CF area.	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF	The military commander should not allow the military to carry their guns and cut tree's in the CF areas.
Some powerful people doesn't discuss with CFMCs before they do activities in the CF areas	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF	Commune council should provide fund for forest protection
The military has set up a new village and brought people from Sen Monorom, Mundulkiri province to live and clear forest land for agricultural purposes.	Prey Sros CF	Relevant ministry should move the military from CFs/ REDD+ project site to outside
There were CF boundary conflicts	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF	Military must attend/protect forest and natural resources. Don't cut trees and conduct hunting
Lack of financial support to conduct regular patrols, regular meetings with all CF members, sending information to different stakeholders on time.	Andong Bor, Dung Beng and Prey Sros CF	All stakeholders should provide funds for supporting and attending the protection of the forest

Group 2: Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka and Chhouk Meas

Challenges	CF name	Proposed Strategy
Military have cut trees and cleared forest inside the CF areas	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka and Chhouk Meas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FA implement forestry laws • Disseminate Sor Chhor Nor, Number: 324, Date: 26/02/13 to local • Implement confiscations of chainsaws • Prepare letter and send to government to make a plan (to move out the military etc)
Local people live and the military build a camp in CF.	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority must move people and military outside the CFs
Illegal forest land encroachment for agricultural purposes	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka and Chhouk Meas	Offenders clearing the forest in the CF must be brought to court. FA and authority have to implement this.
Community forestry boundary was not demarcated clearly	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka	FA and other stakeholders have to support and attend this issue

	and Chhouk Meas	
The military are not allowing the CF members to conduct forest patrols especially at the place where the military camp is situated	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka	Military have to know about CF law and regulations. Ministry of Defense have to disseminate these laws to the military.
Local authority support the illegal forest land clearing especially where the students are demarcating land	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Rukha and Chhouk Meas	Authorities have to invite some stakeholders from the CFMC to attend the measuring of land.
Authorities and other stakeholders did not support and attend to stop illegal logging in the CFs.	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Ruka and Chhouk Meas)	High position of authority should explain their roles and responsibilities in relation to the CF.
Military shoot wildlife in CF area	Rolus Thom, Romdul Veasna, Ratanak Rukha and Chhouk Meas)	The commander of military have to stop their soldiers from shooting wildlife or bringing guns into CF areas

Group 3: Samaky, Sorng Rukavorn, Phaav, Prey Srong and Sangkrou Preychheu CF

Challenges	CF Name	Proposed Strategy
Chief of Samaky has cleared forest and taken people from outside to live in Samaky CF	Samaky CF	Suggest authority (village, commune, district and provincial) move out the villagers that are living inside the CF
CF members threatened by military in Samaky CF	Samaky CF	Military don't bring guns into CFs and threaten CF members
Military (military division 41) cut trees in Sangkrou Preychheu	Sangkrou Preychheu	FA should work with CFs at least 2 FA staff per each CF.
Authorities don't recognize MAFF's Prakas and CF agreement.	Samaky, Sorng Rokavorn, Prey Srong and Sangkrou Preychheu CF	Higher positions should take action with this authority
Authority is taking CF land for people		
Military and villagers are clearing forest for Chamka and ask students to measure for land titles	Samaky, Sorng Rokavorn, Prey Srong and Sangkrou Preychheu CF	Suggest authority (village, commune, district and provincial) to find solution for the CF which have military and people clearing forest, and provide land to people (non CF members) outside the CF areas
People cut and sell trees in Sangkrou Preychheu CF	Sangkrou Preychheu CF	FA should take action this issue.



Picture 3: CF groups discuss challenges

F. Consultation on the propose statement letter

In order to ensure the legal rights of CFMC and CF members to utilize the resources in their management area, and to clarify the role of military in respecting the rights of the CF and reducing deforestation, the project team and CFN decided to develop a statement that will be agreed to by the military. This statement will clarify the role and responsibilities of the military in relation to the project. This statement is developed to support the existing legal frameworks and documents, such as the community forestry agreement, forestry law, and community forestry sub-decree.

The statement requires an approval/signature from the chief or sub-chief military commander, and will be circulated to all military who are occupying land inside the CF areas. The draft statement was originally prepared by Pact staff. The CFN meeting was an opportunity to bring the representatives from the 13 CF groups together to provide inputs on the statement. During the consultation process, some concerns and issues were raised:

- The community agreed to have a statement and that once the statement is signed by the military they will share with CF members, local military personnel, and local authorities (Find attached file on community input on the statement).
- There was a discussion on whether the community want to allow the military to maintain their bases inside the CF areas, or whether they want to suggest

to move them out the CF area. Participants raised the issue of national defense and the tension with Thailand, which means the military will most likely remain in the province to defend the country. The participants agreed that they should allow the military to occupy the CF area, but there should be some rules for them respect. The participants suggested that the project team and CFN should conduct regular meetings with military leaders at the provincial level and send them the result of the meeting.

