

THE FORESTS DIALOGUE

Background Paper for REDD-Readiness Field Dialogue in Siem Reap, Cambodia
November 1st-4th, 2010

This paper summarized by:



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Preface: This document was created to provide a background on Cambodia's history and progress related to REDD+, specifically for the participants of The Forests Dialogue REDD-Readiness discussion in Siem Riep, Cambodia in November of 2010. The paper begins with a section on Cambodia's national land-use and forest governance context, then outlines the major drivers of deforestation within the kingdom, and finishes by describing Cambodia's progress with REDD+ projects and REDD legislation, including the overview of Cambodia's REDD+ Road Map.

Unless otherwise cited, large portions of the document were copied directly from the "Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap: Interim Report" by Tom J. Clements; the "Cambodia Readiness Plan Proposal on REDD+ (Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap, Version 3.0); the "Supporting REDD Implementation in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia through the Design of a REDD-compliant Benefit Distribution System" by R.J. Mather, et. al.; and the "Cambodia REDD+ Readiness Background Document, Version 2.0", with consent from the authors.

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1 General Cambodia Context

Cambodia, like many of its neighbors, is undergoing stark increases in population, economic growth, and deforestation rates across the country. Despite an impressive national forest cover of nearly 60%, the threats to Cambodia's forests are real, and its future remains uncertain. While the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has in recent years grown very warm to the idea of REDD projects within its borders, increases in land concessions from previously protected areas and a lack of forest monitoring present a significant challenge. A newly established National Forest Program (NFP) will attempt to address these shortcomings, while simultaneously securing land tenure systems for forest communities. The NFP, as well as recent legislative decrees, hopes to increase conservation through a robust system of forest demarcation, management, and protective enforcement.

1.1 Location, Population, Biological and Economic Information

The Kingdom of Cambodia, located on the Indochine Peninsula of Southeast Asia, covers roughly 181,035 square kilometers and is bordered by Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and the Gulf of Thailand. Cambodia has a coastline of 435 km, and its land border of 2,438 km runs along Thailand to the west, Vietnam to the east and Laos PDR to the north. Biogeographically, Cambodia is dominated by the lowlands along the Mekong River and Tonle Sap (Great Lake), which are the sites of most of the population and agriculture and three mountainous regions in the Southwest, North and Northeast, which are less populated and rich in forest resources (Ministry of Environment).

This geography helps to form an unusual phenomenon whereby in the Rainy season the Mekong River backs up and actually flows into the Tonle Sap causing the lake to swell up to 4 times its size. The Tonle Sap Lake provided a wealth of biological resources. Specifically the seasonal flooding of the Tonle Sap, supplies suitable conditions for rice and fish, which were and still are the staples of diet in Cambodia. This is probably why the ancient Khmer empire of Angkor was located near its shores. Depictions of plants and animals, throughout Angkor Wat, give an indication of the biodiversity of the area and its cultural importance through utilization. The Tonle Sap ecosystem was, and is still considered by many to be the heart of the country (Ministry of Environment).

The full extent of Cambodia's biodiversity is not yet known; however Cambodia is thought to have a rich diversity of species and is considered a biodiversity 'hot spot' (an area very rich in biodiversity) given its tropical location. Compared with neighboring countries, Cambodia has a low population density and relatively large intact natural areas that are still intact (Ministry of Environment).

Cambodia's history of conflicts and isolation through the 1970s to 1990s resulted in destruction of almost all the areas of national life, including human resources, which are most critical to underpinning the country's socioeconomic development efforts. As a consequence Cambodia is designated as a least developed, low-income country. The restoration of peace and policy stability over the past decade has brought steady economic growth in Cambodia, averaging between 8 and 10 percent since 1998, leading to substantial reductions in poverty. The results of the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey carried out in 2007 show that the overall poverty line fell from 34.7 percent to 30.1 percent during 2004-2007, representing a reduction of more than 1 percentage point per year. Of Cambodia's 15 million people, over 35% remain below poverty-level. The nation

ranks 137th out of 182 countries in the UN's Human Development Index, falling between the Republic of Congo and Myanmar (UNDP).

Cambodia's economy has been growing sharply since 2000, with a GDP nearly tripling to today's \$10.5 billion dollars (World Bank). Cambodia's economy is heavily reliant on export markets and saw a steep decline in GDP growth following the 2008/09 economic crisis, with only 0.1 percent growth in 2009. Unemployment increased while wage rates and demand for land and natural resources fell. Foreign direct investment also fell sharply. In 2008, Cambodia's corruption percentile ranking was 1.8 out of a possible 10, between Venezuela and Krygzstan (Internet Center for Corruption Research).

Cambodia has few areas of significant topographic relief, and a high rural proportion of the total population (85%). Population is projected to increase at 1.7% per annum between 2005 and 2020, the highest rate in Southeast Asia. Rural population rates are rising at a rate below that of the total population, as many rural dwellers continue to migrate to urban areas. Over 60% of the population is dependent on agriculture, and while the country is a net exporter of rice and generally food self-sufficient, 18% of people fell below the food poverty line in 2007. Foreign investment in agriculture has expanded rapidly in recent years with the primary cash crop being rubber. At the same time, landlessness has risen steeply and was estimated at 20% in the 2004 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey. Road networks are increasingly bisecting the country and providing greater access to rural areas and higher paying international markets.

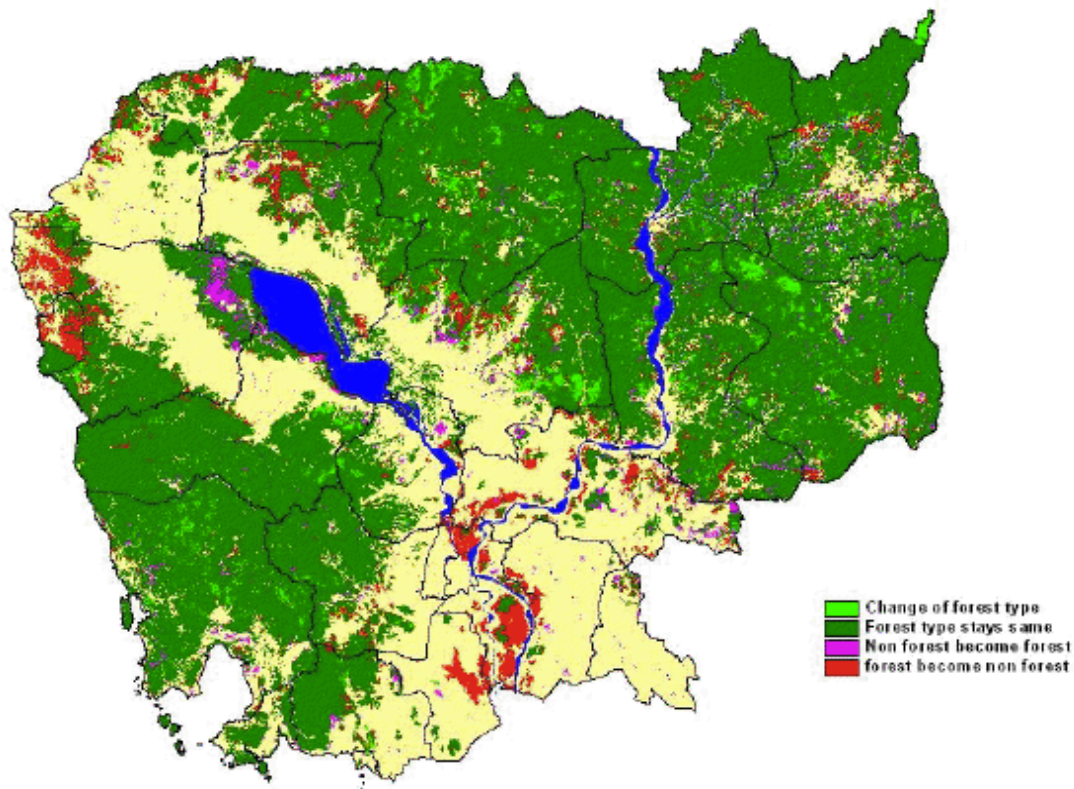
1.2 Forest Cover and Use

Cambodia is classified as a 'high forest cover, high deforestation' country, with approximately 10.7 million hectares (59.04% of total land cover) of forest in 2006, and an annual deforestation rate of 0.5% between 2002 and 2006 (approximately 379,485 hectares of forest were lost during this period). Total forest cover continues to decline at the expense of agriculture, which now occupies an additional 20% of Cambodia's land use.

