

# NEWS UPDATE

**REDD+ Sri Lanka**  
May, 2016 | Issue 03



## Upcoming Events

UN-REDD Steering Committee meeting  
17 MAY, 2016

REDD+ Advisory & Coordination Board  
meeting  
20 MAY, 2016

Consultative Session with civil society  
on Non-Carbon Benefits of REDD+  
24 MAY, 2016

Preparation for Forest Boundary De-  
marcation activity  
MAY, 2016

PAMs finalisation workshop  
MAY, 2016

National Forest Inventory plot size  
establishment planning study  
MAY, 2016

Third meeting of the Communication  
Task Force  
8 JUNE, 2016

Workshop on Non-carbon Benefits of  
REDD+ in Sri Lanka  
JUNE, 2016

National Forest Monitoring System and  
Land Cover Classification Systems  
workshop  
JUNE, 2016

## Momentum gathers for National REDD+ Strategy development

As REDD+ stakeholders have begun intensifying their effort to complete the preparation of the National REDD+ Strategy for Sri Lanka by early 2017, work is moving forward with a strong emphasis given throughout the process on linkages between climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 and the new agreement on climate change at COP21 in Paris, Sri Lanka has received a much needed push towards implementing its ambitious forest-centric development agenda. With the vision of – “Forests and beyond, sustaining lives and livelihoods in a greener Sri Lanka”, REDD+ will support the country in improving sustainable land management, maximising environmental services, conserving biodiversity, maintaining economic growth, and minimising risks of natural disasters through a range of public institutions and non-governmental agencies, which includes civil society organisations, lo-

cal communities and private sector actors, in a highly integrated manner. Building on this vision, the UN-REDD National Programme is continuing to support the development of the country's capacity to address the four key elements of REDD+ under the UNFCCC. These are: National REDD+ Strategy; Forest Reference Level; National Forest Monitoring System; and Safeguards and Safeguards Information System development.

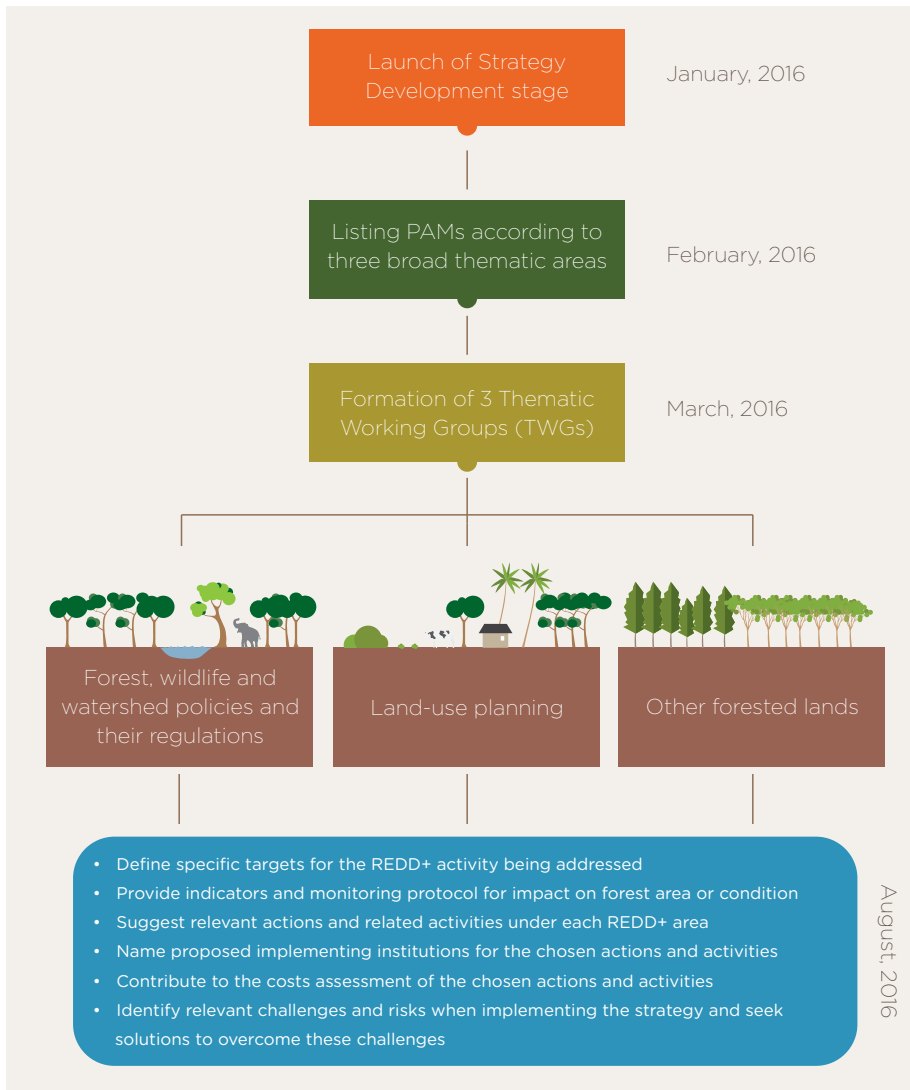
Numerous policies and measures (PAMs) were identified through a multi-stakeholder consultative process to address the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Sri Lanka. These PAMs were then prioritised through multi-criteria analysis using social and environmental safeguards, various feasibility factors and expected carbon and non-carbon impacts as criteria.

