

Concept Note on South-South Learning: “FRL assessment process in Asia/Pacific” Pokhara, Nepal, April 2017

Background and Overview:

Submitting a national Forest Reference Level (FRL) to the UNFCCC is an involved process that requires understanding national circumstances that drive emissions (and removals) and the adoption of reliable and transparent procedures. The components of a national FRL scale of FRL development, definition of forest, activities, pools and gases to be included needs a comprehensive consultation and understanding in line with guidelines of UNFCCC. In addition, the data and methodology to be adopted, emission factors to be used, assessing fluxes from deforestation and afforestation, especially from forest enhancement and degradation, is a rigorous scientific endeavour that requires knowledge of international (IPCC) guidelines. The FRL submission also should report limitations and future improvements to enable an understanding of the future direction of FRL development.

Considering this complex process, at the Forest Monitoring Systems and Forest Reference Levels for REDD+ Regional Workshop in Hanoi, Viet Nam in October 2014, organised by FAO through the UN-REDD Programme, countries proposed future support on FRLs based on their levels of progress and experience. Accordingly, on 4-5 May 2015 an expert consultation event on FRL development in Asia and the Pacific was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia for countries that were, at that point, intending to submit their FRLs to the UNFCCC in January 2016. Representatives from these countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Viet Nam) were joined by representatives from Malaysia, which had already submitted a FRL and was undergoing the technical assessment process. Technical and financial support for the workshop was provided by FAO through UN-REDD targeted support to the government of Cambodia. The workshop brought together countries to share experiences and to support FRL development in the region.

The workshop allowed countries to test their readiness for submission and participation in the UNFCCC technical assessment process. Subsequently, Indonesia and Viet Nam submitted their FREL/FRL in January 2016 and are currently undergoing the technical assessment process. Cambodia and Nepal re-evaluated their objectives with regard to FRL development, and decided to postpone submission until January 2017, in order to allow for sufficient preparation. The workshop received positive feedback from participants, and it was proposed to repeat the exercise in the following year.

Accordingly, a second “Expert Consultation Event on FRL development in Asia/Pacific” is proposed to be held in Pokhara, Nepal for the countries in the region that submitted FRLs to UNFCCC in January 2017. These countries (Cambodia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka) will be joined by representatives from Indonesia and Viet Nam, to exchange their experience in preparing their FREL/FRL and participating in the technical assessment process, and by expert advisors from FAO, through UN-REDD targeted support to the government of Nepal. Additional countries (Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Pakistan) working within ICIMOD’s Regional REDD+ initiative will be invited. Technical advisors from FAO and ICIMOD’s expertise in development of Activity Data for forest cover change and in development of methodologies for measuring forest degradation will also be provided.

Objective and Outputs

For those countries participating in the event, the objectives are to:

- provide information on international guidance on designing and constructing REDD+ FRLs (focusing on guidance from the UNFCCC);
- exchange information on country approaches to FRL development and design;
- discuss and explore possible approaches to resolve technical FRL issues encountered by countries;
- discuss emerging lessons from the FRL assessment process under the UNFCCC;
- provide an informal setting for countries to discuss and consult with experts and other colleagues in countries on their approach to FRLs in preparation for the UNFCCC assessment process.

Design and Process:

A two-day event is proposed. Since FRL design is a decision of governments, the main target participants are technical government officers who have been involved in REDD+ readiness especially in MRV, GHG inventory, and NFI and who form part of the team preparing the FREL/FRL submission to the UNFCCC.

This may involve 3 or 4 participants per country. It is also expected that representatives from member countries of HKH region would also participate to have familiarisation and understanding of the FRL process.

The design of the event will focus on experience sharing, parallel country 'clinics' and country-to-country exchanges, through presentations and discussion groups.

Draft programme for FRLs workshop

Date	Time	Event	Organization	Speaker
9 April, 2017	Arrival day			
	All day	Arrival and registration		
	18:00 & onwards	Rapport building and Reception dinner		
10 April, 2017	Day One: Introducing the UNFCCC FRL technical assessment process			
	8:15-8:45	Opening remarks from host	MoFSC; RIC; ICIMOD	MoFSC/RIC ICIMOD
	8:45-9:10	Introduction to FAO's role in assisting countries with FRLs Overview of UNFCCC modalities and state-of-the art of the FRL and REDD+ results reported by countries to the UNFCCC	UN-REDD/FAO	Ben Vickers
	9:10-09:50	Presentation of Viet Nam's FRL technical assessment process Issues encountered by Viet Nam FRL team and how they were addressed Questions - clarifications	Viet Nam Forest Administration (VNFOREST)	
	09:50 – 10:30	Presentation of India's FRL development process and progress		
	10:30 – 10:50	Break		
	10:50 -11:30	Presentation of Malaysia's FRL technical assessment process Issues encountered by Malaysia FRL team and how they were addressed Questions - clarifications	Malaysia REDD+ Unit	
	11:30-12:15	Presentation of Indonesia's FRL technical assessment process Issues encountered by Indonesia FRL team and how they were addressed Questions - clarifications	Indonesia REDD+ Unit	
	12:15-13:15	Lunch		
	13:15-15:30	Parallel country clinics: Responding to initial TA questions and feedback Cambodia Nepal PNG Sri Lanka	All	Facilitators: Till Neeff, Mathieu van Rijn, Hitofumi Abe, Donna Lee, MSR Murthy
	15:30-15:45	Break		
	15:45-17:00	Plenary session: Sharing lessons from TA feedback		Facilitator: Donna Lee

11 April, 2017	Day Two: Next steps for FRL: Planning for TA process and beyond			
	Time	Event	Organization	Speaker
	8:30-8:45	Recap of discussions from first day and introduction to second day	UN-REDD/FAO	Ben Vickers
	8:45-10:45	Parallel country clinics: Modifying FRLs: What can be modified during TA process, and what can be addressed in future FRLs? Cambodia Nepal PNG Sri Lanka	All	Facilitators: Till Neeff, Mathieu van Rijn, Hitofumi Abe, Donna Lee, MSR Murthy
	10:45 – 11:00	Break		
	11:00-12:30	Plenary session: Sharing ideas for FRL revision		Facilitator: Donna Lee
	12:30-13:30	Lunch		
	13:30 – 14:15	Technical progress in estimating and measuring emissions: deforestation, degradation and enhancement Presentation, Q&A	UN-REDD/FAO	Till Neeff
	14:15-15:30	FRLs and finance: Experiences to date Presentation, Q&A	UN-REDD/FAO	Donna Lee
	15:30-15:45	Break		
	15:45-16:00	Workshop summary and follow-up	UN-REDD/FAO	Ben Vickers
	16:00-16:15	Closing remarks from host	Nepal RIC	