G. Consultation on OM CF REDD+ Project grievance mechanism

The OM CF REDD+ Project Policies have been developed to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the OM CF REDD+ project. The project team are committed to working to ensure the project policies are developed in a participatory manner, with input from project stakeholders and community representatives. Based on these consultations, the policies will be updated on a continual basis. This meeting is the second occasion that community representative have been consulted on the project policies (first occasion occurred in Sept 2012), and provided an important opportunity to gain further feedback on certain aspects of the policies, especially regarding the changes that had been proposed to the projects grievance mechanism.

Due to time limitations, only the grievance mechanism from the project policies were consulted with the CFN. Before discussing, Mr. Delux provided an overview on the mechanism:

- During REDD+ Project implementation, REDD+ might negatively impact on some stakeholders, or positively impact some stakeholders more than others. The OM CF REDD+ Project team want to ensure that community participants in the project, especially women, illiterate people, and other vulnerable groups, will have equal access to the projects benefits, and will be avenues to raise complaints if this is not occurring.
- Conflict may occur at anytime during the REDD+ project, even before the REDD+ project implementation begins
- In developing the projects grievance mechanism, the project team not want to build on existing mechanisms in the community. For instance in the community forestry regulations, when affected CF members face issues related to their benefits, they have the right a file a complaint through the CFMC and Local FA.
- Delux presented the draft OM CF REDD+ grievance mechanism to participants and provided an open forum for participants to raise concerns, experience, and suggestions to improve the mechanism.