The selected PAMs are now being subject to a refinement process to assign necessary operational details. The PAMs are also being integrated in relevant public sector budgets and development partner initiatives as the REDD+ Action Plan begins to take shape. This would be the backbone of Sri Lanka's National REDD+ Strategy.

Within the context of the Government's current development agenda, the added focus on REDD+ in Sri Lanka is specially significant as the main interest of the country is to pursue every possible opportunity to find a path that would lead to non-carbon benefits for the island.

# National REDD+ Strategy development methodology

## The multi-stakeholder consultative process



The proposed REDD+ Policies and Measures (PAMs), which were identified in 2015, were categorised under three sub-areas for which Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) were formed by the TF-NP&S. These TWGs focus on: Forest, Wildlife and Watershed Policies; Land-Use Planning; and Other Forested Lands. The TWGs would ensure the feasibility and applicability of the selected PAMs through the national policy, legal and institutional framework.

It is encouraging to note the level of enthusiasm for REDD+ strategy development among members of the three TWGs who bring their institutional perspectives on the PAMs that are being developed for implementation through the National REDD+ Strategy. Many REDD+ stakeholders claim that this is the first time in Sri Lanka that a national strategy is being devised with such an integrated and consultative approach, which considers the interests of all concerned parties.

This is ensuring that the REDD+ Action Plan being prepared for the Government of Sri Lanka incorporates the diverse interests of relevant government agencies and other stakeholders who are responsible for and/or affected by the National REDD+ Strategy.

This improved understanding of each other's sectors is also triggering other positive developments. For example, an inter-ministerial coordinating committee is being formed to resolve land-related disputes prior to boundary demarcation by the Ministry of Lands, in response to a suggestion that was made at the TWG on Other Forested Lands.

The TWGs are expected to meet their mandate (as indicated in the above infograph) by August this year.

A cross-sectoral Task Force on National Policies and Strategies (TF-NP&S) for REDD+, plays a key role in providing guidance and directions to technical assessments, policy processes and institutional arrangements related to the implementation of REDD+. The Secretary of the Ministry of Mahaweli Development

and Environment chairs the TF-NP&S, and its members consist of senior representatives from more than a dozen ministries and departments including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Lands.

## Developing Sri Lanka's National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)



The online geo-portal for forest-related data storage, analysis, and information dissemination – National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) – has three major components: (a) Satellite Land Monitoring Systems (SLMS); (b) National Forest Inventory (NFI); and (c) Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG) data.

The monitoring function of the NFMS is primarily for domestic purposes to assess the participation in and results of REDD+ implementation by different stakeholders and institutions. In addition, the analysis of satellite data would allow Sri Lanka to meet the reporting requirements indicated in

the IPCC Guidelines, when reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The development of the NFMS is currently under way, and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Two capacity building workshops have been held recently in preparation of this.

Government departments represented in the MRV Task Force have contributed data to be used for the development of the NFMS geo-portal. A first version of the geo-portal is expected to be launched in June 2016.

# The Three Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)



## Forest, Wildlife and Watershed Policies and Regulations

This Thematic Working Group (TWG) has been formed to ensure consistent guidance and technical oversight related to fauna and flora, and watershed policies and regulations. The TWG focuses on supporting the Forest Department and the Department of Wildlife Conservation in the conservation and sustainable management of forests under their purview.

The TWG comprises national experts from the Forest Department, Department of Wildlife Conservation, Irrigation Department, Central Environmental Authority.

## Land-use Planning

The focus of this TWG is to support existing mechanisms related to land-use planning consistent with the prudent use and conservation of land resources.

Together with representatives of the Forest Department and Department of Wildlife Conservation, this TWG comprises national experts from the Survey Department, Department of Land Commissioner General, Department of Land Settlement, Department of Land Use Policy Planning, Land Survey Council, Mahaweli Development Authority, Urban Development Authority, Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development.

