

## Discussions on Linkages between REDD+ and FLEGT in Lao PDR (29 August 2017)

This is the first technical meeting between key FLEGT and REDD+ stakeholders in Lao PDR to understand, and brainstorm on potential practical synergies between the two initiatives in the country. In general, stakeholders found this to be timely as both initiatives are in development phases. Working together and potential collaboration were seen by the group as important in order to be more effective and efficient in the long run.

The meeting started with brief presentations by Dr. Khamfeua (FLEGT standing Office - DOFI) and Mr. Khamsene (REDD+ Division - DOF) on the background and introduction to FLEGT and REDD+ in Lao PDR respectively; followed by a panel discussion by two informed experts; and a brainstorming session.

### Key Points from the discussions:

1. **Improved forest governance and law enforcement** is an underlying driver<sup>1</sup> for all of the main deforestation/degradation drivers identified for REDD+. There is a strong role for FLEGT to play under REDD+ implementation.
2. **Logging (legal and illegal)** as a driver of degradation (and deforestation) is a concrete area for linkage for which FLEGT in its broadest sense is the REDD+ PAMS. FLEGT aims to address illegal logging.
3. **Village Forest Management** Legalizing commercial timber harvesting in Village Forestry (which may be part of the new Forestry Law) could be a strong basis for REDD+. For FLEGT, this would place communities as part of the timber supply chain through inclusion of timber from VF in the Timber Legality Definition (TLD). Both processes can also work on monitoring Village Forest implementation.
4. **Forest Conversion** is another area both initiatives are trying to address and where synergies can be formed in monitoring. FLEGT will be addressing timber from conversion areas through the legal framework (Legality Standard 2 on Conversions Areas).
5. **Processes** The focus should not only be on finding synergies or linkages but also where lessons can be learned / drawn from both initiatives, and particularly on how processes of work and engagement can make a difference.
  - a. Civil Society Organization (CSO) and Private Sector involvement – involvement of CSOs in REDD+ has been limited, whereas FLEGT has been able to organize a CSO Network, and to also engage CSOs as part of the Steering Committee. Drawing on the CSO FLEGT Network to also insert REDD+ agenda may help to fast track REDD+ stakeholder engagement.
  - b. Informal dialogue between the two initiatives is essential. There should also be efforts to formalize the dialogue including from the highest level of political engagement, to the ground level. Concrete working procedures such as shared meeting schedules could be a first step in streamlining the coordination.

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<sup>1</sup> There was also some discussion on the use of the terms “drivers” and “underlying causes”. Within the general REDD+ community, there is a common understanding of the terms as follows: “Proximate causes are human activities or immediate actions that directly impact forest cover and loss of carbon. These causes can be grouped into categories such as agriculture expansion (both commercial and subsistence), infrastructure extension and wood extraction. Underlying causes are complex interactions of fundamental social, economic, political, cultural and technological processes that are often distant from their area of impact. These underpin the proximate causes and either operate at the local level or have an indirect impact from the national or global level. They are related to international (i.e. markets, commodity prices), national (i.e. population growth, domestic markets, national policies, governance) and local circumstances (i.e. change in household behaviour) (Geist and Lambin, 2001; 2002; Obersteiner et al., 2009).”

6. It is important to also engage on FLEGT in the wider and more general ‘forest governance’ sense and not just as part of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) process because these two have separate timelines. The VPA process which will result in FLEGT Licensing will take a long time but more immediate forest governance related synergies exist.

