



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Workshop Report

Participatory Governance Assessments
**Provincial Consultation Workshop:
Institutional and Context Analysis and
Governance Issues for PGA for REDD+
in Lam Dong**
06/03/2013, Da Lat - Vietnam

Workshop Report

1. Background for this meeting

The Participatory Governance Assessment for REDD+ in Viet Nam is about to complete Stage 1. The objectives of Stage 1 are: conducting an Institutional and Context Analysis for improved understanding of the context and identifying relevant stakeholders, and reaching agreement on prioritized governance issues that the PGA will be focusing on. To conduct stage 1 of the PGA, UNDP engaged a research team lead by CSDM¹ in consortium with CERDA² and PanNature³. All three organizations are national NGO. After three months of research, data collection, and interviews with stakeholders, on March 6th 2013, the research team held a consultation workshop in Da Lat with relevant stakeholders from the province and REDD+ pilot districts.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Present preliminary findings from the Institutional and Context Analysis (Stage 1 of the PGA)
- Present and agree on next steps of the PGA (immediate next steps and roadmap of stage 2 of the PGA)
- Validate the Research Team's selection/suggestions for priority governance issues to be assessed in stage 2 & 3 of the PGA
- Identify and validate list of criteria for selection of Advisory Group members for further consultation through stages 2 & 3 of the PGA
- Agree on a set of governance issues that will be prioritized in the further PGA process in Viet Nam

3. Participants

In total, 26 participants from government departments of the province, public and private forest owners, Da Lat University, pilot districts and communes⁴ attended the workshop. In addition, staff from the UNDP – UN REDD Governance Centre in Oslo, UNDP Viet Nam and FAO attended the workshop. See list of annexes for the detailed participants list.

4. Key issues addressed and discussed during the workshop

4.1 Opening remarks session:

Mr. Tran Thanh Binh, Director of Lam Dong Province's Forest Protection Department, on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of Lam Dong, gave opening remarks and expressed full support from DARD, especially of Provincial Forest Protection Department (FPD), in the PGA for REDD+ work in Lam Dong

Mr. Tore Langhelle, focal point of PGA at UNDP Viet Nam, in his opening remarks stated the relevance for PGA for REDD+ in Viet Nam, ultimately producing governance data. The experiences of implementing PGA in Lam Dong, especially from stage 1 of the PGA, will be valuable lessons learned for the implementation of PGA in 5 other pilot provinces in UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase 2.

¹ CSDM: Center for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas

² CERDA: Centre of Research and Development in Upland Area

³ PanNature: Center for People and Nature Reconciliation

⁴ 2 pilot districts: Di Linh and Lac Duong; 4 pilot communes: Bao Thuan and Gung Re (Di Linh); Da Sar and Da Chay (Lac Duong)

4.2 Presentations:

4.2.1. The process of the ICA – by Mdm. Luong Thi Truong, CSDM

ICA is the first step of the PGA implementation. ICA helps to identify the institutional set-up for REDD+, mapping of stakeholders who are involved in REDD+ and their interest and/or concerns with REDD+. ICA also helps the team to learn about the incentives and constraints (barriers) to implementation of REDD+ in the context of Lam Dong. From here, the team highlighted relevant governance issues as background information for the workshop participants' further group work, analysis and discussions.

4.2.2. Preliminary findings of the ICA for PGA for REDD+ in Lam Dong – by Mr. Nguyen Viet Dung, PanNature

According to the Master plan for forest protection and development in period 2011 – 2020, Lam Dong will have to maintain the forest coverage by 61% is regarded as a political commitment. The agriculture & forestry sector in Lam Dong made up to 48.4% of the provincial GDP (2010). Forests in Lam Dong are not only a fundamental source for traditional livelihoods but also ensuring watershed protection and environmental security. One of the problems in Lam Dong is that a majority of forestland of Lam Dong (over 85%) is being managed by state-owned forest organization, 12% is allocated to hundreds private companies and only 1.6% is allocated to households. The most important part of his presentation was on the institutional structure of Lam Dong province's forestry sector. At the provincial level, Lam Dong Province People's Committee (PPC) is the most powerful decision-maker in forestry sector, and DARD is a focal point for state management for all forestry planning and activities in the province. At the district level, district FPDs act as a key focal point to advise DPCs on forestry decisions which is different from other provinces in Viet Nam. At the grassroots level, in principle, the communal people's committee is the one authorized and responsible for state management over natural forest management within their communal territory. However, in reality, they are not able to interfere and have no power to influence forest land-use planning. One of the many recommendations from the team for the implementation of PGA/REDD+ in Lam Dong is capacity building to district and commune level to enable them to support each other in implementing REDD+ and sustainable forest management.

