

## **Developing Social Safeguards for REDD+ Implementation**

### **Strategic Knowledge Exchanges in Asia-Pacific**

**August 16, 2012**

#### **I. Executive Summary:**

Deforestation and forest degradation account for 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions: more than the entire global transportation sector and second only to the energy sector.<sup>1</sup> In light of this staggering statistic, and the vital role forests play in carbon sequestration, the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) initiative was launched<sup>2</sup> as an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. “REDD+” goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. In this way, REDD+ has the potential to confer multiple benefits in addition to mitigating climate change, from preserving forest ecosystems and increasing resiliency to maintaining biodiversity and providing communities with forest-derived food, fuel, and timber resources.

In the Asia-Pacific region, deforestation is occurring at an astounding rate, due to a series of escalating pressures, including high demands for tropical timber products and the conversion of forests to agricultural lands. When combined with the fact that this region is home to 16% of the world’s forests, it becomes clear that swift, effective action to address deforestation must be taken.<sup>3</sup> However, many countries in Asia-Pacific simply do not have the technical, financial, institutional, and human capacity to develop and implement REDD+ programs at the rate required.

In recognition of this fact, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme)<sup>4</sup> initiated the *Asia-Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchanges*, an innovative initiative meant to capitalize upon the common challenges and opportunities that many of the countries in this region face in reducing deforestation and enhancing conservation. These south-south exchanges provide a rich example of how knowledge and learning can be promoted to support more

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.un-redd.org/AboutREDD/tabid/582/Default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> REDD was first formally incorporated into the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during the 13th Conference of the Parties, 2007, in Bali.

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/W4388E/w4388e03.htm>

<sup>4</sup> UN-REDD Programme is a is one of the main multi-lateral initiatives to support countries to get ready to engage in REDD+ and builds on the convening power and expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

effective on-the-ground implementation for actors involved in specific, structured initiatives that present similar implementation challenges to a number of countries.

The initiative was initiated in 2010, with the First Regional Knowledge Exchange in Bangkok, Thailand, which focused broadly on several technical and administrative aspects of REDD+. For the most recent Regional Exchange, which was convened in Bogor, Indonesia on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the UN-REDD Programme narrowed the scope of the event to focus specifically on a topic of both international importance and regional relevance. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific Region have large populations living in and around forested areas. In Indonesia, for instance, approximately 48 million people live in forests. International discussions have rightfully placed critical importance on engaging these key stakeholders and establishing social safeguards in order to recognize their rights as well as to realize the potential multiple benefits of REDD+. Thus, the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange focused on the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, or FPIC, which has increasingly become a widely-accepted approach to ensuring the rights of community stakeholders are respected, contributing significantly to social safeguards that need to be in place for REDD+ implementation. This case study will focus on the Regional Exchange on FPIC as an example through which this broader strategy of regional south-south collaboration can be understood.

## **II. About the Initiative:**

### **Background: Asia-Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchanges**

REDD+ presents new and complex challenges to countries that involve the development of national REDD+ systems encompassing a range of issues including: governance; measuring, reporting, and verification of carbon; the engagement of stakeholders at the national and local levels; benefit distribution systems; and the development of national safeguard systems. The UN-REDD Programme currently has 44 partner countries across three regions of Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Of these 44 countries, 16 countries are receiving direct financial assistance to develop comprehensive national activities to support the implementation of REDD+ in-country. Some of the countries receiving assistance are in more advanced stages than others, additionally, partner countries not receiving direct financial assistance are engaged in preliminary REDD+ activities that may receive financial support from a range of other sources.

There are 14 UN-REDD Programme partner countries located in the Asia-Pacific region, of which 7 are receiving direct financial assistance (see Annex I). The Regional Knowledge Exchanges were developed in order to facilitate the sharing of best practices, approaches, and tools between these countries, which are in various stages of REDD+ planning, to support learning from current experience and avoid “reinventing the wheel.” The Regional Knowledge Exchanges also serve as a platform for participants to work together to determine new directions and priority actions, and share these outcomes with UN-REDD Programme staff. In this way, the exchanges promote cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and the development of critical long-term partnerships.

