

UNEP UN-REDD Team Retreat

29 January – 1 February

Draft Report

The UNEP UN-REDD 2013 Team Retreat took place at Oak Place Conference Centre in Nairobi, Kenya 29 January – 1 February. The retreat had 26 participants, from UNEP headquarter and regional staff, UNEP FI, UNEP-WCMC, the partner agencies FAO and UNDP and the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat.

Implementation Plan for UNEP UN-REDD Programme Activities 2013-2014

The team had the following general comments:

- While concept of green economy is beginning to be understood more widely, communication could still be improved on the practical implications, and steps needed to achieve a green economy transformation.
- Need to keep in mind possible linkages between private sector engagement activities and UNDP work on stakeholder involvement.
- Need for interagency coordination on legal preparedness work.
- Different activities related to landscape-level planning should be brought together (e.g. work with Eco-agriculture Partners, Marxan studies, multiple benefits mapping); phase II work in Vietnam may offer an opportunity to do that.
- Efforts to support countries in accessing market-based funding need to be handled carefully so as to avoid the impression that market-based approaches are unduly favored over others within the UN-REDD Programme; there is also a need to avoid raising too many expectations about market opportunities.
- Should consider producing a matrix or similar presentation that will show how the priorities link with the work programme activities.
- Should consider including a point on how to address slow delivery rates in some countries.
- Prioritization of engagement with countries will be discussed further.

The team had the following comments on the document structure:

- As it was questioned whether UNEP should have its own UN-REDD Programme Strategy, it was agreed to remove the word “Strategy” from the document title so it reads *Implementation plan for UNEP UN-REDD Programme Activities 2013-2014*.
- It was noted that the document is important in bringing together the strategic thinking on linking various outputs and activities.
- In planning of UN-REDD Programme activities it is important to keep in mind how they respond to the UNEP Strategic Framework, though it can be difficult to match these two planning and reporting requirements.

- The prioritization of countries in the document needs to be clarified and explained further, as it was pointed out that the list of countries presented does not properly match the current UNEP activities on the country level.

Key lessons learned, opportunities and challenges at national level

The discussion focusing on the national level was structured as group discussions on lessons learned, challenges and opportunities. The following points were reported back to the plenary:

Lessons learned

- Having an independent national coordinator is crucial for success
- Important to ensure interagency coordination on the regional level before communicating with the countries.
- Countries are showing interest in REDD and green economy.
- Important to ensure clear roles and responsibilities in order to develop NPDs without overlaps or inconsistencies.
- We need to be clear on what and how we communicate to properly manage expectations and countries need to be aware of what to expect from a National Programme.
- To ensure speedy implementation its crucial to build capacity and have the project team in place as early as possible and it is important to build capacity of national government counterparts to coordinate different sectors and REDD+ initiatives.
- Tendency to revisit issues we have already dealt with, rather than tackling issues that may seem difficult.
- Improve linkages and balance between National Programmes and activities under the SNA Programme.
- In countries with little prior capacity it is useful to start small and develop a clear road map before engaging in development of a National Programme.
- Important that government counterparts understand that UN-REDD is not the only initiative working on REDD+ and we don't necessarily need to address all aspects of readiness.
- Have one joint work plan, rather than one for each agency.

Challenges

- The difference in administrative procedures is a challenge in the work to ensure efficient programme delivery.
- As the time between the first meeting in the country and the disbursement of funds in some cases are more than a year, the National Programme Document is in some cases outdated when in time for implementation.
- It is a challenge that you need resources to complete required consultations to have funds released.

- REDD is often wrongly perceived as a 'forest sector programme', and there is not enough involvement of other sectors of the government.
- We need to involve more stakeholders.
- Not having a National Programme Coordinator present in countries is a challenge.
- Important to ensure the chronology of activities are correct, e.g. to ensure studies feed into each other correctly.
- There is a lack of capacity resulting in lack of follow-up.
- UNEP is investing too much time in administrative maintenance of the National Programmes, rather than focusing on deliverables.
- The programme is depending on a few key staff to ensure delivery, e.g. the National Programme Coordinator.
- REDD+ has to be incentivized across a range of ministries to be successful – need to think about how to make it worthwhile for them to engage.
- The closure of programmes has to be managed carefully as countries are unsure what happens in the aftermath.
- Lessons learned from the sub-national level are not always transferred to the national, regional or global level.