Picture 4: Participants discuss the OM CF REDD+ projects grievance mechanism

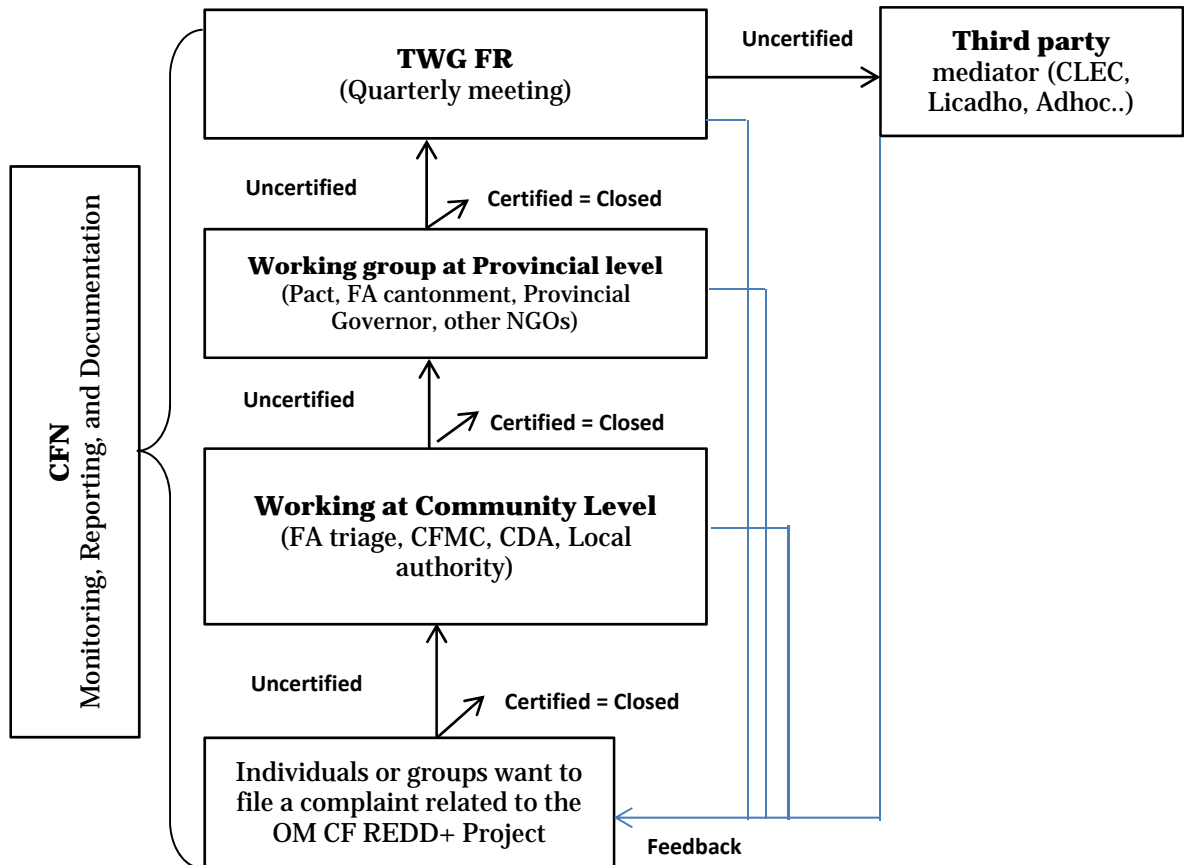
Concerns raised by participants

- Complaints from poor community members may not be as they are unable to write the reports well (or at all), and will not have money for the service of filing the complaint (Prey Sros CF).
- Most community members/CFMC don't trust the local FA and local authorities in helping them file complaints, especially if the complaint is against the benefit of these authorities (Chhouk Meas CF)
- When community members/CFMC file complaints, there is no response, and no feedback on the status of their complaint (Ratanak Ruka CF)
- Most community members don't know how to file complaints, and don't know who the right persons is to submit a complaint to (Andong Bor CF).
- We have to define what kind of issue or criteria is eligible to file a complaint, otherwise community members will file complaints and include other issues that are not relevant to the OM CF REDD+ Project (MCF).
- How will the project team and CFN make sure that all community members understand and are aware of this grievance mechanism (MCF)?
- How do we know that OM CF REDD+ grievance mechanism works effectively? If it is not working effectively, what would be a strategy to improve this mechanism? Who will be responsible to monitor this mechanism (Mr. Sar Tlay, CFN)?
- Is it required to make this mechanism formal?

Suggestions from Participants:

- All participants trust the CFN and suggest the CFN to be the one to facilitate and assist effected community members in filing complaints. The CFN should also play a role in following up and monitoring all complaints filed, and provides feedback/responses to complainants.
- Should set up a working group at the community level to help strengthen them to be independent and provide capacity building. This working group should have representatives from the Forestry Administration triage, CDA, Local authorities, and the CFMC.
- At the provincial level participants suggest to have a working representative from Provincial governor, Pact, FA Cantonment, and other human rights NGOs to form a provincial working group.
- At the national level participants suggest that the TWG FR play a role, and suggest that professional law NGOs should be the independent third party, such as CLEC or LIKADO, or Adhoc.
- At each level (community level, provincial level, and national level), the project have to assign one secretariat to be responsible for receiving, responding, and documenting all complaints. The information should be shared to all stakeholders in a transparent way.

Diagram of the proposed OM CF REDD+ grievance mechanism



H. Next Quarterly Action Plan of CFN

Activities	Responsible person	Funding sources	Schedule		
			June	July	Aug
Facilitate Samaky , Andong Bor, and Dung Beng CF elections together with CDA, Pact, and Local FA	Sar Thlay (CFN Chief)	Pact, CDA			
Assist CFMC to conduct regular forest patrol	Sar Thlay	Pact			
Attend OM CF REDD+ Stakeholders meeting	CFN	Pact, CDA, FA			
Conduct CFN quarterly meeting	Sar Thlay, CFN	TBC			
Regular meetings with targeted local authorities in thirteen CFs	Sar Thlay	Pact			
Sending information regularly to all thirteen CF (by reports, phone calls)	Sar Thlay	Pact			
Make a copy of CFN related documents and send to all 13 CFs	Sar Thlay	Pact			

Annex 1 – Participants list

No	Name	Role	CF name	Village	Tel
01	Mr. Ros Phaly	Chief	Rolus Thom	Kdol	0979188379
02	Ms. Rerm Kimcheng	Member	Rolus Thom	Kdol	098292720
03	Mr. Malish Heoth	Chief	Romdul Veasna	Sombur Meas	095948706
04	Ms. Rut Touch	Planting	Romdul Veasna	Sombur Meas	No
5	Mr. Lev Lim	Chief	Prey Sros	Chheu Slab	0886226087
7	Mr. Phoun Phon	CM	Prey Sros	Chheu Slab	0889255668
8	Mr. Phun Suy	Sub-CFMC	Andong Bor	Dong Kor Tabuk	095989306
9	Mr. Phon Sophon	Chief	Beng	Yeay Tep	077884521
10	Mr. Hong Seng Hok	Sum- CFMC	Sangru khar Vorn	Ou Pha	0974540008
11	Mr. Sar Thlay	CFN	Doun Ken		
12	Mr. Mum Prun	Sub-CFMC	Chhouk Meas	Chhouk Meas	097884603
13	Mr. Brang Sovanara	Chief	Chhouk Meas	Chhouk Meas	0978380405
14	Mr. Nhel Nom	Secretary	Samakey	Ou Sramor	0977761491
15	Mr. Mit Savorn	Sub-CFMC	Samakey	Ou Samroang	0885390611
16	Mr. Blok San	CDA staff	CDA	Chhouk	0979997140
17	Mr. Lev Seth	Chief	Sangrus preychheu	Rom Chek	0976764351
18	Mr. Som Preang	Chief of patrolling	Sangrus Preychheu	Rom Chek	
19	Mr. Bin Bern	Finance	Phaav	Chrouk	0975709454
20	Mr. Chhun Dany	CM	Phaav	Chrouk	No
21	Mr. Din Heng	Chief of CF	Andung Bor	Kantuy Chhoun	0977887744
22	Ms. Sou Pisey	Finance	Prey Srong	Kork Sompur	016936037
23	Mr. Hing Phern	CFMC	Prey srong	Ou Korki kanda	0972105140
24	Mr. Soun Sorn	Sub-CFMC	Ratanak Rukha	Ou Kanseng	0976188185
25	Mr. Chea Choung	Chief	Ratanak Rukaha	Bak Nim	0979690715
26	Venerable. Bun Saluth	Chief	Sangru Khavonr	Samrong	012315753