Forests play an important role in meeting the subsistence and income needs of many households. Recent research indicates that 41% of rural households in Cambodia derive between 20 to 50% of their total livelihood value from forest use, while 15% of households derive more than half of their total livelihoods from forest use and harvesting. Poor rural households, in particular, are known to have high levels of forest dependence, through the extraction, consumption and sale of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), which may provide a crucial livelihood safety net. While the poor are heavily dependent on forest resources, the potential for forests to continue to generate needed social, economic and environmental services is declining due to the high rate of land-use change.

At a national level, forests play an important role in the Cambodian economy. Although the sector's direct contribution to the economy has declined following the ban on timber logging concessions, it continues to provide a range of important goods and services to society as a whole. Ecosystem services provided by forests include regulation of water supplies, watershed protection, erosion control, carbon sequestration, ecotourism and maintenance of biodiversity. Continued degradation of forest resources is impacting a range of other productive sectors such as the fishing industry, as seen by the destruction of mangrove forests and their conversion to rice cultivation around the Tonle Sap.

Figure 1: Forest Cover Changes in Cambodia, 2002-2006 (TWG Forestry and Environment)



1.3 Forest Ownership and Associated Carbon Ownership

It is legally correct to presume that the owner of a tree also owns the forest carbon stored in the tree. In most cases, forest resources belong to the owner of the land property that the forest resources are growing on. Naturally occurring forest resources (and the carbon stored in them) growing on State Public Land is by definition property of the State. Since almost all forests in Cambodia are naturally grown, the majority of forest carbon in Cambodia is state property.

Forest resources (and the carbon stored in them), planted on State Public or State Private land through an agreement with the appropriate State jurisdictional management authority, are the property of those that planted the forest resources and invested other resources involved in the planting of the forest resources¹. Forest resources (and the carbon stored in them) growing on private property are the property of the entity that legally owns the land that the forest resources are growing on, unless the land property owner has permitted another individual or entity to plant forest resources on the private land property in accordance with agreement of the owner of the land property, such as through some sort of long-term lease agreement.

In terms of forest carbon sales:

- The Forestry Administration (FA) currently has authorization to develop forest carbon sales only in the Permanent Forest Estate, which lies under the jurisdiction of the FA.

¹ "Any individuals that plant trees on private land or on state forest land where they have granted user rights, have the right to maintain, develop, use, sell, and distribute their products. (Forestry Law, Article 46); The state will not require the payment of royalties or premiums for the harvesting of Forest Products & By-products from private forests. (Forestry Law, Article 52)

- The Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Ministry of Environment (MoE), and the relevant state entities that exist within the Ministries of the RGC, including the FA, are the state authorities entrusted with forest resources management in the country. However, they do not have the right to sell, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of these state properties without direct permission from the RGC, previously delegated authority to do so from the RGC, or delegated authority to do so from the legislative branch of government.
- The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) acts as the executive agency of the RGC in managing state properties (including forest carbon) in terms of selling, leasing, transferring, and other arrangements, and granting of various state concessions or contracts on management of state property.
- Private forest owners, either individuals or recognized indigenous communities with communal title, have the right to sell their own forest carbon.

Table 1 provides the approximate estimate of the percentage of Cambodia's forest carbon in each type of forestland management unit, and gives details of the forestland owner, managing agent and regulatory agent. This table is based on an initial assessment by the United Nations Environment Program's World Conservation Monitoring Center, and the numbers are approximate estimates based on Cambodia data and default values for under-sampled forest types.

Table 1: Forest Carbon management in Cambodia (Ministry of Environment).

	Forest Classification	% Forest Carbon stock estimate ¹	Land/Forest Owner	Managing Agent	Regulatory Agent
Permanent Forest Estate	Forestry Concessions (Production Forest, PFR)	30%	State (State Public Land)	Forestry Concession	FA
	Community Forests (Production Forest, PFR)	3% [overlaps with other types]	State (State Public Land)	Forestry Community	FA
	Protection Forests (Permanent Forest Reserve)	14%	State (State Public Land)	FA (usually with support of a donor/NGO)	FA
	Conversion Forests gazetted as Economic Land Concessions	12% [overlaps with other types]	State (State Private Land)	Economic Land Concession holder	MAFF/ELC holder
	Other Forests (could be private forests, or plantations)	19%	State (State Public Land) or Private	Unclear	FA
	Private Forests	? <1%	Individuals (can sell, transfer, etc.)	Individuals	FA
	Indigenous Land Title	? <1%	Registered Indigenous community (cannot sell, transfer, etc.)	Registered Indigenous community	FA
Protected Areas	Protected Areas	26% (all PAs)	State (State Public Land)	GDANCP (sometimes with support of a donor/NGO)	GDANCP / MoE
	Community Protected Areas		State (State Public Land)	Protected Area Community	GDANCP / MoE
Flooded forests & Mangroves	Community Fisheries	<1%	State (State Public Land)	Fishery Community	FiA
	Fishing Lots	<1%	State (State Public Land)	Concession holder	FiA
	Other flooded forest areas	<1%	State (State Public Land)	FiA	FiA

Note: the total percentage of forest carbon adds up to approximately 105% due to overlaps between forestland management units. Most of these overlaps are community forests (declared within forest concessions for example) and economic land concessions (declared within forest concessions, protection forests, protected areas, etc.). Data is based on forest management units in 2010 against the 2006 forest cover assessment. Forest carbon stock estimates include aboveground and belowground biomass but not soil carbon.

1.4 Forest Governance

The management of forests within Cambodia falls under a number of institutions, indicated in the outline below, depending on how the forest is classified (see also Figure 2).

1. Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:
 - a. Permanent Forest Estate
 - i) Permanent Forest Reserve (State Public Property):
 - (1) Production Forests, including:
 - (a) Community Forests
 - (b) Concession Forests
 - (c) Protection Forests
 - (d) Conversion Forests (which can be transferred to state private property for other land-uses such as economic or social land concessions)
 - ii) Private Forests (Private Property), including:
 - (1) Privately-owned forests
2. Ministry of Environment:
 - a. Protected Areas (State Public Property), including:
 - i) Community Protected Areas
 - ii) Flooded Forests and Mangroves inside Protected Areas
3. Fisheries Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:
 - a. Flooded Forests and Mangroves inside fisheries domains (State Public Property) outside Protected Areas, including:
 - i) Community Fisheries
 - ii) Fishing Lots
 - iii) Fisheries Protected and Conservation Areas
4. Apsara Authority and other Temple Authorities:
 - a. Forested Areas around temple complexes (State Public Property)
5. Indigenous Peoples:
 - a. Forest Resources within lands of indigenous peoples, registered as collective title (State Public Property)

In 2002, Cambodia's forest sector entered a prolonged period of reform following the suspension of all logging concessions by the RGC. Over the past two years, the RGC has begun to implement a new vision for Cambodia's forest sector, which was laid out in the Rectangular Strategy Phase II (2008) and is based on the new National Forest Programme (to be approved in 2010) and the new Protected Areas Law (2008).

Key aspects of these new policies and laws include an explicit recognition of the rights of local communities and the importance of decentralized management of natural resources, through

Community Forestry agreements (in Production Forests within the Permanent Forest Estate) and Community Protected Areas (inside Protected Areas under MoE).

1.4.1 Programmatic Areas of NFP Priorities

The NFP identifies nine strategic priorities, including contribution to the economy, climate change and REDD, forest governance, conservation of forest resources, improved forest management, and sustainable financing. The NFP priorities cover six programmatic areas that will receive emphasis over the next two decades in order to achieve these objectives, namely:

1. Forest Demarcation, Classification and Registration. Forest land is demarcated, classified and registered by MAFF and then entered on to the land register by the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC). The NFP sets a target of maintaining 60% forest cover by 2015, based on the CMDGs, with 120,000km of forest boundaries demarcated by 2029.
2. Forest Conservation and Development of Forest Resource and Biodiversity. The NFP sets targets of 3 million hectares of Protection Forests, 0.5 million hectares of plantations, and 2.4 million hectares managed according to sustainable forest management guidelines, with 50% of processed wood for export being certified and establishment of a chain of custody system.
3. Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Programme, including law enforcement and forest crime monitoring and reporting.
4. Community Forestry. The NFP sees local management as a key component of efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and sets a national target of 1,000 community forestry groups registered, covering 2.0 million hectares. The Rectangular Strategy prioritizes community forestry as the principal vehicle for obtaining payments for carbon, through voluntary carbon markets and REDD. The NFP also identifies the importance of broadening strategies for decentralized forest management beyond community forestry (under the 2003 Subdecree #79, at village scale in production forest only), to include community conservation forestry (in protection forests), and partnership forestry or community production forestry (at larger scales). In common with other reviews, the NFP recognizes that the short 15-year length of Community Forestry Agreements, lack of local benefits, complexity of community forestry regulations, and uncertainty over royalty rates, hinder implementation of community forestry from a local perspective.
5. Capacity and Research Development.
6. Sustainable Forest Financing. The NFP identifies REDD as a critical source of sustainable financing for implementation, and prioritises development of national capacity to manage the proposed international REDD+ mechanism, including setting baselines and improving capacity for forest carbon monitoring.