Opportunities

- The difference in administrative procedures has created opportunities as UN-REDD can choose procedures on a case-by-case basis.
- We should consider how much we should invest in backstopping in the planning phase of National Programmes.
- Use lessons learned from existing national programmes in the formulation of new national programmes.
- Opportunities for private sector discussions: FAO contacts can be used for involving agriculture sector; UNEP FI can use contacts to financing institutions.
- Possibilities for Tier 2 funding in Ecuador and Colombia and it is important that the Management Group decide on which agency should take the lead to see this through.
- Ensure national, regional and global lessons learned are communicated through continual south-south cooperation exchange, through both the SNA and National Programmes.

Safeguards and multiple benefits

The following action points were raised in the discussion on safeguards and multiple benefits:

- We should continue to aim for stronger interagency collaboration and explore/use opportunities for linking or coordinating different consultation processes, data gathering efforts, analyses etc. In addition to areas where collaboration is already being practiced (e.g. joint work on social and environmental benefits and risks) this could include looking further into:

- potential links between Participatory Governance Assessments and addressing issues of environmental governance / applying SEPC,
 - including multiple benefits issues in stakeholder engagement processes,
 - coordinated planning of sub-regional workshops on MRV and multiple benefits.
- Shared work planning taking account of time sequences should take place during the early stages of implementing a national programme.
 - In later stages sharing of information on planned activities (including missions) is important; concrete steps discussed include sharing a document on the decision-support tools proposed by UNEP-WCMC with UNDP, the Safeguards Coordination Group and Regional Coordinators; engagement with UNDP Regional Technical Advisors on technical issues as these come up (support is likely to be possible even where there is no formal involvement of the Advisors in the country programme in question); and consistent use of the UN-REDD workspace calendar for announcing missions even when dates are still tentative.
 - Implications of priority countries approach for interagency collaboration need to be thought through.
 - There have been questions about best timing of multiple benefits work within the National Programme process: early timing can be useful to make sure REDD+ planning goes in the right direction; later timing can allow use of information/data produced by other components of the programme and building on growing understanding of what REDD+ implementation could mean in the country context; a possible approach is to have awareness-raising activities early on, but leave more substantial analyses until later.
 - Application of SEPC during National Programme development should be encouraged more; further discussion needed on how to achieve this.
 - Work on safeguards should take place before important strategic decisions are made; DRC REDD+ Strategy was mentioned as an example where safeguards did not seem to be sufficiently reflected in the draft.
 - Confusion over relationship between different sets of standards / safeguards remains an issue at country level, and should be addressed where relevant.
 - Need to continue to aim for clear communication about multiple benefits and safeguards as two linked but not identical issues.
 - There should be a work-stream on including multiple benefits in REDD+ planning in Vietnam phase II.
 - Each should have a general capacity-building / awareness-raising element and a more specific thematic element contributing to work in one of the countries.
 - Francophone Africa: the specific theme could be demonstrating use of Marxan for DRC and getting feedback from national decision-makers.
 - Latin America and Caribbean: specific theme might be mapping but this needs to be re-assessed; general capacity-building part should involve a broad range of government

representatives including planning department.

- Asia and Pacific: specific topic could be selected based on progress in Vietnam and Cambodia; general session can focus on assessments rather than safeguards, as separate work on safeguards is already happening.

Private Sector engagement in REDD+

The following action points were raised in the discussion on private sector engagement:

- Clarify the end goal of the UN-REDD private sector engagement to be clear on the Programme's niche and to guide the discussion on the activity level.
- Bring the discussion down to country and regional level to ensure the work is grounded geographically and to avoid conceptual discussions going around in circles.
- Clarify what is meant by "private sector" as the term goes beyond the finance sector and have different connotations to different people.
- Distinguish the different roles of the private sector and what perspectives the UN-REDD Programme can cover.
- Important to map out country specific situations to deliver on private sector engagement.
- Existing mechanisms on private sector engagement outside the UN-REDD Programme should be explored.
- The entire range of tools, including market and non-market tools, should be taken into account in future work.
- Address concerns over the UN-REDD Programme directing countries towards voluntary market solutions, while the Programme is designed to respond to the UNFCCC process.
- Caution is required as engaging in discussions on voluntary market solutions can create high expectations the UN-REDD Programme may not be able to deliver on and therefore will refer back to the Programme negatively.
- As more funds are moving towards non-market mechanisms UNEP FI should be at the forefront of the discussion of these shifting priorities.
- Clarify the value proposition the UN-REDD Programme is making to private sector.
- Consider regional workshops and include participants/fora from outside the usual comfort zone, e.g. mining industry etc.
- Further clarify incentives for private sector to be interested in sustainable use of forests. This is a broad area that covers a range of demand and supply side intervention.

