

Minutes of Meeting
Workshop on Cambodia REDD+ Readiness Efforts and Ways Forward
Date: December 20, 2013
Venue: Raffles Hotel Le Royal

Agenda (see the attachment 1)

List of participants (see attachment 3)

Opening Speech by H.E. Chea Sam Ang

The goal of today meeting is to inform all relevant institutions and stakeholders about technical requirements in order for Cambodia to be ready to implement REDD+. This meeting today will also be an opportunity for the stakeholders to be aware of the upcoming activities in regards to REDD+. The objective is to ensure that Cambodia will complete its readiness phase as planned, and thus we are able to move on to phase two, which is a phase where Cambodia will be implementing REDD+. REDD+ is a global strategy and initiative for forest governance, and thus Cambodia has been following decisions made at the global level – in particular the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Discussions at COP have been on the strategies and finance for the implementation of REDD+. In general, COP takes place annually. The latest COP took place in Poland in November. This COP adopted various decisions on REDD+, for example decisions on safeguards, Monitoring Reporting and Verification, and results-based finance. Cambodia has received fund from the UN-REDD Programme through the UNDP, UNEP and FAO to implement REDD+ readiness activities. Providing that the UN-REDD Programme's fund is not sufficient to cover activities such as stakeholder engagement or benefit sharing, Cambodia can also explore other sources for support.

Thus to reiterate, the objectives of our meeting today are to understand the basic principles of REDD+, technical requirements for REDD+, and activities that are coming up in the next year. In terms of budget for upcoming activities, the UNDP had signed the World Bank's FCPF agreement and the government will be signing it soon – probably next week. The budget is roughly about USD 3.8 million. Since we now have this agreement, it is important to discuss today activities that all relevant stakeholders are planning for the coming year to ensure that Cambodia is able to move on from readiness phase to implementation phase as planned, that is 2015. There will be various activities that will be happening at the fields once Cambodia moves to the implementation phase. Thus within this readiness phase, the goal is to build capacity and capability of relevant stakeholders which include FA, MoE, FiA and other relevant ministries. Thus far, we have 7 ministries that have been involved in this REDD+ readiness phase. Also, this capacity building activities have targeted various NGOs, local communities, IPs, private sector and the academic institutions (universities). The goal is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are fully engage in this readiness process.

Besides this, we need to be ready in terms of technical requirements such as national forest inventory, carbon measurement, MRV, and benefit sharing. In terms of benefit sharing, the question is how to ensure that benefits reach to the three main beneficiaries. The first group will be the local communities/ IPs. Incentives/ benefits for this group are to be used for livelihood development and poverty reduction activities and reduction in unsustainable uses of forest resources. Here the question is how to ensure that the incentives/ benefits are effectively used.

The second group that should be getting benefits from REDD+ are those that are working on forest management via law enforcement activities. Third, some of the benefits should also be going to national budget to highlight the importance of revenue coming from the forest sectors for the national economy. Finally, in terms of benefit sharing, we also need to talk about expenses that will incur through various preparation activities such as forest inventory and carbon measurement.

Overall, at the global level we have decisions that will guide the implementation of REDD+ activities at the national level. However, it is also up to the country to decide on how REDD+ should be implemented by taking into consideration the legal, social and economic context of the country. Thus, the importance of today meeting is for the participants to be aware of the current status of various REDD+ technical works (safeguards, benefit sharing, MRV and demonstration) and their future activities.

Presentations

1. Climate Change and REDD+(by Peter Iversen)

Contents:

Climate change and REDD+

What is REDD+?

Status of global REDD+ negotiations and financing

Why REDD+ in Cambodia? How does it contribute to forest governance under FA, GDANCP and FiA?

Q1: (Heng Hong, GDANCP): I am interested in greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies. There, I'd like to learn more the difference between GHG emissions reduction between developed and developing countries.

A1: Within the forest sector, for example emissions come from deforesting of 1,000 trees per year. Thus if we can reduce – not even stop – the number to 500 trees per year, this means we have reduce emissions. Another example is unsustainable forest harvesting. So in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from this example, we might establish a management plan where we can specify how harvest is to be done sustainably. Also, significant GHG emissions come from agricultural sectors (food production), and thus if we produce food more efficient without having to clear forest land then we are also reducing emissions of GHG. This example shows that GHG emissions also come from outside the forest sector.