## Facilitated brainstorming on areas of synergy

### 1. Areas of work

- a. **Use drivers of D&D as a starting point.** Look at forest risk commodity supply chains and also at existing and potential incentives for reducing deforestation and degradation to help identify links between REDD+ and FLEGT. One option is to 1) look at the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation which are important to both initiatives, 2) assess the PAMs for both initiatives to address the driver and 3) where can both FLEGT and REDD+ work together to address the driver.
- b. **National REDD+ Strategy** will present areas for both initiatives to be able to collaborate. REDD+ has upstream focus and FLEGT has downstream focus. It can be useful to look at things from a supply chain perspective, as FLEGT should be able to help addressing REDD+ drivers particularly as they relate to the supply chain (eg rubber).
  - i. Infrastructure (hydro, road, etc.). Interests for FLEGT would be to ensure legality of conversion timber; interest for REDD+ would be to monitor against unplanned conversion and where planned conversion does take place, to ensure compliance with conversion plans and to minimize impact to forests.
  - ii. MONRE and DOF – impact assessment in dam construction. Pre-conversion assessment.
  - iii. Regulatory framework – important focal areas for both initiatives.
  - iv. Landuse / Land tenure – ditto.
  - v. Provincial REDD+ Action plans and their PAMS – law enforcement is a major PAMs.
  - vi. GCF funding if successful will support Law enforcement for the next 6 years.
- c. **Database Management System (Monitoring).** Both are working on monitoring delivery / results, we need to identify how can both initiatives work together on a common / complementary system. For example, for conversion timber/area, it would be in the interest of REDD+ to be able to monitor changes to forest cover particularly in the surrounding areas of the conversion. It would be of interest to both, if real-time monitoring of conversion areas could be implemented. For REDD+ purposes, the intention would be for law enforcement to intervene to suppress illegal conversion, and for FLEGT, to enable supply chain verification.
- d. **Forest Legality Compendium** – the Forest Legality Compendium was developed by the government together with key stakeholders (GIZ, FAO, etc). This document is important for both FLEGT and REDD+ work. Recently, new regulations are in place and more are being revised (ongoing process), how can this be updated and kept alive with the new legal documents being reviewed/revised? How can we find a ‘common entity’ to keep this updated considering access to this database is important for both initiatives?
- e. **Discussion on PMO 15.** The PMO 15 was needed in order for Government to take stock of the timber sector and develop better policies. PMO in this sense is a one-off policy that needs to be institutionalized into the departmental operations. There is a committee headed by the Deputy Prime Minister to monitor and review the impacts of PMO 15. Nevertheless, at some point the

order will be lifted, and it will be important to think of 'post-PMO15', including through research and through other means.

It is possible that as an after effect of PMO15, timber prices increase, resulting in induced illegal logging. Perhaps one of the synergies could be in relation to incentive structures – how can income from other sources such as REDD+ compensate some of the losses for better forest governance.

## 2. Linkages in the process

- a. **Technical Meetings** - Identify and working together through the technical working groups set up by both FLEGT and REDD+; for example, on the issue of Village Forestry - FLEGT has the Timber Legality Definition (TLD) process to develop the Legality Standard for Village Forestry and REDD+ is also working on identifying laws and gaps for example in Village Forestry. Law Enforcement Technical Advisor's Group (LETAG) is also a mechanism that brings together the TAs working on forestry law enforcement, periodically to share information.
- b. **Technical Working Groups.** Exchanges between the TWG that share common areas of focus should take place. This can be informal at first, but, may make sense to also formalize. FLEGT CSOs could be part of some REDD+ technical working groups.
- c. **Funding.** Working together - breaking down silos and mentality. Eventually, when funding of the activities is considered, a common fund source such as through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), may be tapped for implementation of shared activities.
  - i. Concretely, CliPAD's experience has been that the REDD+ work and findings on Village Forestry were based on the FLEGT TLD development process. This was enabled through CliPAD having an advisor who was shared between the two FLEGT and REDD+ projects.
- d. **Meetings.** Ensuring that joint meetings can be organized when involving same stakeholders and government officers. Both initiatives need to share relevant meeting plans for better planning. In this regard, it is also noted that both processes are developing their own websites, and more information sharing could occur for both the website development, as well as through the websites.
- e. **Outcome orientation.** FLEGT and REDD+ same in the sense that both are outcome-oriented (i.e. particularly in the current phases of the initiatives, the ground-based activities are not meant as the output, but, as input to structure and inform central level dialogue.)
- f. **Government institutions.** Inter-ministerial Steering Committee for FLEGT gives FLEGT leverage at the national level creating strong political will. FLEGT targets high level policy change (mandated by the Prime Minister), has higher leverage and political commitment and negotiation, REDD+ involves lower level activities and struggles with high level commitments – working together could positively influence the REDD+ process and high level decisions / policy reform could positively benefit the REDD+ implementation.

