



The Forests Dialogue

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The Forests Dialogue

International Dialogue on REDD Readiness

17-18 March 2011 | Gland, Switzerland

Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

Between October 2009 and November 2010 The Forests Dialogue (TFD)¹ in partnership with IUCN, organized international REDD-readiness field dialogues in five countries including Brazil, Ghana, Guatemala, Ecuador and Cambodia. The field dialogues are part of TFD's REDD Readiness Initiative that seeks to understand how selected countries are actively engaged in REDD-readiness activities. The field dialogues have shed light on the common issues countries are facing to get REDD-ready and demonstrated the importance of addressing country-specific issues and challenges early on in the process.² The Initiative has been sponsored by NORAD.

On 17-18 March, in an effort to build on the last 5 field dialogues and to consolidate learning from this initiative so far, TFD convened an international dialogue at the IUCN headquarters in Gland, Switzerland. The Initiative has produced a wealth of information and understanding to date and the meeting gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on the quickly changing REDD-Readiness landscape and how to help countries and stakeholders improve the process. The objectives of the Gland Dialogue were to:

- ➔ reflect on the practical challenges of the REDD-readiness phase;
- ➔ analyze the paths to REDD+ that several countries have followed to date;
- ➔ discuss what needs to change to help get countries ready for REDD+;
- ➔ develop a collective strategy to help realize that change.

DIALOGUE PROCESS

30 participants from 15 different countries joined the two-day dialogue (See Annex I for Participant List). The meeting started with several presentations to orient the participants to TFD's process, the five countries visited and the current international "scene" as it relates to REDD-Readiness. The discussion then began in earnest as participants reviewed the key findings and conclusions from the five in-country field dialogues. In working groups, participants further discussed specific challenges illustrated by examples from the 5 countries as well as other experiences, and explored practical actions that could be taken to address those challenges. On the second day, with a clearer vision for REDD+ in mind, participants worked within stakeholder groups to identify key actions each stakeholder group could take to move forward with REDD+. The Gland Dialogue wrapped up with a call from participants for TFD to continue its work towards building a

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community of practice among REDD+ countries as well as bridging the information gap between national and international multi-stakeholder platforms.

This Gland Dialogue summary outlines the main discussion points, ways forward and stakeholder actions identified by the participants. A more comprehensive TFD Review on REDD-Readiness, slated to be released in mid-2011, will synthesize the findings and lessons learned from the Initiative and propose stakeholder specific actions to address them.

READY FOR WHAT?

The discourse around REDD+ has progressed quickly since 2005 when the issue of avoided deforestation was bought back into the UNFCCC negotiations on a post-Kyoto climate regime by Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Coalition of Rainforest Nations. Since then, the international and national discourse around REDD+ has bought key governance issues back to the table and shed light on the importance of safeguards and the rights of marginalized stakeholder groups including indigenous people and women. Lately, there is an emerging understanding that REDD+ will require transformative land-use change and needs to adopt an inter-sectoral approach to be successful. Despite the progress, one fundamental issue that has yet to be adequately addressed is developing a clear vision of where we are heading with REDD+. Fundamental questions include:

- ➔ To what degree can REDD+ be broadened into other land-use and development schemes without paralyzing the progress?
- ➔ How should REDD+ respond to increased attention on mitigation in agriculture?
- ➔ How can REDD+ contribute to transformational change in the forestry sector and beyond?
- ➔ How does the private sector regard the scope of REDD+ and how can they be better participate in REDD+?
- ➔ To what degree should REDD+ pilots contribute to broader sustainable development objectives?

Participants pointed out that one critical barrier for REDD+ is the disconnection between the scope and ambition of the REDD+ discussions at international, national and local levels. This is borne out by the fact that while international negotiators and donors continue to frame REDD+ as only a climate solution, the “forest community” views REDD+ as an integrated sustainable development option far beyond carbon sequestration. Participants highlighted that REDD+ is more about land-use trade-offs than a simple win-win “carbon for cash” solution. The international discussion should broaden its scope to cater to local needs and adopt a land-use based approach for REDD+. To link the scope and ambition of the REDD+ discussions at different levels, there should be more engagement of stake-



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holders with local experience and traditional knowledge as part of the REDD+ discussions at all levels. The benefit from improved engagement will far outweigh the costs.