The main Government-donor coordination mechanism is the Technical Working Group on Forestry and the Environment (TWGF&E), which is co-chaired by the Forestry Administration and a representative selected by development partners, currently the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The TWGF&E includes members from relevant ministries (Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of National Defence), development partners (AFD, DANIDA, DFID, JICA, FAO, UNDP, USAID and World Bank), civil society and NGOs.

Despite a history of documented governance problems in the forestry and land sector, Cambodia has a good track record at site-based conservation and development projects, which are often implemented by Government agencies with the support of various international and national NGOs. These projects include:

- **Community Forestry:** Forestry Administration, with PACT, Community Forestry International, RECOFTC (Regional Community Forestry Training Center – Center for People and Forests), Oxfam Great Britain, etc.
- **Eastern Plains:** a network of two MoE Protected Areas and two FA Protection Forests covering over 11,000 square kilometers, supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Birdlife International, etc.
- **Cardamom Mountains & Southern Cardamoms forests:** a network of at least 4 MoE Protected Areas and 2 FA Protected Forests, covering over 29,000 square kilometres, supported by Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, the Wildlife Alliance, etc.
- **Northern Plains:** a network of an MoE Protected Area, Production Forests and a FA Protected Forest, covering over 7,000 square kilometres, supported by WCS.

Together these areas make up about 45% of Cambodia's forest estate.

Although these projects have demonstrated that significant positive outcomes for biodiversity, local people and forest conservation can be achieved at the site level, all programs are dependent on short-term sources of finance. Developing sustainable financing for forest conservation is therefore a critical need, and one that was identified under the NFP.

1.5 Forest Regulation

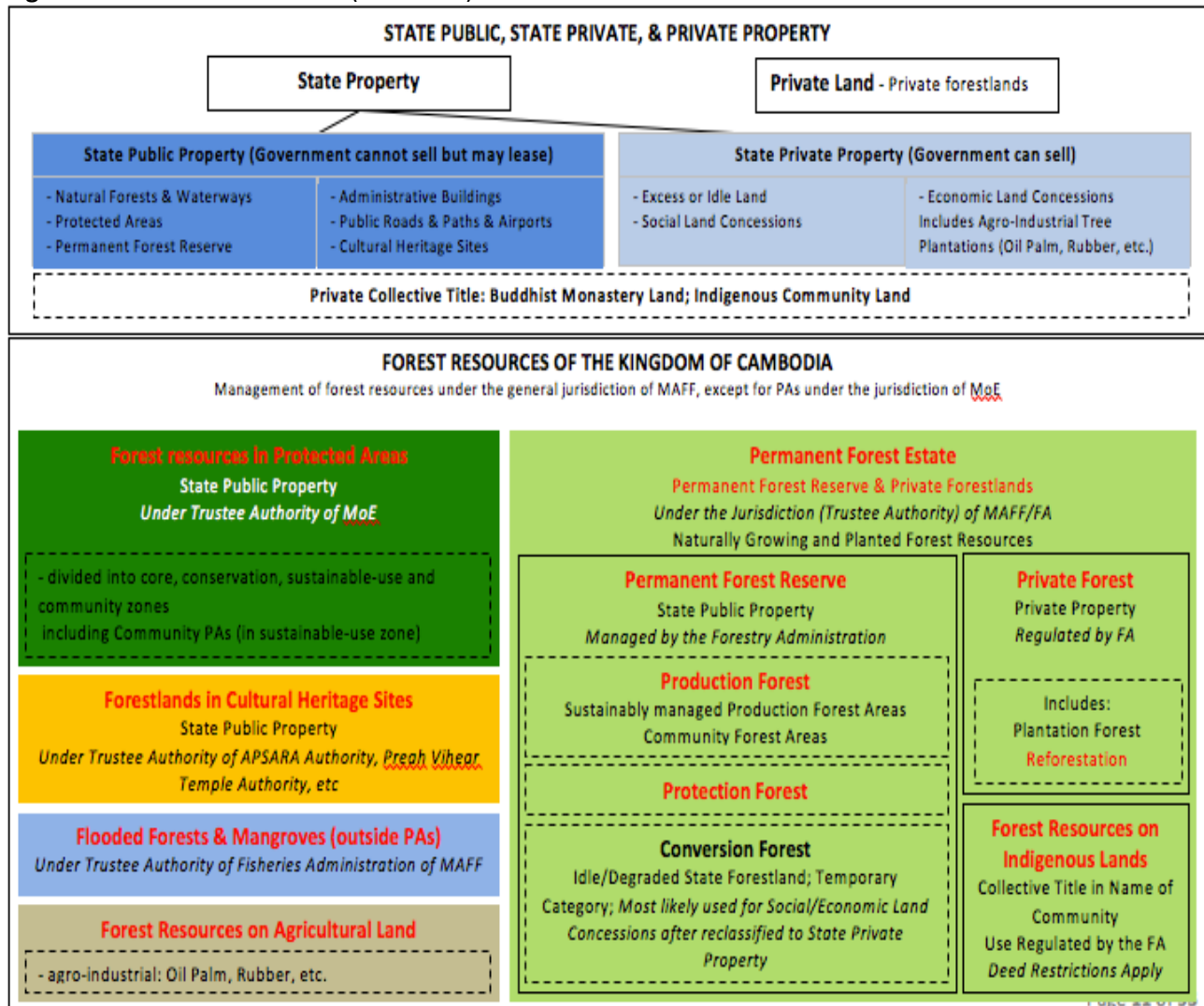
There are a number of laws relating to management of forest land that are critical for REDD in Cambodia – The Land Law (2001), The Forestry Law (2002), the Fisheries Law (2005) and the Protected Areas Law (2008).

1.5.1 The Land Law:

At the broader level, the Land Law classifies land into four main categories:

1. **State Public Property:** land that carries a public interest and is held by the state in public trust. It cannot be sold or transferred to another entity. This includes protected areas and waterways.
2. **State Private Property:** state land that does not carry a public interest and can be sold and transferred to another entity. This includes degraded forest and all land that economic land concessions are on.
3. **Indigenous Land:** land where indigenous communities have established their residence and where they carry out traditional agriculture. In order to receive collective ownership communities must go through a process of registering with the Ministry of Interior (MoI).
4. **Private Land:** The RGC along with a number of partner organizations has been conducting a large long term project which attempts to provide urban and rural Cambodians of which the majority don't have land title with official land tenure.

Figure 2. Forests of Cambodia (Obendorf)



In July of 2009, the RGC adopted a declaration on Land Policy, which lays out broad principles and goals relating to land management principles in the country. While this policy does not mention the forestry sector specifically, or management of forest resources in the country, it does state that the process of State land registration (both State public and State private) should be accelerated, and also calls for the development of a nationwide Land Information System (LIS) that is available for public reference.

1.5.2 The Forestry Law:

Under the Forestry Law (2002), the Forestry Administration (FA) is in charge of most of Cambodia's forest estate (except for protected areas, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment; flooded forest areas, under the jurisdiction of the Fisheries Administration; and forests managed by the Apsara Authority. The law sets out the responsibilities of the agency for different types of forest. Under Article 10 of the Forestry Law, the permanent forest estate under the jurisdiction of the FA, is defined as including both *permanent forest reserve* lying on state public property and *private forest* lying on private property. *Permanent forest reserve* is further divided into three categories:

1. **Production Forest:** areas of forest primarily for the sustainable production of timber or Non Timber Forest products (NTFPs)
2. **Protection Forest:** has the primary function of protecting forest ecosystems, conserving biodiversity and regulating water and soil resources.
3. **Conversion Forest:** degraded and idle forest (that will at some point most likely be re-classified as State Private Land and subsequently used for Social Land Concessions or Economic Land Concessions)

The FA has regulatory authority, but not management authority over forest resources on private land (*private forest*). Protected areas, which are areas of high biological significance, are State Public Property under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment.