Q2: (Heng Hong, GDANCP): So we've talked about GHG emissions coming from the forest and agricultural sectors, what about other sectors?

Comment: H.E. Chea Sam Ang: There are other sectors, but the main focus for REDD is on the forest sector. There are other mechanisms for GHG emissions for other sectors.

Q3: (MLMUPC): Does forest degradation lead to an increase or decrease of carbon? To ensure carbon stock balance is there any international guidelines on for example how many hectares of trees should a country like Cambodia keep?

A3: There is no quota or limit on how much a country should increase its carbon stock. But there are some physical limits in the forest in terms of how many trees a country can keep in the forest, the size of the trees. Thus, the aim is to reduce emissions because this will determine the finance.

Q4: (Mr. Ouk Vibol, FiA): How do you calculate the estimated carbon stock? Where do you get the data?

A4: The data here is only for illustration purpose.

Comment (Mr. Long Ratanakoma): You should use this example carefully because all participants may confuse that it is the real data and they will use it for their references.

A4: The Secretariat will make sure that the slides will show that the data used in this presentation are examples only

Q5: (FA): Peter mentioned that the global loss of forest and forest degradation contribute around 12 % of global annual emissions. I am also aware that livestock also produce CO₂ emissions and this also contributes to global warming. So, if we compare emissions from these two sectors, is emissions coming from livestock higher or lower than that from forestry sector?

A5: We will have the new IPCC report next year that contains new data on this question. But if we are using data from the current IPCC report, the emission from forest and land use change activities is higher than that of the livestock sector. But maybe this number might change in the future as the demand for meat product increases. Also, there are some mechanisms that aim at reducing emissions from livestock for the example the Clean Development Mechanism.

Comment: Mr. Khun Vathana shared the statistics on emissions coming from various sectors using number from the 2007 IPCC report.

Q6 (FA): My question is to do with the balance of deforestation and reforestation. According to the data from FAO (2000-2005), deforestation was estimated at 14 million hectares annually, but reforestation has been less than. Thus, REDD+ should focus on reforestation activities. Developed countries have been emitting a significant amount of GHG for various economic activities, but have they done something to reduce emissions – NO. Because of these imbalances, are we optimistic that we would be able to reduce emissions?

A6: You are right that reducing emissions from deforestation would not solve the problem. We need to reduce emissions from the energy sector, transports sector and other sectors even if we are able to reduce deforestation. But at least REDD+ is contributing to solving the problem.

Q7 (MoE): In regards to the study that was done by the University of Maryland in the USA, how many countries were included in the study? Is Cambodia ranked 5th in terms of deforestation in comparison to the whole world or only among some studied countries?

A7: The study used satellite image which covers all countries around the world and the study period is the same.

2. **REDD+ in Cambodia (By Mr. Vathana Khun)**

Contents:

Forest in Cambodia

Why are Cambodian forests important?

Why is REDD+ important for Cambodia?

Key elements of REDD+ National Framework

National REDD+ system

REDD+ three phases

4 main outcomes for REDD+ readiness

Major supporting frameworks for REDD+
Status of REDD+ institution arrangements (Outcome 1)
Status of policy development (Outcome 2)
Status of support for subnational levels(outcome 3)
Status of MRV and M systems(outcome 4)

* One suggestion: Keep using REDD+ (plus) in Khmer version (without the translation of the plus sign to Khmer) based on the recommendation of DG-FA, in the 2nd Cambodian REDD + taskforce meeting.

Q1: It's said that we will share benefit to local villagers. I wonder if you could provide actual percentage of benefit that the communities can get so that they can plan for their future activities. Another question is that we have spent some years during this REDD+ Readiness Phase and we still have two more phases, so how long will that take? And the last question is that in case our forest is destroyed by any risks such as fire will we need to pay back the money to the buyers?

A1: How much benefit we will share to the communities is the reason why we have benefit sharing technical team. This team will work for the principle of benefit sharing. We do not know how much yet but we (Sub-decree 699) determined that maximum benefit will be shared to communities. From 2014, the study of benefit sharing will be done. We also have a member from MEF to help.

To reach the third phase, we need good cooperation from all stakeholders. We cannot specifically determine the time but if we have great cooperation from the various stakeholders; the faster we can reach our goal.

Whether we will pay back to the buyers in the case of forest fires, it depends on our contract with the buyer. It should be pointed out that in that contract, a certain amount of forest land within the project will be allocated as a buffer zone in case such risks happen. This buffer zone shall act as insurance.