We also need to recognize that Readiness is not only a step in REDD but it is the phase when the key framework needs to be spelt out and put in place. “Readiness” does not have straightforward definitions or timeframe and few countries are close to achieving it. Getting REDD-ready does not mean that countries need to get everything right at the first try and allows countries to learn from doing with an aim to compliance with international obligations including respecting indigenous peoples’ rights and deliver reduction in deforestation and degradation. A “phased-approach” for REDD+ should not be a narrowly-scoped, prescribed, linear process but rather an iterative process that encourages learning by doing. Countries will need to go back and forth between phases as they learn from their and others experiences. This requires a refined phased approach that will move away from the assumption about the consequentiality of the phases and the approach towards identifying triggers that would allow countries to move between phases.

CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

Much of the Gland Dialogue focused on participant perceptions of the common challenges and ways forward that became increasingly refined over the last five REDD-readiness dialogues. Participants were asked to provide examples of situations in REDD+ countries to illustrate those challenges. The broad categorization of common challenges that emerged through the initiative thus far include:

- Engagement and meaningful participation of stakeholders;
- Generation, quality, access and use of information;
- Cost and benefit management and related distribution mechanisms;
- Policy and legal reform for secure rights and responsibilities;
- Integration of REDD+ into broader development and land-use strategies.

Details about each challenge and associated action will be summarized in the TFD Review on TFD REDD-Readiness. This summary only highlights points that generated deeper discussion and broader agreement during the Gland Dialogue.

Engagement and meaningful participation of stakeholders

Countries are still unclear on which “key” stakeholders should be engaged; on what issues those stakeholders should be engaged; at what stage engagement should happen and for how long. Perhaps more challenging for countries is how to ensure effective implementation of what is agreed upon during the full stakeholder engagement process.

Any engagement has to be based on clear policies that are in line with international obligations, especially for Indigenous Peoples, and that full and effective access to culturally

appropriate information is an integral element of consultation processes. Participants suggested that existing successful engagement models under other initiatives can be used to inform the design of stakeholder engagement for REDD+, and that different stakeholders have different important roles to play:

- ➔ International initiatives should be able to provide advice or guidance (when needed) on how to identify issues that require engagement during the REDD-readiness phase and beyond.
- ➔ Government should plan engagement meetings well ahead and distribute the locations strategically to maximize local participation. Governments should also recognize that flexibility is required in the engagement model with the ability to assess and change along the way.
- ➔ Communities should pro-actively seek engagement in REDD Readiness processes; When necessary, communities should seek assistance from NGOs; Communities should be vocal about their needs and rights, and actively share their traditional knowledge.
- ➔ It was highlighted that the private sector has not been fully engaged in REDD-readiness processes in most countries. It was suggested that we should strive to increase the participation of private sector and work to build the trust among stakeholders to reduce the aversion from some stakeholders to private sector involvement.

Finally to ensure that the agreed actions will be implemented after the engagement process, success indicators should be developed and agreed by all stakeholders during the engagement process.

Generation, quality, access and use of information

At the regional and local level, substantial numbers of stakeholders are still uninformed or do not fully understand REDD+. The barriers for them to access REDD+ information include: translating scientific information designed for local policy makers; different education levels; different languages; limited means to access web-based information; lack of information that is catered to stakeholders' interests. Besides the access challenge, the quality of information on REDD+ is also highly variable. However, rather than controlling the quality of all the information produced, the key issue is how to consolidate information and to use it effectively.

One key step to help drive stakeholder interest in obtaining information is to first identify stakeholder needs and provide relevant information that catered to those needs. Translating information into local languages and adapting the information to reflect local reality will link the information to the positives of engagement and REDD+ in general. To ensure adequate financing for the generation, quality, access and use of quality information, governments need to develop an information dissemination strategy for their national plan and integrate different actions into various components of their national plans that are already funded.

Cost and benefit management and related distribution mechanisms

It is still unclear what role the compliance market will play in REDD+ at the international level. Thus governments are at a loss as to what they can expect to gain from carbon projects and how such benefits can be distributed and managed. It was noted that the benefits for REDD+ are not only monetary but also come in different forms, such as biodiversity gains. Currently the discussions on cost and benefit management for REDD+ are too narrowly focused on the benefit-side, thus ignoring opportunities that can help lower the



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Co-chair Stewart Maginnis leading the group discussion



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costs to maximize the net-benefits of REDD+.