The First Regional Knowledge Exchange was held in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2010 over the course of three days. Seventy-five participants from various government ministries from

nine countries in the region<sup>5</sup> convened with representatives from bilateral and international nongovernment organizations, including GIZ (Germany), USAID (United States), JICA (Japan), and various UN agencies. Over the course of the workshop sessions, representatives shared information on a broad range of administrative and technical REDD+ issues. Time was also allotted for question and answer sessions and general discussion. Participants' evaluations, which were completed at the end of the event, reflected positively on the initiative. High marks were given for the relevance of the workshop sessions and the perceived importance of sharing and exchanging experiences, knowledge, and resources. Common suggestions included holding the Regional Knowledge Exchange annually, having fewer participants to facilitate enhanced communication, and narrowing the focus of the workshops.

## **Second Regional Knowledge Exchange: Developing and Implementing Social Safeguards**

### *Responding to stakeholder demand*

In response to the feedback received from participants that attended the First Regional Knowledge Exchange, for the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, held in April 2012 in Bogor, Indonesia, the UN-REDD Programme strategically focused on social safeguards in REDD+ implementation, and more specifically, on early efforts to uphold the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). In order to realize the multiple benefits of REDD+ and ensure that fundamental rights are respected, indigenous peoples and local communities that live in and depend on forests and forest-based resources must be meaningfully engaged stakeholders in REDD+ planning and implementation. Only with their full involvement can REDD+ projects be sustainable, long-term successes.

FPIC is a widely recognized principle in international law (e.g., it is a key provision noted in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - UNDRIP) and requires that these crucial stakeholders be engaged effectively in order to ensure that their rights to their lands, territories, and resources are upheld. Essentially, FPIC refers to the right of communities to freely grant or withhold its consent to proposed projects and programs that will impact the land that they customarily own, occupy, or utilize. FPIC requires non-coercive, equitable, and fully informed negotiations between those that wish to conduct an activity or enact a policy and those that occupy or utilize the land that would be impacted. It is intended to create a space for communities to reach consensus on these decisions in a way that respects their social norms and practices and ensures that they are fully informed of potential benefits and risks. The application of FPIC spans a wide array of activities, from mining projects to highway construction. The Cancun Agreement, which was an output from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations that guides REDD+, specifically requires the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in REDD+ and indirectly references FPIC through noting the importance of UNDRIP. Most countries in the region have little experience and capacity to support the right to FPIC, and there was considerable demand to learn from other countries.

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<sup>5</sup> Countries from the Asia-Pacific region that participated: Viet Nam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Solomon Islands, Philippines, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Mongolia and Thailand

### Choosing the appropriate subject matter for a South-South exchange

Countries in Asia-Pacific are at various stages of planning and implementing activities to support FPIC, from developing FPIC national guidelines and piloting REDD+ social safeguard projects to designing FPIC communication methods. It was therefore deemed an appropriate time to convene an exchange on the topic of FPIC, with a good balance of countries with useful experiences to share, and a number of countries that would be embarking on activities to support FPIC in REDD+ in the near future. Furthermore, although international discussions have emphasized the importance of FPIC, it is an issue that is very unfamiliar to many countries and organizers were aware that many of those working on REDD+ remain uncertain about aspects of the principle and how best it can be integrated into their planning and programmes. Finally, as noted, many countries in the region have significant numbers of communities that live in or around and depend upon forested areas. For this reason, integrating social safeguards into REDD+ is critical.

The Second Regional Knowledge Exchange organized by the UN REDD Programme built further upon the attendance of the first workshop to include participants from 14 countries from the region.<sup>6</sup> In all, there were nearly 100 participants, who represented relevant government ministries, international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society and indigenous peoples' groups, and technical advisors (see Annex 1 for overview of the actors and their roles).