1.5.3 The Fisheries Law:

The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries 2010-2019 sets out several key goals for the fisheries sector. Goal 3 states that “the fisheries domain and associated resources are in a healthy and resilient condition and sustainably managed. Co-management, with the full participative involvement of local people throughout the process, is a fundamental principle of this goal. Under the goal, key indicators include (3.2) the mapping, demarcation and protection of flooded forest, (3.5) the area of critical fisheries habitats under sustainable management, (3.8) the strengthening of Community Fisheries to conduct effective Natural Resource Management, and (3.9) the impact of regulation on inland fisheries protected areas. Achieving these indicators would lead to reductions in the rates of flooded forest and mangrove loss, and potentially improvements in the overall area through replanting and regeneration (indicator 3.5).

1.5.4 The Protected Areas Law:

The National Protected Areas Strategic Management Plan is mandated by the new 2008 Protected Areas Law as the overarching management framework for Protected Areas. Development of this Management Plan is supposed to commence in the second half of 2010, with financial and technical support from UNDP. Even in its absence, elements of the framework are clear from the subsidiary regulations mandated by the 2008 Protected Areas Law (which have also yet to be developed). This includes:

- Development of individual protected area management plans linked to a National Protected Area Strategic Management Plan;
- Zoning of Protected Areas into core, conservation, sustainable-use, and community zones, where natural resource extraction, agriculture and investment activities are permitted in the last two zones subject to conditions and regulations;
- Continued establishment of Community Protected Area (CPA) agreements with local communities for local management of natural resources in the sustainable-use zone (the CPA *prakas* has yet to be passed); and
- The establishment of a Protected Areas Fund to be co-managed by MoE and the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Writing the National Protected Areas Strategic Management Plan and development of the necessary subsidiary regulations to enact the policy framework are priorities for the immediate future if the 2008 Protected Areas Law is to be implemented.

2 Challenges for the Forest Sector

Despite having one of Southeast Asia's highest rates of forest cover, an annual deforestation rate of 0.8% is putting Cambodia's forests increasingly at risk. The drivers of deforestation are varied and complex, yet government concessions for agriculture and other activities have clearly emerged as the most destructive. Despite a legal structure that now exists to manage the nation's forests, boundaries between different forest types are vague, capacity to monitor the forests is weak, and in many cases the decrees governing forest use are at odds with each other. Land tenure remains an elusive challenge, and disputes are commonplace, particularly as portions of protected areas become reallocated through economic concessions. While community forestry has shown promise since the enactment of the 2002 Forestry Law, it is predicated on the establishment of land title, which has been a frustrating process for communities, in particular indigenous groups. Establishment of a comprehensive benefit distribution mechanism stands out as perhaps the greatest challenge to the sustainability of REDD in Cambodia.

2.1 Drivers of Deforestation and Degradation

Perhaps the most significant cause of deforestation is land clearance for Economic and Social Land Concession activities, which legally can be as large as 10,000 ha but occasionally are even greater in size. This is mainly for agricultural activities (food crops, rubber and oil palm), and forestry plantations such as acacia. In the 1990s, a logging concession system was introduced in the country with the aim at raising much needed revenue, and over four years (1994-1997) the RGC granted 36 forest concessions covering 7 million hectares, or close to 70% of the forestlands in the country. Destructive, legal and illegal logging, combined with weak enforcement and monitoring, jeopardized attempts towards sustainable management as over-harvesting took place within and outside of the concessions granted. Moreover, the flow of revenue from logging to the government treasury was minimal due to weak governance institutional controls in place at the time.

To reverse the trend of forest degradation, a logging moratorium was introduced in January 2002. While most of the production forestry concession agreements were ultimately cancelled by 2006, all remaining logging concessions, which have been reduced to 3.4 million hectares of the Permanent Forest Reserve, remain at a halt.

Following the moratorium on logging, timber coupe concessions have also been created to supply domestic timber markets, typically by auctioning off areas of at least 1,000 ha (Bradley). These concessions can in theory only be granted on state private lands, yet forest areas which are state public land can be reclassified by the state as state private land to meet a public purpose – including through the granting of economic land concessions. By 2006, Over 1 million hectares (6% of Cambodia's land area) have been granted as economic land concessions, not counting concessions granted at the province level. Concessions have been granted in forested areas and in former forest concessions contrary to the forestry law and forestry regulations.

Additional drivers of deforestation are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Cambodia

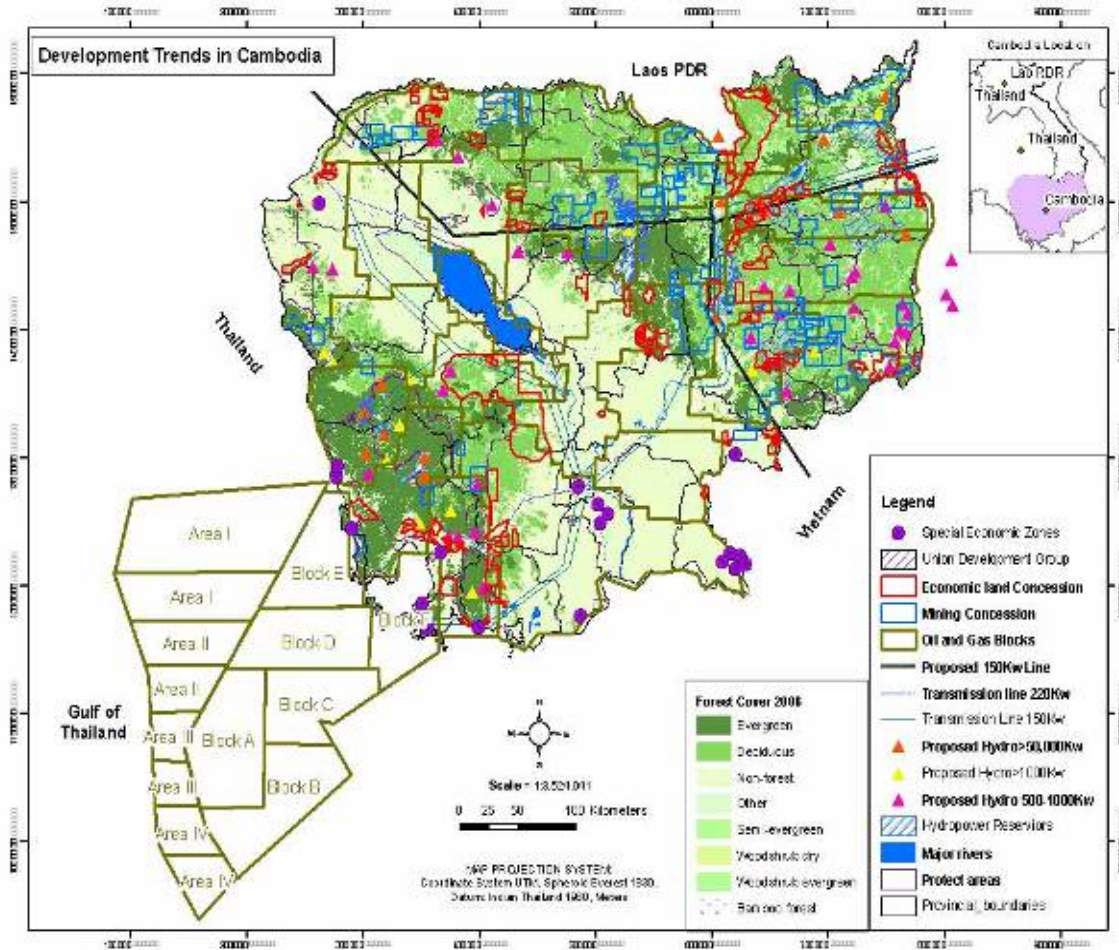
	Within the forest sector	Outside the forest sector
Direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsustainable logging; • Fire* (role disputed); • Unsustainable woodfuel collection**. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance for agriculture; • Expansion of settlements; • Infrastructure development;
Indirect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low institutional capacity and weak policy implementation; • Inadequate forest law enforcement; • Weak forest sector governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low levels of stakeholder participation and involvement; – Lack of transparency and accountability; – Lack of assessment of social and environmental impacts • Lack of demarcation of forest areas; • Lack of sustainable or alternative supply of wood and timber, including for wood energy to meet demand; • Demand for wood energy for domestic and industrial use; • Low efficiency of wood conversion and use for construction, energy production, etc. • Lack of incentives promoting sustainable management of forests; • Lack of finance to support sustainable forest management activities by line agencies, local authorities and local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population increases; • Poverty; • Rising incomes and demands for resources; • Increasing accessibility of forest areas; • Low agricultural yields; • Migration into forest areas; • New settlements, including in border areas; • Large-scale agro-industrial developments (including economic and social land concessions and other concessions); • Land speculation; • Regional demand for resources; • Poor ESIA regulations and lack of implementation • Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weak forestland tenure – tenure is weakest in forests and other areas outside residential or farming zones; – Weak enforcement of the law; – Limited implementation of land registration (private and state) – Lack of a fair and transparent conflict resolution mechanism; – Insufficient implementation of land-use planning; – Overlapping/unclear jurisdictions; • Social norms (claiming land through utilisation); • Economic benefits provided by sustainable management of forests at the national level often appear lower than alternative land-uses; • Opportunity costs of sustainable management of forests at the local level; • Low awareness of environmental roles of forests.