To manage benefits at the Readiness Phase, countries should look for proxies for payments and develop benefit management schemes. National REDD+ plans should clearly recognize the non-monetary benefits of REDD+ as well as the monetary ones and look into other initiatives to secure financing for REDD+. To manage costs, international initiatives as well as governments should create systems that incentivize “lower cost” approaches for implementing REDD activities so as to increase net-benefits and thus allow for wider benefit distribution among stakeholders. To develop a fair and effective distribution mechanism, pilot projects on benefit distribution can be used to help build capacity for stakeholders to understand how to develop an effective and equitable scheme that suits the local context.

Policy and legal reform for secure rights and responsibilities

Participants highlighted again the importance of clear land, tree and carbon tenure for REDD+ to be successful. There is still a lack of international technical support for efforts to clarify how carbon rights can be defined at the national level for REDD+. For land and tree tenure, participants cautioned that REDD+ policies shouldn’t narrowly focus on land/tree tenure rights but should work through concessions and customary rights to ensure communities and Indigenous Peoples benefit in an equitable way. Participants also noted that the current discussions on REDD+ policy and legal reform at the international level have adopted a pro-conservation focus that may not reflect national and local realities.

A rights-based approach is important for REDD+ to be successful and customary rights and concessions can be a good base from which to develop the approach. Examples in Guatemala illustrated how customary rights can be utilized to ensure local participation and benefit sharing in concession areas. Discussions at all levels on REDD+ need to broaden and search for successful examples from the agriculture and development sectors where land tenure barriers are lifted to balance conservation and development needs.

Different stakeholders’ roles for policy and legal reforms were also highlighted:

- ➔ Governments have the responsibility to establish a legal/policy framework to implement REDD+ sustainably and to ensure the delivery of emissions reductions through REDD+. It is important to note that different levels of government have different roles to play and the specific roles for provincial, district and local governments should be identified.
- ➔ Continuous and large-scale grass-roots support is important for policy and legal reform to happen. NGOs and communities will need to work together to push for reform.

Integration of REDD+ into broader development and land-use strategies

Integration challenges are different for different stakeholder groups. Integration amongst government departments and across different levels is difficult to achieve given that the typical government agency structure is designed for departments to organize around single issues. This is in contrast to the private sector that analyzes many different factors that influence their business decisions while communities tend to focus holistically on livelihoods that are influenced by all sectors. The discussions on ways forward reflected this challenge and focused mainly on how to integrate sector issues within government.

For integration to happen between different sectors and agencies within governments, high level champions rooted in the executives office and included in developing the low-carbon strategy can be very effective. But in some cases, if this high-level commitment proves to be difficult, forming a cross-sectoral taskforce can be a more effective way to facilitate integration. Integration should also be prioritized across different levels of government. To achieve this, capacity building at a sub-national government level is necessary. While strategic planning is appropriate at the national level, implementation blue-prints can be developed at the sub-national level.

NEXT STEPS FOR TFD

The dialogue concluded that stakeholders should continue to see TFD as a platform for REDD+ countries to exchange experiences as well as to bridge gaps between international, regional, national and local discussions on REDD+. The initiative should keep building a “community of practice” with particular efforts to bring in private sector. The findings and recommendations of the dialogues should be used to help inform donors about the funding needs in REDD+ countries and identify key areas to be prioritized for funding. Future dialogues should focus on successful examples within the REDD Readiness community where specific issues highlighted during the dialogues have been positively addressed at the local or national level. The field-dialogues should also learn from on-going REDD+ demonstration projects addressing carbon rights, benefit distributing and/or private sector participation.

TFD has committed to review its REDD-Readiness Initiative and consolidate information shared and lessons learnt in a TFD Review report that will be released before COP-17. TFD’s team will share the learning from our REDD-Readiness Initiative possibly through a side-event at The Forests Day 5 during COP-17. TFD intends to continue the REDD Readiness field dialogues in 2012 subject to continued support.

FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION:

All meeting materials of TFD REDD Readiness Gland Dialogue can be found at: <http://environment.yale.edu/tfd/dialogue/forests-and-climate/sixth-redd-readiness-dialogue/>

Any questions concerning this summary or the REDD Readiness Initiative should be directed to the TFD secretariat at tfd@yale.edu.