### Use of breakout sessions and exhibition area

The Second Regional Knowledge Exchange began with an update on the UN-REDD Programme's global FPIC guidelines and how they can be utilized in developing national FPIC guidelines. After discussion on this topic, country representatives gave presentations on progress made, challenges faced, and lessons learned from their various experiences with FPIC (see Box 1). The workshop included the format of formal breakout sessions, in which country representatives were divided into working groups to facilitate the generation of knowledge and solutions to challenges regarding the

Box 1: Country presentations reflected FPIC integration issues on a range of levels of action

As different countries were at various stages with regards to activities to support FPIC, participants had the opportunity to review issues associated with different phases of the implementation of activities to support FPIC:

- Papua New Guinea presented the process of developing national FPIC Guidelines, and shared action taken to implement FPIC on the ground thus far;
- Indonesia shared lessons learned in conducting an FPIC policy analysis and developing policy recommendations ;
- Viet Nam and Indonesia discussed experiences in piloting on-the-ground FPIC processes in key REDD+ communities;
- The Philippines reviewed their institutionalized FPIC process, and explored the obstacles encountered;
- Cambodia shared project-level FPIC planning and implementation progress; and
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, and the Solomon Islands discussed their early efforts thus far to inform and consult with indigenous people and local communities in REDD+ implementation.

<sup>6</sup> Countries from the Asia-Pacific region that participated: Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam. Note: Representatives from two other UN-REDD Programme partner countries (Ecuador and Paraguay) also attended, as they were in the locality for a related workshop.

topics covered in the country presentations (see Box. 1).

Participants were divided into four groups based on their preferred working language. Groups were chaired by representatives from Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and were given one of three topics to work on:

- Communicating FPIC: Languages and materials
- Documenting FPIC: Decision-making and recording
- Establishing a grievance mechanism

Topics discussed reflected the wide range of issues related to integrating FPIC, including whether national guidelines were needed, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, benefit sharing obstacles, effective FPIC communication tools, and establishing grievance mechanisms. After 90 minutes of discussion and debate as to suggestions addressing these topics, groups shared their conclusions with the rest of the group. These conclusions include preferences for consensus versus voting in decision-making, the need to create space for traditional decision-making processes, and the necessity of implementing grievance processes at the local level.

An additional component included an ongoing exhibition area for countries to display materials developed for FPIC outreach and communication.

At the conclusion of the two-day workshop series, three central messages were identified:

- Context-appropriate national guidelines on FPIC should be developed in order to standardize and formalize the process;
- Creative communication tools are needed to assist FPIC facilitators in informing and working with indigenous and local communities; and
- Sharing experiences between REDD+ partner countries is needed in order to learn from each other's experiences, ask questions directly, and facilitate brainstorming.

#### Development of a detailed lessons learned document that went beyond a workshop report

The UN-REDD Programme recruited the services of a specialist in FPIC, REDD+, and local community rights issues to carry out more detailed interviews with participants and to analyze the case studies presented at the workshop in order to distill more in depth analysis and lessons learned from the country examples shared. The knowledge shared and generated at the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange was compiled into a Workshop Proceedings report, and a companion document developed by the specialist will be disseminated widely via a forthcoming *Lessons Learned* publication. Recognizing the importance of long-term partnership building and communication, UN-REDD Programme is considering establishing an FPIC email listserve so that attendees can easily communicate and share resources.

The Third Regional Knowledge Exchange will be held in late 2012, on the subject of social and environmental safeguards.

### **III. Financial Arrangements:**

The UN-REDD Programme funded the facilities utilized for the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, while the participants' costs were covered by a number of sources. These sources are comprised of UN-REDD National Programmes, the UN-REDD Global Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme Country Offices, and the indigenous peoples organization the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact.

### **IV. South-South Cooperation Components:**

South-south cooperation at the workshop sessions included three types of knowledge exchange: the *sharing* of knowledge between participating countries, as well REDD+ experts; the *generation* of new knowledge from interactions between participating countries; and the *dissemination* of knowledge shared and generated to relevant parties that may not have been present. Taken together, these three components comprise a robust strategy for using south-south knowledge to build capacities and suggest new ideas to be operationalized by both the UN-REDD Programme partner countries and the UN-REDD Programme advisors.

#### *Knowledge sharing components*

##### *Country presentations*

The knowledge sharing component comprised the bulk of the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, mainly via the country presentations and subsequent question and answer sessions. Each country presented their up-to-date experience with FPIC in REDD+ implementation, including details of what had been accomplished, obstacles faced along the way, and next steps. After establishing this background information, presenters explored critical issues with workshop participants.