* Fire: the role of fire has been discussed extensively in Cambodia and its role in driving land-use change is unclear. Although use of fire is widespread in Cambodia, e.g. in the deciduous dipterocarp forests in the dry season, this has been practiced for 100s-1000s of years and whether or not the use of fire is sustainable (and can continue at the current extent) is not clear.

** Woodfuel: the contribution of woodfuel burning to overall emissions is unclear, since it depends on the source of the woodfuel (i.e. whether or not the wood would have been burnt anyway), and how sustainable the source is

It is estimated that 21% (282,700ha) of six areas under environmental protection in Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri has been allocated to mining concessions and since 2007, a further 7% (98,239ha) has been allocated as Economic Land Concessions. In Kompong Speu, a sub decree signed by the Prime Minister allocated 17,650 ha of the Aural protected conservation area to a private agricultural firm. While the 2001 Land Law states that agricultural concessions cannot be larger than 10,000 ha, this has occurred in several instances (Bradley).

Figure 3. Land Concessions in Cambodia (Cambodian Centre for Human Rights)



2.2 Issues in Forestry Management

Although a legal structure now exists in the Kingdom to manage forests, the various institutions responsible for forestry management and enforcement face a number of difficulties. These include:

1. *A lack of clearly defined boundaries between different forest types.* Many of the maps which demarcate different forest types were drawn up with limited field surveys to validate distinctions between different forest categories. Lack of financial and technical capacity is a barrier to mapping programs, as is political interference. Borders placed on maps within ministries in Phnom Penh have often not translated into meaningful borders for people on the ground. The FA, MoE, and the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) are currently conducting a project aimed at

2. *Weakness in forest governance and lack of capacity of forest management.* A number of obstacles confronting forestry, including corruption, have, remained largely untouched by the technological fixes promoted by donors. There is an insufficient degree of responsibility allocated to the Forest Crime Monitoring Unit and a lack of capacity provided to implement direct action **Error! Bookmark not defined.** As the FA was only set up in 2004, it still has limited experience in the management of forests. Most of its limited budget comes from foreign NGOs and donors and it remains heavily dependant on foreign technical advisers and staff.
3. *Conflicting laws, and lack of Decrees-or Prakas-to guide implementation.* There are many inconsistencies in Cambodia's land law – especially in regard to how each type of forest category is classified. Whilst it is generally the case that laws are intentionally not overly detailed, this implies the need for additional documents (such as *Prakas*), to spell out the details. In the forest sector a lack of sub decrees to specify the mechanisms for classifying and managing land has often led to the re-interpretation of laws by political elites.

2.3 Land Tenure and Land Disputes

Land tenure may possibly be the largest issue that REDD projects are likely to face, with over 173 cases of land conflicts occurring within the Kingdom during 2008. It has been an issue of great concern amongst indigenous communities who have been extremely vulnerable to illegal evictions and land sales which alienate them from land.

Social norms have also contributed to deforestation because forest land not currently under management is traditionally seen as an open-access resource that can be claimed by whoever clears the forest. The 2001 Land Law converted possession into ownership in certain cases, but it also restricted legal possession of other lands, most notably state public land, after promulgation of the law. The 2001 Land Law does allow land titling of possession rights but this has been mainly implemented for agricultural and urban areas in Cambodia.

Under the 2001 Land Law, indigenous communities can become registered under the MoI in order to receive a community land title. So far three pilot communities have been identified to partake in the initial process of becoming a legally defined indigenous community. To date only one community has succeeded in receiving this status, yet it is still in the process of receiving land title. As this has proved a challenging process, it would be difficult to guarantee tenure for indigenous communities involved in REDD projects, and therefore not possible to ensure that benefits will always be received by forest dependent communities.

2.4 Community Forestry, Indigenous Communities, and Capacity at Local Scale

Community forestry initiatives exist throughout the Kingdom, covering approximately 0.7% of the total forested area and including 3.6% of the population. Much of the projects have received extensive support from NGO's, and FAO in particular has played an important role in providing technical assistance and capacity building. Provisions found in the 2002 Forestry Law (community forestry sub decree number 7) give legal rights for communities to manage lands and provides the mechanism for the establishment of community forestry groups. The FA is in charge of community forestry programs, except where they fall in protected areas, in which case MoE takes jurisdiction.

As to date there has been little peer reviewed research conducted on the effectiveness of Cambodia's Community Forestry Program.

Evidence on the performance of community forestry initiatives to reduce deforestation and forest degradation remains inconclusive. This partly results from the short period since community forestry became formally recognized in Cambodia – community forestry implementing regulations were issued only in 2006. When legally registered and approved, however, community forestry “appears to increase local tenure right and reduces the risk that forests will be appropriated by external interests and converted to alternative uses.” While positive effects in some sites have been observed, many sites are still seeking formal recognition and registration. Community forestry currently provides only limited economic benefits due to the degraded condition of allocated forests. Coordination between government and organizations supporting forestry has been mixed and approval processes for community forestry are lengthy. Allocation of economic land concessions within proposed CF sites also poses threats both to forest resources and human rights.

As forest dependant communities are at the centre of the REDD initiative, the way in which communities in Cambodia operate and interact with the law and authorities warrants careful consideration. Certain assumptions about communities also need to be revisited, i.e. that they are homogenous, that they are able to maintain autonomy over decision making when projects are entrusted to them, that they *understand* and *operate within* a framework of a rational bureaucratic set of laws and regulations, and that forest protection and conservation is in the best interest of forest dependant communities.

2.5 Benefit Distribution System (BDS)

In order for any REDD+ program to be efficient, effective, and equitable, appropriate fund management and distribution mechanisms are a fundamental prerequisite. As such, there are a number of major issues to consider in design of a REDD BDS system, including:

1. **National fund management:** Where funds are kept; project based, off central budgets, as a part of budgets.
2. **Fund distribution mechanism:** Who are the actors involved in the distribution of funds; at what scales do they operate
3. **Legal framework for fund distribution:** what laws already exist, what laws may need to be introduced for funds to be channeled down to local communities.
4. **Accountability and management of funds:** The mechanisms for ensuring that funds are distributed transparently and that fund managers are held accountable for decisions
5. **Percentage distribution of funds to different stakeholders:** how much revenue governments should retain and what percentage of revenues should be guaranteed to forest users.
6. **Linking funds to outcomes:** The mechanism for linking payments from international sellers with the outcomes of forestry management at the local level
7. **Mechanisms for increasing capacity of monitoring:** How can technical skills and knowledge be transferred to institutions within participating countries so they are not dependent on foreign entities.
8. **Recourse mechanism:** How can complaints, conflicts and points of contention which will arise during the initiative be resolved and dealt with in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

Given these general considerations, the following need to be given particular attention to in light of Cambodia's national context.

1. A BDS should be detailed yet flexible, as a vague BDS and set of accompanying legislation will allow intermediaries to reinterpret laws for self interest, a pattern which has occurred in many projects in the country.
2. A BDS should be managed so as to ensure that fund mismanagement and appropriation for individuals does not occur. Hence initially funds will need to be at least partially managed and monitored by institutions and organizations with a proven record in fund management.
3. A BDS should include mechanisms to ensure capacity development. Initially there will need to be large investments to ensure that Cambodian institutions such as the Royal University of Phnom Penh, government agencies and NGOs can effectively manage the process of monitoring.
4. Before BDS systems are set up, uncertainties and contestations over land and land tenure should be resolved. Where this is not possible, detailed and systematic plans for how these issues can be addressed through the project need to be collaboratively developed *before* implementation of any REDD project.
5. Systematic plans should be collaboratively produced which seek to detail how the inequalities and vulnerabilities of indigenous people can be addressed within the scope of the project. It should also be ensured that indigenous peoples are able to express and pursue lifestyle and livelihood aspirations in the same manner as any other Cambodian and not be confined by projects to notions of being 'traditional' (eg NTFP collection being seen as the only livelihood option).
6. Care should be taken that people who enter into REDD projects are not treated unequally in comparison to people not engaged in REDD activities.