4.2.3. Possible governance issues – by Mdm. Vu Thi Hien, CERDA

The presentation focused on the context analysis for forest management and protection of Lam Dong. This included planning, allocation, lease of land and forest protection, investment for forest management and protection in Lam Dong. Based on the analysis, the research team presented 5 governance issues they found to be of great importance for the next stages of the PGA:

- Issue 1: The existing management mechanism of forestland management is not ensuring opportunities for improving or maintaining local people's livelihood/well being
- Issue 2: Government agencies' management over the private companies' performance, especially on using the rented forestland has not complied properly with the law/ policies/ contract
- Issue 3: Ineffective law enforcement to prevent illegal forest degradation and deforestation
- Issue 4: Commune authorities, local people are almost marginalized from the forest/ forestland use management in their areas
- Issue 5: Ineffective inter-sectoral coordination in management of forestland

4.2.4. Next step of PGA Viet Nam and Advisory group – by Ms. Hoang Vu Lan Phuong, UNDP Viet Nam

The presentation focused on the roadmap of the PGA and details activities of stage 2 of the PGA. She also presented the idea of an Advisory Group to facilitate and endorse the process as well as the findings of the PGA. The Advisory Group would play an important role in the implementation of the PGA. The Advisory Group will be composed of a key government counterpart, representative from the pilot province: provincial committee, national assembly, civil society organization, board of ethnic cities and others. Advisory Group members will be selected based on the list of criteria recommended by the participants in this workshop.

4.3 Discussions:

In order to get more thorough and representative feedback from stakeholders on governance issues as well as a list of criteria for selection of Advisory Group members, stakeholders were divided into groups for further discussion. Group 1 included participants from province, districts and private companies; whereas group 2 included participants from Bao Thuan, Gung Re, Da Sar and Da Chay communes. Participants from both the provincial, district and commune level provided comments on the following issues:

4.3.1. The selection of Di Linh and Lac Duong to be pilot districts for the PGA

Comments: Implementation of Di Linh and Lac Duong in forest protection and management had not been good, and therefore these two districts would not sufficiently present the full picture of Lam Dong province.

4.3.2. REDD+ and participate in REDD+

Comments: People want to know more about the relationship between REDD+ and management of community forest as well as the benefits and risks of participating in REDD+. If people participate in REDD+, will it limit their access to the forest? There is a need for a clearly defined mechanism of benefit distribution of REDD+. Regarding issues related to forestry, PPC will assign to DARD. DARD will assign to relevant department within DARD to be focal points. There is a need to add the role of the commune into governance for REDD+, but it must clearly layout detail works to be done by them.

4.3.3. Shortage of land in Lam Dong

Comments: Provincial leaders prioritize providing land and housing for ethnic minorities who are originally from Lam Dong. Based on the statistics that districts provide on the situation of land shortage in their districts, the province will allocate more land accordingly. However, the problem here is that districts allocated land to people but they sold the land instead of using it then came back and said they do not have any land. Currently, Lam Dong is having difficulty with migration. People migrate to Lam Dong spontaneously so the province is having difficulty in providing housing and land to those people.

4.3.4. Allocation of land / forest to community

Comments: Lam Dong already allocated forest to 10 communities. When local people got allocated forests but do not receive any financial support from the government, it leads to decrease in their income. No one can guarantee that when allocated forests to community, they will protect and manage the forest better than state-owned forest organization or private companies. Therefore, we need to have some kind of instrument to assess the advantage and disadvantage when forests are allocated to community.

4.3.5. Inter-sectoral coordination

Comments: While the research team said some departments in the province have more power than others, the people said it is not true. Whenever the province established a committee or board, all the departments are always fully represented. Moreover, provincial FPD has signed the regulation on coordination with other government agencies.

4.3.6. Commune authorities are almost marginalized from the forest / forestland use management in their areas

Comments: People disagreed on this issue. According to representatives from province and districts, commune authorities have many powers and functions because they are managing all the grassroots issues in the provinces. They were not able to do their job fully due to limited capacity and human resources not because they were marginalize from forest protection and development. But representatives from the communes thought different. Commune authorities only implement decision from province and district and they only get informed about the allocation of land to private companies. They were excluded from the decision-making process.

Private companies are under the management of province/ districts, but commune authorities do not know about the work of private companies or have the right to manage the forest that allocated to private companies. The commune officials are limited in capacity but they have a lot of work. Therefore, there is an urgent need for capacity building as well as empowerment and increase the number of employees.

4.3.7. Priority was given to private companies on land allocation

Comments: Even though the provincial authorities already recalled 15,000ha of land allocated to over 100 private companies but some other private companies still left their land vacant. Commune authorities would like to request the province to recall those lands and allocate to local people.

4.3.8. Forest violations / crimes

Comments: PPC and Provincial Party's committee are concerned about forest management and protection. This issue was included into the political system of the province. Provincial Party's Committee issued resolutions on forest protection. This showed the determination of Lam Dong in forest protection.

4.3.9. Commune forestry boards

Comments: This is very unique of Lam Dong. In the whole country, only Lam Dong's communes have a forestry board. Therefore, the research team needs to talk more about this in their report and also needs to highlight the uniqueness of commune forestry board.