Q2: (Department of Forest Plantation): My personal perception is that NFP includes REDD+ but REDD+ does not support all the programs mentioned in the NFP. So I would like to understand which activities under the NFP are prioritized for REDD+?

Q3: (Mr. Ouk Vibol, FiA): In slide 7, I wonder why you only mentioned Oddar Meanchey and Seima FiA has two REDD+ pilot projects and MoE also has their pilot projects? In addition, I wonder how many people here understand carbon stock and the methodologies to calculate it. For example, a few days ago I went to RECOFTC training on this topic which was very confusing and I did not know how to proceed with actual implementation after that training. Thus, I would like to request that the Secretariat arrange a training of trainers on carbon stock calculation with clear and standardized methodology.

Comment: I would like to comment that we should not use Thnak Krom Cheat (Sub-National/Under National). Everyone is working for national, but why are there above national, national or under national? It's better to say Thnak MoulThan (Local level).

Mr. Kimnong (MoE) informed the meeting that the Council of Ministers has nominated H.E. Say Samal from MoE to be the Cambodia National REDD+ Focal Point and thus MoE will be providing reports on REDD+ to the UNFCCC.

National Forest Monitoring Systems, Monitoring & Measuring Reporting and Verification (MRV) and REL/RL (by Peter Iversen)

Contents:

Why forest monitoring?

What are the building blocks of a National Forest Monitoring System for REDD+?

What are the steps to be taken under MRV?

What is the difference; and how to establish a REL/RL?

Q1: (Mr. Long Ratanakoma, FA): Should we use the term GHG or CO₂ or just Gas when talk about REDD+? Second, in regards to V (verification), is verification done by a national team at the national level or will it be done by a third party? Finally, in terms of determining national REL, how many years should we go back and how many years should we project into the future?

A1: There are a number of GHGs (at least 6 gases) that are included under the UNFCCC, the one that we speak about the most is CO₂ and other gases like methane we convert them to CO₂ equivalent for comparability.

Country will submit the biennial report to the UNFCCC Secretariat then the Secretariat will nominate third party to verify the submitted report. The process has three options 1) experts check at the UNFCCC Secretariat in Bonn, Germany, 2) in the home country of the reviewer, and 3) country check.

- No clear period has been dictated, but most likely something like a ten year period will be sufficient for the reference level. For national level implementation (UNFCCC) there is no need to make projection for the future.

REDD+ Safeguards (by Mr. Long Ratanakoma)

Contents:

Key socio-economic and environmental roles of forests

Main social and environmental risks of REDD+

UNFCCC safeguards

Global level safeguards

National approaches to safeguards

Main steps for development of national safeguards

Next steps for Cambodia

Q1: Can we escape from environmental risks since villagers mainly depend on forest and NTFPs?

A1: It is really difficult to escape from environmental risks. We are studying to find out a mechanism to solve this problem. However, local use in general is not the challenge. We will use revenue from REDD+ to develop community and improve their livelihood activities.

Q2: (Mr. KimNong, MoE): What experience does Cambodia have in terms of safeguards?

A2: We don't have safeguards that are specific for REDD+ yet, but there are sections in our existing laws that correspond with criteria specified under the various safeguards frameworks.

Dr.Moeko Saito-Jensen: There is a team that has been conducting a gap analysis between various Cambodian laws that might be relevant for safeguards and the criteria specified for various international safeguards framework. The goal is to understand what Cambodia already has in terms of legal frameworks that might be relevant for criteria under various international safeguards frameworks.

Ms. Naomi Matsue: We have collected and analyzed various legal documents from FA, MoE, FiA, and other partners.

Comment: Mr. Kim Nong suggested that the team should also draw lessons from both REDD+ and non-REDD+ sites that have had successful experiences with forest managements that might provide interesting lessons that are relevant for safeguards.

REDD+ Benefit Sharing (by Mr. Long Ratanakoma)

Contents:

What is REDD+?

What are incentives?

REDD+ mechanisms

National REDD+ system

Two key questions for benefit sharing

Status of and next steps for REDD+ benefit sharing in Cambodia

Q1: (Mr. Uy Kamal, MoE): The presentation shows consultation with local communities, but it doesn't show the framework on how to do it.

A1: we are collecting relevant documents and it will be consulted with all stakeholders here.