##### *Exhibition area*

Another strong knowledge sharing element was the exhibition area: a large space in the conference center that was set aside for participating UN-REDD Programme partner countries to share the communications and outreach materials that they had developed. This media included posters outlining FPIC, videos that could be used for stakeholder with varying levels of literacy, and brochures. Videos were shown during break times and communications materials were handed out to interested participants to bring back to their home country. In this way, participants became aware of the resources already available for them to contextualize and utilize in their own countries.

#### *Knowledge generation components*

Closely tied to the knowledge sharing components outlined above, the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange also generated new knowledge, to the benefit of both country representatives and UN-REDD teams working on designing and implementing national guidelines.

### *Group work*

As noted earlier, one workshop session was entirely devoted to group work. This presented a good format for countries to have more dynamic and in depth discussions on issues that facilitated deeper analysis and learning between participants that could not be achieved through formal presentations. Conclusions emerging from these group discussions presented valuable advice and learning that countries could apply directly to their own work on FPIC.

### *Knowledge dissemination components*

Unless knowledge shared is documented and disseminated, the learning and capacity building at the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange would effectively end upon the participants' departures. To avoid this, planners strategized a number of ways to share outcomes with a larger audience and to facilitate ongoing communication between participants.

### *Workshop proceedings and evaluation*

Information and summaries regarding presentations, discussion sessions, and working group outputs were compiled into a comprehensive Workshop Proceedings document, and shared with the REDD+ community via the UN-REDD Programme Collaborative Online Workspace. The Workshop Evaluation, which was completed by 40 participants at the conclusion of the event, was also shared through this outlet and other relevant UN-REDD Programme websites. All country presentations were made available online, and open to public viewing. A globally disseminated UN-REDD Programme Newsletter featured the workshop, and included links to this relevant material to share with the community. This dissemination will help enable actors involved in REDD+ the world over to utilize this knowledge in their own work.

### *"Lessons Learned" document*

The organizers decided to produce an innovative Lessons Learned document that will go beyond a narrative of the workshop itself to also incorporate more detailed FPIC information that could not be covered in only two days. The investment of securing a dedicated specialist to review and analyze the proceedings, presentations, and discussions as well as carry out targeted interviews with participants, allowed for a more thorough record of the learning and outputs generated. This record will not only enable participants to build upon their experiences at the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, but provide those unable to attend with critical information as they work to implement FPIC in REDD+ initiatives. The document is currently being developed and will be released by September 2012.

### *Asia-Pacific FPIC listserv*

Workshop organizers and participants alike felt strongly that channels for ongoing communications between participants would significantly enhance capacity to develop and implement FPIC guidelines. To this end, the UN-REDD Programme is considering establishing an FPIC listserv for workshop participants to be able to carry out discussions and pass along relevant information and resources.

### *(Potential) Cross-Regional Learning Platform*

As mentioned, Ecuador and Paraguay also attended the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, as they were in the locality for a related REDD+ event. Impressed with the importance and

relevance of the lessons learned there, Ecuador has proposed a cross-regional learning platform to share this information with the Latin America and Caribbean region. The exact format this platform will take is currently being discussed.

## **V. Lessons Learned and Conclusion:**

The UN-REDD Programme's Asia-Pacific Knowledge Exchanges demonstrate an innovative way of incorporating a single south-south exchange workshop into a larger strategy to use this mode of capacity building to achieve cost-effective, efficient, and enhanced actions and solutions. Lessons learned from the process are highly informative in understanding the elements that made the initiative a success. These elements can be incorporated into similar initiatives which seek to bring together countries of the South and share experiences, tools, and resources to build capacity and develop sustainable solutions.

### *Strategic focus that responded to demand*

The First Regional Knowledge Exchange focused broadly on the topic of REDD+, encompassing not only issues of social safeguards, but also technical and administrative aspects of REDD+. Participants felt that this level of scope was perhaps too broad to catalyze rapid and meaningful actions back in their home countries. The Second Regional Knowledge Exchange responded to this feedback to design an exchange that focused clearly on issues that were identified by the beneficiaries and that are currently important in the international community. By focusing on one strategically chosen topic, discussions could be more concrete and comprehensive. The selection of FPIC as the heart of the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange reflected increased international attention on the issue (including donor attention), and was ripe for sharing because countries in the region were at varying levels of planning and implementing FPIC.