4.3.10. Forest protection / allocation contract

Comments: Local people do not like the current set up of the forest protection contract (yearly contract) → people feel unstable; they do not know if they will get the contract next year and if yes would they be able to get the same area they are protecting now? → lack of responsibility. Short-term forest protection contract would not be able to help people feel motivated. The rate of households involved in forest protection is low (7%), but higher in the areas where ethnic minorities live. Only households that are under the poverty rate could be contracted for forest protection. There are many different ways in forest protection, in some areas the contractor could go freely in the areas they are assigned to protect, but in some areas the contractors are only allow to go in a certain routine set out for them. In some communes, the boundary for protected areas are clearly set up, but not in some others. This created confusion for people, they don't know where the areas that they have to protect.

When allocated forest long-term to local people, the authorities have to: i) clarify the rights and obligations; ii) provide financial support or lend money to local people based on the type of forest they are contracted to protect; iii) need to do more awareness raising on forest protection and management laws, decisions, and resolutions; iv) and also more capacity building for communities.

4.3.11. Payment for Environmental Services (PES)

Comments: People have not received any payment for the latter half of 2012. There was no explanation from the authorities and responsible parties about this issue.

4.4 Prioritized governance issues:

Both groups agree on the importance of the 5 governance issues that were recommended by the research team, but ended up with prioritizing three of these:

- **Participation in the REDD+ process**
- **Law enforcement**
- **Inter-sectoral collaboration**

However, participants suggested a more careful wording of the governance issues. Some of the words were deemed incorrect. The rate of women's participation in forest protection was low, so the need for more awareness raising for women on forest protection and prevention of deforestation was advocated.

4.5. Criteria for selection of Advisory Group members:

After the discussion and prioritization of governance issues, the two groups discussed and came up with the list of criteria for the selection of advisory group members. Two groups came up with vast variety of criteria. List of specific criteria is in Annex C. Below is the list of similar criteria from both groups:

- Governance agencies which should be represented in the Advisory Group:
 - o Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)
 - o Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE)
 - o Board of Ethnicities
 - o Provincial Forest Protection Department (Provincial FPD)
 - o District Forest Protection Department
 - o District Natural Resources and Environment office
 - o Private companies
 - o Farmers union
 - o Women Union
 - o Commune's Forestry Board

- List of criteria for selection of Advisory Group members:
 - o Willing to follow from the beginning to end
 - o Have relevant forestry experiences
 - o Willing to share local people's opinions / requests

Participants from communes suggested for more than 1 representative from each commune in the Advisory Group.

5. Conclusion of the workshop

The consultation workshop on the ICA and governance issues for REDD+ in Lam Dong managed to reach all intended outcomes. Consensus on governance principles and prioritization of issues was reached. However, there is some disagreement between the different levels (provincial, district and communes participants) around the issues of forestland allocation, forest protection and lease land to private companies which will need to be dealt with further, and perhaps the PGA governance data (once available) can help facilitate further action on this.

Both the analysis through the ICA exercise and the discussions during the workshop shed more light on the governance issues brought forth. The provincial officials seem to agree with a policy of not allocating forestland to local people and communities. Commune officials see the need of a long-term forest/ forestland allocation to local people, especially in the context of REDD+, so the protection of forest can be improved/ maintained. Local people cannot participate in REDD+ as the “forest owner” because currently they do not have the right to use forest land/own the forest, only a small number of under poverty households and ethnic minorities receive a 12-months contract for forest protection. Therefore in Lam Dong virtually only state forest owners and private companies have the right to use forest and forestland, local people seem to have no long-term access to forest and forest land, while they are the best forest protector but also good at destroying the forest without easily being detected. Most of the participants found that the allocation or lease of forestland to private companies is less effective in terms of economic, social and environment factors. The management of local government to private companies do not adhere to the rules, policies and laws. In governance for REDD+, there is a need to pay more attention to law enforcement, the way to manage forests and the coordination between government agencies. The participants also agreed that the current role of Commune People’s Committee and in some cases the role of District People’s Committee in the process of decision making about forest management have been obscure and mostly just implementing the decision of the superior while responsible for the forest in their areas. It was also argued that to implement REDD+ successfully in Lam Dong, district officials and especially commune officials should receive more capacity building and empowerment.

Moving forward to stage 2 of the PGA will require the research team to complete stage 1 report based on feedback from the participants. Based on the list of criteria suggested by the participants, the PGA team will start to map out potential Advisory Group members. To continue PGA activities in the province, there will be an indicators training workshop held in the second quarter of this year. The objectives of the training workshop are

- Build capacity for potential Advisory Group members and other relevant stakeholders in the province on indicator development
- Develop a rough draft of indicator set (building on prioritized governance issues agreed by participants in this workshop)
- Explore possible data sources
- Discuss relevant considerations in preparation for the selection of data collection methodologies and the actual data collection

Annexes: please check the [REDD Viet Nam website](#) and [UN-REDD workspace folder](#)

1. Final agenda
2. Participants list
3. Presentations
4. List of criteria for selection of Advisory Group members



Mr. Tore Langhelle gave opening remarks

Groups discussion on governance issues and list of criteria for selection of Advisory Group members.



Group 1: participants from provincial, districts and private companies



Group 2: participants from communes

Photos credit: Ms. Tina Hageberg