Group Discussion



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Co-chair Joe Lawson



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REFERENCE

1. www.theforestsdialogue.org
2. Meeting Materials and summaries of TFD REDD-readiness Dialogues can be found at <http://www.theforestsdialogue.org/dialogues/forests-and-climate/>

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All omissions and inaccuracies in this report are the responsibility of the TFD Secretariat. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the institutions involved, nor do they necessarily represent official NORAD policies.

Annex I: Participant List

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Annex II: Summary of Ways Forward Highlighted by Dialogue Participants

To ensure engagement and meaningful participation of stakeholders:

- ➔ Use existing stakeholder mapping tools to identify stakeholder groups and needs
- ➔ Gap analysis of national legislation to understand where government and legal regime is with respect to international obligations
- ➔ Integrate stakeholder needs in global negotiations while bringing global negotiation process to local level
- ➔ Tailor REDD+ engagement strategy to priorities of stakeholders, including marginalized groups

- ➔ Support more multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder initiatives
- ➔ Establish a task-force elected by the community to represent the community's interests at a national level where such a representative body for the community does not exist

To ensure generation, quality, access and use of information:

- ➔ Map and build on existing information sharing platforms and multi-media, and assure widespread accessibility to REDD+ knowledge
- ➔ Create a two-way information flow between international, national and local levels: not only to disseminate information in a top-down fashion but also to incorporate traditional knowledge into REDD+ strategies at the national and international level
- ➔ Translate and adapt REDD+ languages to local realities: show specific examples to communities
- ➔ Disseminate information based on stakeholder needs
- ➔ Develop system of community representatives using a training of trainers approach to share information and knowledge, to reach up to national and international levels, to feed into policies
- ➔ Support and implement Pilot activities, to learn (and make mistakes!), to innovate, use hands-on training instead of talk shops
- ➔ Look beyond forest sector and national approaches for practical tools
- ➔ Recognize the importance of information and allocation for resources to information in REDD+ strategies and explore creative financing strategy to fund actions
- ➔ International donors should take initiative and put pressure on national and local efforts to ensure transparency

To manage costs and benefits related to REDD+:

- ➔ Funds can be assigned for REDD+ activities as well as for strengthening governance in general for REDD+
- ➔ Support the preparation of sub-national MRV systems and provide a “financial” mechanism for the investors in the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM)
- ➔ Integrate REDD+ into broader initiatives to broaden funding resources beyond REDD+
- ➔ Engage stakeholders in designing finance mechanism
- ➔ Pilot distribution schemes to build capacity and raise awareness
- ➔ Identify the costs associated with REDD+ and create a system that will incentivize a “lower costs” approach for implementing REDD+ activities so “NET” benefits can be significant for further distribution among beneficiaries

- ➔ Clearly map out benefits associated with REDD+ : there are monetary benefits, e.g. revenue from timber and non-timber forest products ; and also non-monetary benefits, e.g. secure land tenure
- ➔ Guatemalan Case Study: In Guatemala a financial mechanism was created at the sub-national level that works for the voluntary market. The Special Proposal Vehicle (SPV) ensures that the funds are kept safe, management kept accountable, and that all actors (govt., NGOs, community members, other stakeholders) participate in defining how to invest these resources.

To lead to policy and legal reform for secure rights and responsibilities:

- ➔ Start a broader international discussion and definition of what carbon rights are
- ➔ Pursue land tenure changes that are wider than land titling
- ➔ Work through concessions, that provide tax revenues for governments and incentives to stakeholders
- ➔ Executive level engagement is necessary to coordinate various departments (to provide checks and balances) and achieve cross-sectoral integration
- ➔ Ensure inclusive decision making processes to ensure strong grassroots support for reforms
- ➔ Set up a community MRV system, with capacity building components, to assure safeguards are met
- ➔ Build on existing incentive programs, like community forestry and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)
- ➔ FPIC should be anchored to the broader array of rights, such as land rights. And in the readiness phase that the proper enablers have to be put in place to ensure that indigenous peoples can enjoy the right to FPIC.

To ensure integration of REDD+ into broader development and land-use strategies:

- ➔ Strengthen and support high level champions
- ➔ Build a Task Force on REDD+ with actors from different sectors
- ➔ Invest in capacity building for project implementation
- ➔ Revive or create a system of local extension agents (barefoot REDD+ motivators/mobilisers)
- ➔ Work through associations to integrate private sectors into REDD+ projects
- ➔ Provide clarity on benefits to communities and other stakeholders so they can decide on best use of land

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