Green Economy transformation and REDD+ strategies

The following action points were raised in the discussion on Green Economy transformation and REDD+ strategies:

- There are enough case studies to make the argument, but few on what countries can

do.

- Develop clear description of what countries might want to do and how UN-REDD can help with that.
- Possible countries to make progress in that could serve as example for others are Panama and Vietnam.
- Important to have capacity in place to work with countries who are already convinced.
- Decision-support tools (such as scenarios) need to be embedded in a national discussion process so that they can actually have an impact; best-case scenarios could have good traction.
- Investment plans should serve as a catalyst for creation of enabling conditions.
- Green economy work needs strong UN-REDD team on the ground; define roles of national coordinator, headquarters, consultants (and technical experts panel).
- Green economy work needs to be advanced by UN-REDD partnership as a whole; possibility to involve other UNEP branches (e.g. DTIE) and UN agencies as well (UNESCO, UNIDO, UNITAR).
- Development of internal and external guidance can be useful; need to decide what to address when.
- Regional and national workshops important part of the plan; need to decide how many, where and how.
- The African Forest Dialogue will enhance regional progress.
- Focus on a small number of countries but go more in-depth on GE/REDD+ and move beyond scenario work.

Key communication opportunities

The following action points were raised in the discussion on communication:

- All material should be made available in French, Spanish and an international version.
- Quotes and sound bites from unused interviews in the power point loop.
- Communication films should be kept under five minutes, and preferably two to three minutes.
- Provide support to countries in the development of their REDD+ communication strategies. It was questioned whether UNEP has the resources to do this, while other expressed the need for this kind of support on the national level.
- Create an online course (MOOC model) for stakeholders on Green Economy and REDD+.
- The scope of the UNEP UN-REDD communication strategy should be widened from its current focus on key partners and donors to include international publications such as the Economist, Financial Times etc. Some participants in the discussion, however, felt that communication efforts needs to be more targeted, e.g. on key ministers.
- Produce power point presentations that use scenarios to clearly outline multiple benefits, Green Economy.
- Communication tools should be short, to the point and sleek.

- Create REDD+ Ambassadors who can participate in high-level events and communication efforts, e.g. the President of Indonesia when he retires. However, it was pointed out that involving high-level persons in communication efforts are highly time consuming in terms of logistics and administration.
- Create communication films that tell personal stories.
- Utilize social media platforms.
- Create a boilerplate on UNEP UN-REDD work and the Green Economy (approximately 150-300 words).
- Update text on Green Economy and UN-REDD website and on REDD+ and forestry on the UNEP website.
- Ensure communication tools and products are distributed to all relevant staff within UNEP UN-REDD.
- Use scenarios to communicate key messages to audience.

REDD+ in a Green Economy – Proposal for a global report and advisory services to developing countries

Upon request it was clarified that it has been suggested to build the functions of the expert group into existing structures and panels under UNEP:

- *A working group under the UNEP International Resource Panel* responsible for preparing an International Report on REDD+ in a Green Economy, and
- A group of experts to respond to country requests.

Both groups will be linked to other on-going efforts of UNEP in the context of sustainable land-use planning and a green economy transition.

The team had the following comments:

- Concerns were raised regarding the establishment of new structures or procedures which may compete with established decision making procedures within the UN-REDD Programme, such as the Policy Board. The suggestion to build the functions of the expert group into existing structures and panels under UNEP was well received.

Interagency Coordination

The following action points were raised in the discussion on interagency coordination:

- Joint day on private sector engagement held in Geneva 8 February to discuss REDD+ finance landscape, and on private sector engagement strategy.
- Staff training between FAO, UNDP and UNEP to improve delivery of a 'seamless package' on multiple benefits/stakeholders.
- International Panel on REDD+ and Green Economy should fit into existing UNEP structures, and build up roster of experts.

- There is a need for a coordination day and regular calls on legal preparedness.