### *Including the right stakeholders and building horizontal partnerships*

Given that FPIC is an issue that requires the buy in and support of different groups, the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange included a variety of stakeholders. Along with representatives from national government ministries, attendees also included indigenous peoples' organizations, conservation groups, academics, and national and international non-profits. It is important to analyze the key groups that need to be involved in order to ensure that learning is holistic and covers all perspectives that are necessary for taking ideas forward. This also enhanced the sense of shared ownership among different sectors and worked to obtain broad-based support and involvement for future REDD+ social safeguard initiatives. In future activities the UN-REDD Programme seeks to involve the private sector as well, as they have experiences to share with the FPIC process in a broader range of activities and contexts outside of REDD+.

### *South-South cooperation modalities as cost-effective solutions*

Part of the impetus for launching the Regional Knowledge Exchanges was the recognition that in initial planning and development phases, sharing knowledge and resources prevents money from being spent on "reinventing the wheel." For instance, a poster or video designed in one country



can be adapted for use by another country, instead of starting from scratch. In this way, exchanges such as this one cut down on the use of precious financial, technical, and human capital.

South-South cooperation as a long-term strategy

It is important to note that the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange was not a one-time conference event. Rather, it is part of a longer-term strategic plan to facilitate and capitalize upon shared best practices, lessons learned, opportunities, and challenges. It seeks to build upon the knowledge and scale of the First Regional Knowledge Exchange by focusing on a narrow theme, involving representatives from additional countries, and responding to the needs and perspectives of participants. Moreover, planners recognized the true role of the workshops – to catalyze longer-term communication and action in participating UN-REDD Programme partner countries. To this end, innovations such as the comprehensive “Lessons Learned” document were devised to maintain the long-term goal of enhancing south-south cooperation in order to effectively implement crucial social safeguards in REDD+ initiatives.

Balancing effective learning with beneficiary demand

After the First Regional Knowledge Exchange in Bangkok, participants reported in their evaluations that communication would be enhanced if there were fewer participants – there were 75 at the first meeting. Although this advice was intended to be implemented at the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange, many requested to attend at the last minute, and were permitted. Thus, attendance at the second meeting grew to almost 100. A lesson learned then is to be able to say “no” to participants if it will negatively impact the ease of communication and the exchange of knowledge.

Looking forward, the next Asia-Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchange will take place in late 2012, and will focus on social and environmental safeguards in REDD+ implementation. In planning the third installment of the series, the UN-REDD Programme will have a greater focus on the role of south-south cooperation in facilitating horizontal partnerships between government agencies and civil society organizations, building on this successful outcome from the Second Regional Knowledge Exchange.

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## Annex I. Actors and their Roles:

<b>Recipient Entities</b>	<b>Basic Information</b>	<b>Role</b>
Training participant countries: Papua New Guinea Bangladesh Bhutan Cambodia Indonesia Malaysia Myanmar Nepal Pakistan The Philippines Solomon Islands Sri Lanka Viet Nam Ecuador Paraguay	<i>Sector:</i> Representatives from government ministries, civil society organizations, technical advising committees, and indigenous peoples' organizations  <i>Center of Operations:</i> Varied  <i>Ownership:</i> Varied	Facilitated exchange of knowledge by presenting relevant experiences to fellow attendees and participating in group work  Moving forward, participants will develop national guidelines and policy strategies regarding the integration of FPIC principles with REDD+ implementation

<b>Initiating Entity</b>	<b>Basic Information</b>	<b>Role</b>
UN-REDD Programme - (The United Nations Collaborative Programme on REDD in Developing Countries)	<i>Sector:</i> International nongovernmental organization  <i>Center of Operations:</i> Nairobi/New York/Rome  <i>Ownership:</i> Public - a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Forestry, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	To assist developing countries in preparing and implementing national REDD+ strategies  Provide programmatic support in organizing the Workshop, including input on agenda, panelists, and working group facilitation
<b>Supporting Entity</b>	<b>Basic Information</b>	<b>Role</b>
Indonesian Ministry of Forestry	<i>Sector:</i> National governmental ministry  <i>Center of Operations:</i> Jakarta, Indonesia  <i>Ownership:</i> Public	Workshop hosts: assisted in logistical aspects of event