Experience from Cambodia's first REDD initiative, known as the Oddar Meanchey (OM-REDD) project (See Section 3.), is perhaps the most relevant for the development of a national REDD BDS, despite the fact that it operates within the voluntary carbon market and was designed before the existence of extensive REDD procedures and protocols. During the development of the OM-REDD project, NGOs, donors and the head of FA (who initiated the project) lobbied the RGC (Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister) to develop legislation to allow FA to manage funds from the project. The resulting decision, Decree 669 of the Council of Ministers, has become one of the most important outcomes of Cambodia's REDD preparatory activities.

Decree 699 also articulates that at least 50% of all revenue generated from REDD projects must go to the community. It further states that revenues from carbon sales will be used to: improve the quality of the forest, maximize the benefits to local communities participating in the project, and to study potential sites for new carbon REDD projects. Apart from being an important first step in developing REDD legislation, Decree 669 also serves an important role in reassuring potential carbon buyers of the government's commitment to REDD projects. Despite the decree's advances, there remains ambiguity as to whether it's scope applies to all future REDD projects, or only the OM-REDD project. According to both the 2009 Project Design Document, and the PACT document *Communities and Carbon, Establishing A Community Forestry REDD Project in Cambodia* (2009), several benefit sharing issues remain unresolved. In particular:

1. There is no mechanism specified for how benefits are to be distributed

2. The role of ministries and departments other than the FA related to forest management in REDD currently remains ambiguous
3. The focus on technical criteria for being approved within the Voluntary Carbon Market was to perhaps at the expense of the political and social criteria within a UN system.
4. The issue of how capacity development and transfer of technical knowledge will be conducted is not sufficiently addressed.
5. A lack of transparency in how funds will be managed. Both documents state that the firm in charge of ecological assessments and monitoring will take *a percentage* of the credits without specifying the exact amount.
6. Lack of certainty over benefits based on the fluctuations of carbon pricing
7. Uncertain land tenure status.

3 REDD+ in Cambodia's Context

While the UNFCCC has yet to mandate a compliant-grade carbon market for REDD+ projects, international negotiations have enabled a voluntary carbon market that is peripheral to the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism. Given the new potential to be reimbursed for the protection of its forests, The Royal Government of Cambodia has successfully entered the REDD+ arena with progressive REDD-friendly legislation and a clear ambition to support REDD+ projects. After Cambodia became a non-funded member of the FCPF an official observer to the UN-REDD Programme (also non-funded), the UNDP and FAO pledged to fund a REDD+ Road Map for the kingdom, to be completed by October of 2010. Three pilot projects in differing provinces are charting the future of REDD+ in Cambodia, and the forthcoming REDD+ Road Map will solidify REDD's role in Cambodia's efforts to curb deforestation across the country.

3.1 International REDD+ process to-date

At the 15th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in Copenhagen, a decision on REDD+ policy was drafted and achieved broad consensus; this is expected to be approved at COP16 in Mexico in 2010. In addition, following on from the Copenhagen Accord, the Interim REDD+ Partnership was established, which commits a large number of developed countries to provide at least \$4.5 billion of fast-start financing between 2010 and 2012 to developing countries for development of REDD+ Readiness and demonstration.

3.1.1 Scope of REDD+

- Based on the COP15 decision, REDD+ is defined as:
"Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries"

3.1.2 Scale of Implementation of REDD+

- Decision on methods at COP15:
'national forest monitoring systems and, if appropriate, sub-national systems as part of national monitoring systems'
- Draft Decision on implementation at COP15:
'a national strategy or action plan and, if appropriate, a sub-national strategy'

The key word is “and,” indicating that countries can have sub-national approaches, so long as they are inside, or nested within, a national system. This language contrasts that of the CDM, which is project-based only.

3.1.3 Activities eligible for crediting under REDD+

- Reducing emissions from deforestation; (RED)
- Reducing emissions from forest degradation; (the second ‘D’)
- Conservation of forest carbon stocks; (included in the ‘+’)
- Sustainable management of forests; (included in the ‘+’)
- Enhancement of forest carbon stocks; (included in the ‘+’)

3.1.4 Financing for REDD+

Financing for REDD+ is initially available from donor-based grants, and from the Voluntary Carbon Market or Afforestation/Reforestation Clean Development Mechanism (CDM, for projects). In the future finance may also be available from:

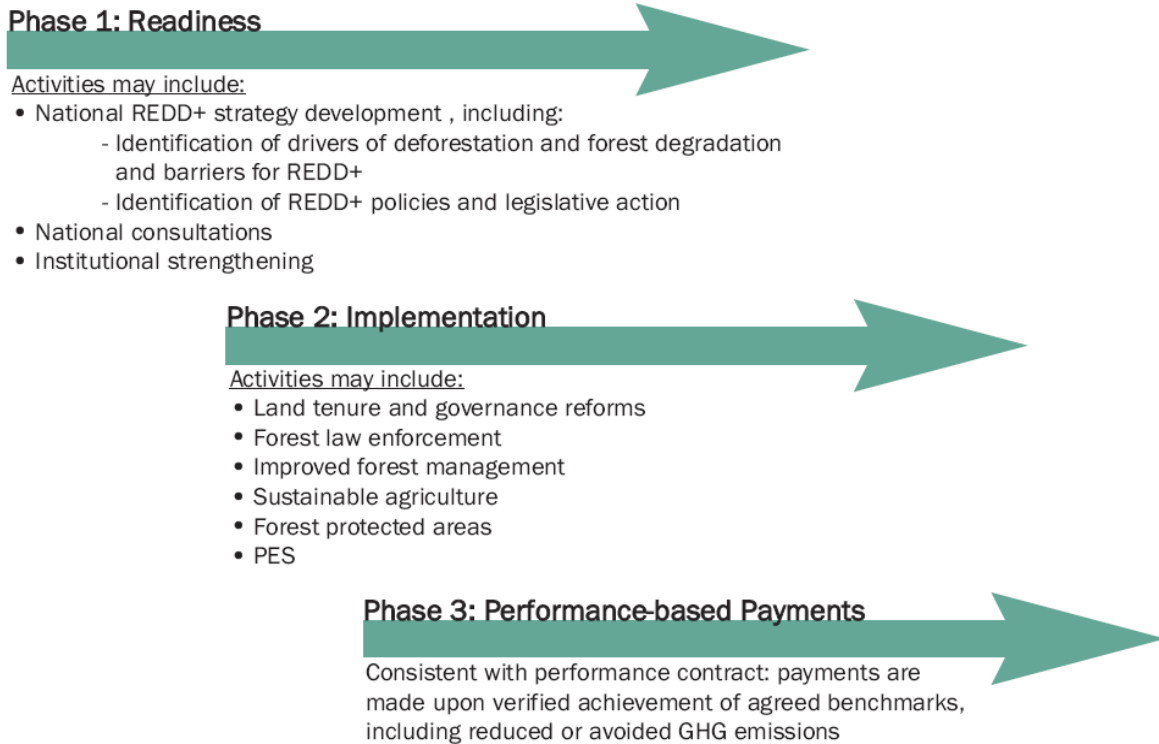
- Payments for results from funds (fund-based mechanisms)
- Sales of carbon credits to compliant (regulatory) markets (market-based mechanisms)

International support for REDD+ Readiness is currently being channeled through bilateral agreements between developed and developing countries, The World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), and the UN-REDD Program. Cambodia has applied to the FCPF and has been accepted, although currently is not eligible for financial support. Similarly, Cambodia is an official observer to the UN-REDD Program but has not qualified for Readiness funding.