## Other Forested Lands

This Thematic Working Group ensures consistent guidance and technical oversight related to other forested areas.

This TWG is tasked with monitoring protocol and providing indicators for impacts on other forested areas; identifying policies, regulations and assessing the present status relevant to land use; and suggesting relevant actions and related activities under REDD+.

The group consists of officials with specific expertise from the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs, Land Reform Commission and Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation.



## WORKING TOGETHER

**Dinanji Karunaratne**

*Finance Assistant - Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme*

### When did you join the PMU?

I joined in August 2013. My last job was with UNDP in disaster management. Prior to that, I served the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Administration and Finance.

I now have far greater job satisfaction than I would have had working for the private sector. We are connected with nature

and people, and our work will have a positive impact on the environment in which we live; what greater satisfaction can I have than this!

### What are your thoughts on being a part of the Sri Lanka UN-REDD Team?

From the beginning up to now, we have always had a great team. Everyone helps each other while we all have a good understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses. I am glad to be a part of this team and am learning a lot from everyone.

### Please explain REDD+ according to your understanding

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is not really a new concept. REDD+ is helping developing countries to find ways to go beyond deforestation and forest degradation to protect forest areas, develop strategies to save carbon stocks and manage forest resources sustainably for future generations.

Living on an island that has beautiful forests, we all know the basics of forest conservation from childhood; however in Sri Lanka, REDD+ goes beyond forests.

### What do you feel about REDD+ in this country?

Sometimes I feel that REDD+ is like a dream. In my point of view, we should go more to the grassroot level and convey the message of REDD+. The active involvement of each and every citizen of this country is important to achieve success through this project. Protecting forest areas should not be the only focus.

This message needs to be conveyed to children, as well as policy makers and all others who live in our beautiful land.

### What would you like to see when REDD+ is implemented in Sri Lanka?

We are raising awareness of the importance of working together to protect our environment. This united approach should be seen all over the country. The message should be clear and people must focus on what the present generation should do to safeguard the environment for future generations.

I would like to see everyone being aware of REDD+ and understanding the crucial role that forests play in sustaining life on Planet Earth.



## REDD+ in a Blue-Green Era



Announcing the launch of the REDD+ Strategy Development Phase



Reducing deforestation



Reducing forest degradation



Conservation of forests



Sustainable management of forests



Enhancement of forest carbon stock

The Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme supported the launch of 'Sri Lanka Next: Blue-Green Era,' which is the Government's initiative to pursue a low-emission development pathway. This new emphasis on safeguarding the environment is in line with the Government's commitment to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A press conference was organised to announce the launch of the National REDD+ Strategy development phase, at this nationally significant event on 6 January, 2016.

## Engaging the Private Sector in REDD+



In partnership with Biodiversity Sri Lanka, the UN-REDD Programme organised a private sector event titled 'Opportunities for the Private Sector to Develop Forests in Sri Lanka' on 5 April 2016.

In line with the theme of the event, Conservator General of Forests and Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme Director Anura Sathurusinghe addressed the gathering and presented the Forest Department's proposal to engage the private sector in reforestation and national forest improvement.

Representatives of many leading Sri Lankan companies actively participated in the discussion that followed and expressed a strong interest in working together with the Forest Department.

## Establishing Sri Lanka Climate Forest Action Network (SLCFAN)

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have always been at the forefront of protecting Sri Lanka's forests.



Members of SLCFAN on the day of their first Annual General Meeting

The Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme encouraged the formation of a platform for such CSOs to speak with a single influential voice, and make a real impact on government forest-related policy. This vibrant platform – Sri Lanka Climate Forest Action Network (SLCFAN) – has now been incorporated as a limited liability entity that can function independently and contribute to REDD+ implementation. The first Annual General Meeting of the newly formed network was held on 23 February 2016.

Member organisations of SLCFAN can contribute not only at ground level, but also at the policy level, to combat deforestation and forest degradation, when the National REDD+ Strategy is implemented in Sri Lanka.

## Creating the REDD+ Academic & Research Forum



The vast knowledge base and experience of the academic community in Sri Lanka has now been channeled to support REDD+ with the formation of the REDD+ Academic and Research Forum (ARF).

While the main State universities have been invited to be a part of the newly formed ARF, membership of the forum is expected to include the main research institutions and other relevant entities in the future. The Convening Committee of this forum is chaired by Emeritus Prof. Nimal Gunatilleke of the University of Peradeniya.

## Want to know more about our activities?

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