3. REDD+ in Seima Protected Forest (by Mr. Men Soryun)

Contents:

Area History

Activities and result of REDD+ project implementation

Q1: What are the lessons learnt from REDD+ implementation in Seima?

A1: FPIC has been done. This is important for REDD+ safeguards criteria as mentioned in previous presentation. REDD+ implementation needs involvement from indigenous people and local communities.

Q2: (Mr. KimNong, MoE): How much money and time did FA spend for this pilot project? And how can this project be scaled up for UNFCCC REDD+ or national REDD+?

A2: The project has spent a significant amount of financial and human resources since it started in 2008. The project has been supported by JICA, WCS and other donors. WCS has strong cooperation with FA.

Q3 (FiA): What is the timeline for the agreement between FA-Cantonment and the communities? When will the agreement end? And why do we need lawyers?

A3: This agreement is for the entire life cycle of the project (60 years). We needed lawyer as the witness, and this project has auditors. When auditors come, they ask all the relevant people in the project. Without this procedure, our project document is not valid.

Q4: What are the benefits for local communities?

A4: There are direct and indirect benefits. The percentage is not finalized yet. We are working on this.

Q5: Has MAFF allowed the validation yet?

A5: MAFF already approved on validation, the third party came last month to check the document, inventory plot, and to meet with the communities.

4. Scaling up REDD+ project (by Peter Iversen)

Contents:

Projects

Subnational level and challenges to scale up project to national level

Possible solution

Comment: Mr. Uy Kamal commented that implementing REDD+ is not an easy process as we have seen in the presentations so far. Drawing from the experiences on the development and implementation of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), CDM can be implemented at either large or small scale. If a CDM is implemented at a large scale, it can financially stand alone. However, small scale CDM projects would not be financially viable due to the high transaction costs to develop the small-scaled-stand-alone projects. Thus, a standardized baseline was developed that combined these small scale projects. Getting back to Peter's presentation, as we can see methodologies that were used for OddarMeanchey and Seima are different. In addition, if we are developing REDD+ at a project level, the cost of development such project is high, and thus Peter suggested that REDD+ should be developed at the national level in order to reduce the transactions. This is not too different from CDM. Another issue that we experienced with credits from CDM project is finding the buyers. The recommendation has been that CDM project developers should try to identify potential buyers before developing the project. This is not too different from OddarMeanchey REDD+ project where we are still looking for buyers. Another problem has been the time that it takes to develop a project. For example, Oddar Meanchey started since 2008 and till now we are still not able to find a buyer.

5. REDD+ in Oddar Meanchey (by Mr. Long Ratanakoma)

Contents:

Background

Project Cycle

Deforestation and forest degradation drivers

Safeguards and Benefit sharing

Opportunities and Challenges of REDD+ implementation

Comment: Mr. Uy Kamal highlighted the challenge of finding a buyer for the generated credits by comparing the Oddar Meanchey experience with a CDM project in Kampong Chhnang province

6. Key activities for 2014 (by Mr. KhunVathana)

Contents:

Outcome 1
Outcome 2
Outcome 3
Outcome 4

Q1 (Chief of Battambang FAC): My concern is that how is REDD+ compared to other national development strategies? Is REDD+ more attractive than for example agro-industry?

A1 (Peter): In respond to this worry, we need to:

- Start working on national REDD+ strategy
- Be clear on the forest definition, so we can estimate what is deforestation and what is not
- And with these elements, we can then proceed to phase 2,
- And of course also we need to continue working on developing a system for reporting safeguards

Q2 (MoE): I am concerned about the various illegal activities that are increasing while we are waiting to reach phase 2. .

A2 (Mr. Uy Kamal, MoE): To solve this issue, we should:

- Build capacity of stakeholders,
- Strengthen cooperation among ministries and relevant stakeholders,
- Introduce NFM to subnational level

Closing Remarks by H.E. Chea Sam Ang

If we can complete what we have designed we can reach the second phase. I understood that there are challenges – to design mechanisms for MRV, REL, safeguards, benefit sharing. Designing is easy but ensuring effective implementation is difficult. The government has been supportive of the implementation of REDD+ in Cambodia. The challenge for us will be to ensure that REDD+ will be able to help us protect our forests, to help improve the livelihoods of local communities, and to reduce poverty.

We must be cautious of the decisions that we make today bearing in mind that the life cycle of REDD+ project goes beyond our generation.