3.1.5 Phases of REDD+ Implementation

REDD+ is expected to be implemented in the three phases shown in Figure 4, known as the “Phased Approach”:

Figure 4: REDD+ “Phased Approach”



3.2 Cambodia’s Initial Experience with REDD+

During 2008 and 2009 Cambodia made significant steps towards establishing REDD related activities. Key achievements included:

1. Decision number 699 of the Council of Ministers, endorsed by H.E. Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia on 26 May 2008. Decision 699 approved the Oddar Meanchey pilot project and established guiding principles for REDD projects to ensure that carbon revenues are used to: 1) improve forest management; 2) provide maximum benefits to local communities which participate in the project activities; and 3) support development of new REDD projects in Cambodia. In addition, the Decision requires that revenues from REDD for the pilot project are managed through the TWGF&E bank account, ensuring transparency and oversight, and designates the FA as the Government agency responsible for arranging carbon sales.
2. Sub-decree number 188, 4 November 2008, gave the FA responsibility for assessing national forest carbon stocks, executing and regulating forest carbon trading, and sales of forest carbon credits for the Permanent Forest Estate
3. Establishment of the Department of Climate Change within MoE, the national focal point for the UNFCCC climate change negotiations and reporting to the UNFCCC.
4. Creation of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), which includes representatives from 19 ministries and is responsible for coordinating climate related

5. Designation of a national REDD Focal Point, Dr. Omaliss Keo Deputy Director of the Department of Wildlife and Biodiversity the Forestry Administration, and creation of the Forestry, Climate Change and Innovative Financing Working Group within the TWGF&E.
6. Development of a Readiness Project Idea Note (R-PIN) by the FA, which was submitted to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in late 2008. Following the submission Cambodia was accepted into the FCPF in March 2009, although Cambodia has not been allocated any funds for development of a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP).
7. Various workshops and training events on REDD, including a national REDD consultation workshop held on 14 October 2009 with participation from government agencies, development partners, civil society, local and indigenous people. A three-day training for Government officials, civil society and community forestry representatives was held in February 2010.
8. In October 2009 Cambodia became an official observer of the UN-REDD Programme, Policy Board.

Based on Cambodia's admission to the UN-REDD Programme, and based on the current lack of support from either the FCPF or formally from UNREDD, the UN agencies (UNDP and FAO) agreed in October 2009 to provide initial support to the Royal Government of Cambodia with development of an initial National REDD+ Readiness plan: the REDD+ Roadmap (Section 3.4).

3.3 Current REDD+ Pilot Projects

Three REDD+ projects have been initiated in Cambodia to date: the Oddar Meanchey project mentioned above, in Oddar Meanchey province; the Seima Protection Forest project in Monduliri Province; and the Northern Plains project in Preah Vihear Province. While each are at varying stages of REDD readiness development, they are promising showcases of project design and coordination between provincial governments and the RGC, international NGO's, and local communities.

Oddar Meanchey (OM-REDD). In December of 2007, the FA introduced the Oddar Meanchey REDD project, the first REDD project in Cambodia. While the region held as much as 75% forest cover in 2002, it also was home to the highest rates of deforestation through 2006. The area involves 13 community forest groups in previously established Community Forest Areas, comprising more than 50 villages and over 67,000 hectares.

The project, developed in collaboration with the Clinton Climate Initiative, Community Forestry International, Terra Global Capital and PACT, will generate an estimated 8 million tons of CO₂ offset credits over the 30 year project life for sale on the voluntary carbon markets. While still in it's infancy, OM-REDD is gathering significant support among locals because of the promise to distribute at least 50% of future income to communities.

Seima Protection Forest (SPF). Work on the SPF REDD project in Monduliri Province was launched in mid-2008 with the completion of an independent feasibility study by Winrock

International, which concluded that the proposed project was highly feasible and that even under a conservative scenario would avoid millions of tons of carbon emissions. The area covers 187,698 hectares of the Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area, and is of particular ecological importance because it serves as a key ecological migratory corridor the asian elephant, among other species. The Mondulkiri forests are also home to the indigenous Bunong minority, and the SBCA pilot will be an important demonstration of benefit-sharing from REDD to local people (WCS-Cambodia).

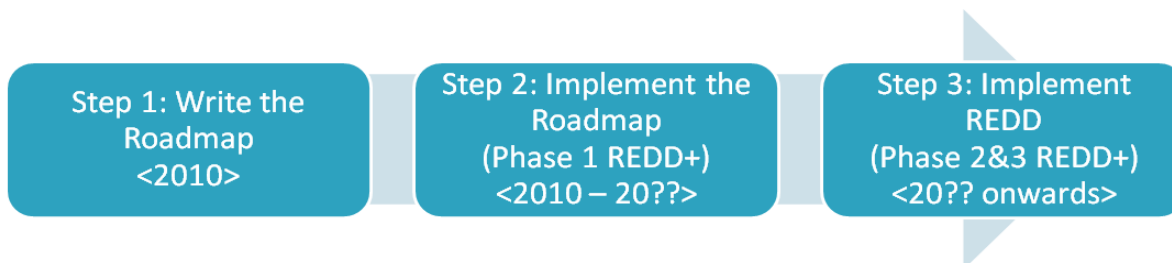
In 2009, the area was given Protection Forest status. WCS is now working with the RGC's Forestry Administration to complete the Project Design Document (PDD), which will be submitted for verification by the Voluntary Carbon Standard and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance in 2010 (WCS-Cambodia).

Northern Plains (NP). Following WCS's experience in the SPF, a similar feasibility assessment is currently underway in the NP of Preah Vihear Province, and will be completed in 2010. Preliminary results are promising, and it is very likely that at least some management units would be able to proceed to PDD development during 2010 (WCS-Cambodia).

3.4 National strategy for REDD+ in Cambodia: The Road Map

3.4.1 Overview of the Road Map

The Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap is a national plan for how the RGC wants to move ahead with REDD+ Readiness. Following initial stakeholder consultations in late 2009 and early 2010, the government agencies created the inter-ministry REDD+ Taskforce in January 2010, with an interim mandate to develop the Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap. The Taskforce is primarily composed of technical officials. It was chaired by the Forestry Administration of the MoA, Forestry and Fisheries, and includes the Departments of Wildlife and Biodiversity, Forestry and Community Forestry, and Forest Plantation and Private Forest of the FA, the Departments of Climate Change and National Parks of the General Department for Administration of Nature Conservation and Protection (GDANCP) of the MoE and the MLMUPC. The Clinton Climate Initiative and RECOFTC (the Regional Community Forestry Training Center) served as civil society representatives on the REDD+ Taskforce. Development partners are represented by UNDP/WCS and FAO. The REDD+ Taskforce's initial mandate was for an initial interim period only, with the expectation that it would be replaced by more permanent National REDD+ management arrangements at the end of the Roadmap process. The approximate steps in the Cambodia REDD+ Readiness process are:



During Step 2, the implementation of the Roadmap, Cambodia will put in place the necessary capacity to implement REDD+ at the national level. This could include capacity-building, and development of new policies and legislation. Only during Step 3 would Cambodia start to implement REDD+, which might include fund-based payments and eventual transitions to compliant markets.

The Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap was completed in September 2010, and is used as the basis for:

1. The UN-REDD National Programme Document.
2. Any future Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) by the RGC to the FCPF.

The general principles, stated in the Road Map, for development of Cambodia REDD+ Readiness include:

1. first and foremost build national capacity within Government institutions and non-Government stakeholders: REDD+ is new and complex and substantial increases in understanding are required before decisions can be made;
2. support implementation of existing policies and strategies for management of forest resources that have been developed over the past 10-15 years;
3. be inclusive and balanced, both between Government agencies and non-Government stakeholders;
4. learn lessons from previous policy development processes;
5. be based on the existing mandates of Government institutions, rather than creating new institutions in an already crowded and complex institutional environment;
6. make use of existing coordination mechanisms, rather than building new fora for discussions;
7. seek to provide predictable and substantial finance for implementation and scaling-up of existing forest management strategies;
8. build awareness;
9. be consistent with the international negotiations process;
10. be based on existing REDD+ pilot projects; and
11. recognize the importance of demonstration and adopting a learning-by-doing approach.

Funding for the Roadmap has been provided by UNDP and FAO, with the technical support of the UN-REDD Programme and the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

3.4.2 National Responsibilities with respect to REDD+

Whilst the legal framework for management of forest resources is clear, the national coordination and regulation framework with respect to REDD+ is not yet fully defined. Nevertheless, the general framework can be determined based on the existing jurisdictions of relevant Government ministries and institutions. Additional processes will need to be established during the national REDD+ Readiness process to clarify decision-making and create appropriate subsidiary regulations.

Figure 5 summarizes the main responsibilities for involved government agencies in the REDD+ Readiness process.

Figure 5: National Responsibilities for REDD+ Readiness in Cambodia



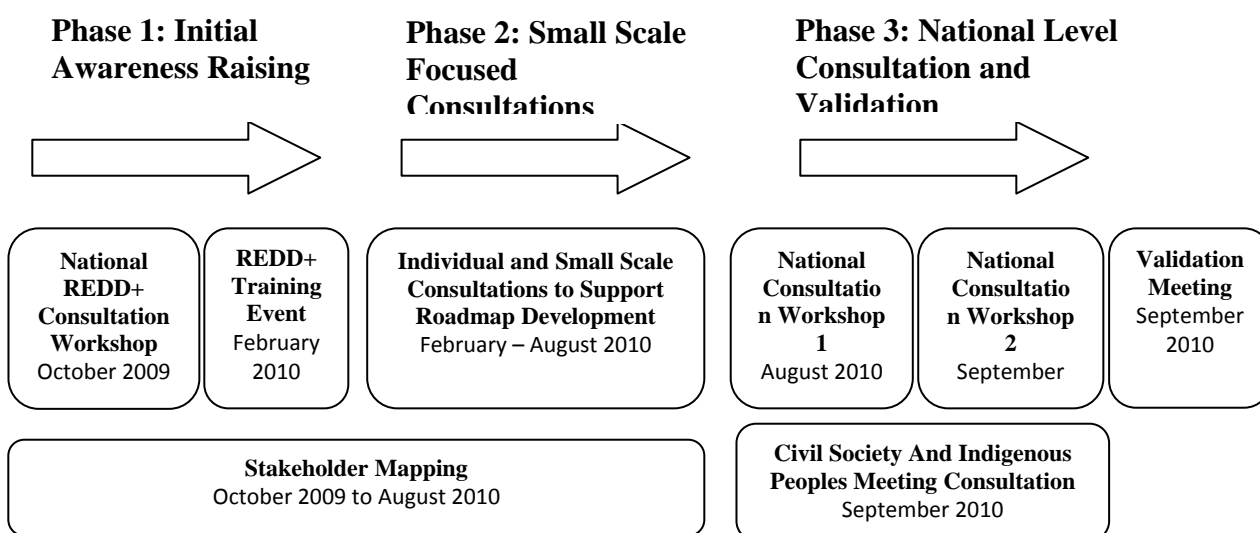
3.4.3 The Consultation and Participation Process on the Readiness Plan Proposal drafts

The objectives of the Consultation and Participation process during Readiness Plan proposal development were to:

- Undertake a mapping of key stakeholders, and their potential role in REDD+;
- Increase awareness and understanding of REDD+ and the National REDD+ Planning process in Cambodia amongst Key stakeholders at national level – in particular within key Government bodies;
- Gain input from key stakeholders within and outside of Government on the content of the Readiness Plan Proposal; and
- Develop a clear understanding of what the next steps are for engaging stakeholders within the REDD+ planning process in Cambodia.

In addressing these objectives the REDD+ Taskforce has sought to learn from the lessons of past processes. The result has been a flexible process that has used different techniques to raise awareness of and consult on the Readiness Plan Proposal. This process can be divided broadly into three phases (shown in Figure 6) which overlap and have progressed at different speeds for different stakeholders.

Figure 6. Cambodia REDD+ Readiness Plan Proposal Consultation and Participation Process



3.4.4 Phase 1: Initial Awareness Raising

Initial awareness raising occurred through two national level workshops in October 2009 and February 2010 as well as through presentations to the Technical Working Group on Forestry & Environment (TWGF&E), the main forum for multi-stakeholder consultation on 7 September and 23 December 2009 by the Forestry Administration. The TWGF&E presentations were particularly important to announce the start of the planning process to all stakeholders, including Government agencies, development partners, NGOs and civil society, who are represented on the TWGF&E. In addition, presentations by taskforce members were undertaken at the majority of platforms identified during the stakeholder mapping exercise (see Table 3 below). This has been followed by more focused individual technical consultations and awareness raising to inform the development of the draft Readiness Plan Proposal. During this phase the Taskforce has worked hard to engage

different Government agencies and departments as well as representatives from national and international Civil Society.

Table 3. Key Stakeholder Groups engaged through the Readiness Plan Proposal development process

Group	Means of Engagement
Government	REDD+ Taskforce – regular meetings held Internal Government agency review meetings
Donors/ Government / Private Sector / NGO's	Technical Working Group on Forests and Environment Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water
Donors	Individual Meetings
Private Sector	Individual Meetings
Environmental and Conservation NGO's working on REDD+	Informal NGO REDD Working Group
Climate Change NGO's	Coordination through the National Climate Change Network
Community Forestry groups	National Community Forestry Program Coordination Committee NGO Forum Forestry Network Regional/Provincial/Local networks in areas with REDD projects, such as Oddar Meanchey Community Forestry network
Indigenous peoples and civil society organisations	Representative organisations such as ICSO, IRAM and CIYA Meetings facilitated by NGO Forum Regional/provincial/local networks in areas with REDD projects

3.4.5 Phase 2: Small Scale Focused Consultation

Following the development of a draft document small group sessions were held with key stakeholder groups to inform them of the Readiness Plan Proposal's progress and to further raise awareness of key issues within the document. A series of meetings with Civil Society groups were arranged to increase their level of understanding of REDD+ and the REDD+ process in Cambodia. Two short information sharing and discussion meetings on REDD+ and the Readiness Plan Proposal were held with the informal NGO Working Group on 4 March and 7 June 2010. Presentations on overall progress were made at various high-level events, including the Asia-Europe Meeting in Phnom Penh on 6 May 2010.

Initial small consultations were held with key representatives from civil society and indigenous peoples on 13 and 17 August 2010. These meetings were partly facilitated by NGO Forum but were generally focused on grassroots civil society as opposed to national or international NGOs.

3.4.6 Phase 3: National Level Consultation

Two national consultation events were held on 20 August and 10 September 2010. These workshops provided a forum for all stakeholders to discuss of key topics within the Readiness Plan Proposal and for the Taskforce to consolidate this feedback. All stakeholders were invited to attend. The workshops were deliberately structured around facilitated group discussions to allow for open debate of key issues. Minutes from the plenary and group discussions were taken and reports from both workshops are available. Based on the results of the first workshop a table of key comments and revisions made to the Readiness Plan Proposal documents was compiled, so that stakeholders could easily see how their comments had been reflected in the drafts.

The Readiness Plan Proposal document was circulated by email in English prior to both workshops, and a Khmer version was available for the second national consultation. An email address was specifically created for submission of written comments, and these were also compiled prior to the second national consultation.

At the request of the civil society and indigenous peoples representatives a 2-day workshop facilitated by NGO Forum and key members from the community networks was held on 2-3 September 2010 in order to gain their input into the Readiness Plan Proposal and particularly the development of a consultation and participation plan for the Readiness phase. About 50 participants from community forestry, community networks, indigenous peoples and other grassroots civil society networks attended the meeting. The minutes from the working were taken and a report is available.

Following the second national consultation the Readiness Plan Proposal document was revised a second time to reflect comments received and a validation meeting for key stakeholder representatives to approve the document was held on in late September 2010.

Observations on the REDD+ Readiness Plan Proposal consultation process:

The duration and reach of the process was limited for two reasons: a lack of adequate time and resources to carry out a comprehensive awareness raising and consultation process, and a desire not to raise expectations amongst stakeholders at the grassroots level regarding REDD+ until the likely nature of international REDD+ mechanism is clear and further analysis has been done on how the REDD+ mechanism could then be implemented within Cambodia. In addition, it is generally quite unusual in Cambodia for extensive stakeholder consultation to be done so early in the policy development process, and some participants found it quite abstract that they were being consulted on how to a process might be established to develop an implementation strategy for an international mechanism that had yet to be decided.

Stakeholders requested further information on REDD+ so they could fully understand the issues that should be addressed prior to the adoption of a National Strategy on REDD+. They also noted that while the strategies suggested provided a good framework for addressing the direct drivers of deforestation, a national framework for REDD+ would also have to address indirect drivers related to the wider enabling environment in which Government agencies worked.

The six main sections of the Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap are:

1. Management of National REDD+ Readiness
2. Consultation, stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising plan
3. Development and selection of REDD strategies
4. Implementation framework (including benefit-sharing and safeguards)
5. Development of the Reference Scenario against which performance will be measured (Reference Levels or Reference Emissions Levels, RLs/RELs)
6. Development of the Monitoring System for national Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

For a detailed information for each section, please refer to “Cambodia REDD+ Roadmap, revised draft 27 September 2010, Version 3.0.

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