Having two separate Departments (DOF, DOFI) as head of the two initiatives is a potential barrier. But there are many ways to overcome this barrier. FLEGT and REDD+ involves many sectors including beyond MAF. FLEGT has succeeded in getting strong ownership including from MOIC. In order to bring people together, it is important to identify the common agenda, and to get people to understand that this is not just 'extra work', but in fact, helping government agencies in their government mandates. Important to shift mental gear to think in terms of the benefits of working together, rather than think of coordination as additional transaction

cost/time. In order to get agencies of REDD+ and FLEGT engaged and committed to creating synergies and working together, a top down approach with directive / instruction from the Prime Minister may be one viable option; we note that when REDD+ enters into demonstration phase, the synergies will become more apparent, in terms of the shared areas of work.

- g. **Working at the Province and District level.** While it is important for this discussion on synergies to take place at the highest level i.e. Steering Committee level, it is also important for DOF and DOFI staff at province and districts to also see the links. REDD+ has strong engagement at the province level, a question was asked about FLEGT's progress at the province level and where/how pilot provinces for both initiatives can address concrete issues. It is important that for both Central and local levels, the tasks related to REDD+ and FLEGT be formally reflected in the mandates of the government agencies (ie as TORs).
- h. **Involvement of CSOs.** There is potential for REDD+ to learn from the FLEGT process, and even further, to consider expanding the scope of the FLEGT CSO Network to address REDD+, which should not be seen as an entirely different area of work.
- i. The Lao FLEGT process has been successful to date, in cultivating a process and space for CSO engagement. In FLEGT, there is strong organized participation by CSOs and they are fully on board because they are kept engaged in the process, at the invitation of the Government. On the other hand, so far, REDD+ projects have tended to work directly with communities and FLEGT worked through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The REDD+ Div. noted that one model is not better than the other and ideally engagement at both levels is are very important. The REDD+ Div., also noted that the TWGs under REDD+ are open for observers (though, currently, one the FRL/MRV TWG is open in the sense that invitation is sent out through the FSSWG email list serve.)
  - ii. Under REDD+, the SESA (under FCPF) had direct engagement with communities and included engagement at the '*khumban*' level in their consultations. This was considered (by the WB safeguards officer) to be a strong point of the Lao SESA. (SUFORD had used the same model too where the emphasis was to work with local communities and not with CSOs).
  - iii. CliPAD (REDD+) with Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) developed the developed the Guidelines on village level FPIC. The district level LFNC and the Lao Women's Union were engaged to jointly conduct this guideline in 70 villages. CSOs were not approached as an entity to conduct this exercise, as there is no CSO/NPA coverage in Huaphanh where CliPAD operates.<sup>2</sup>  
It was noted though that such a guideline could be taken up by FLEGT, but, in order to do so, it should be part of the national legal framework (whereas, the CliPAD guidelines were approved at the provincial level, and are considered best practice, rather than as a legal framework.)
  - iv. Both FLEGT and REDD+ have potential in involving CSOs/NPAs in work under Land use planning. CIDSE, for example, has experience working at 3 levels and has been involved in the acquisition of a communal land title for a community in Khammouane. "Legal

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<sup>2</sup> Note of correction: In the early phase of CliPAD (project based REDD+ approach around Nam Phui and NEPL) the project worked with the Lao Biodiversity Association (NPA) on conducting FPIC at village level.

Education Programme” also by CIDSE can link to FLEGT, district staff can be trained for ToT.

**Immediate next steps:**

1. A pro-active response to this meeting was requested, the group agreed to comeback together and look at the activities we can really work on based on the minutes of this meeting.
2. Dr. Khamfeua suggests that FLEGT SO and REDD+ Division should have an internal meeting in order to understand exactly where in the FLEGT and REDD+ departmental set up, the two offices can link.
3. Scale up this meeting to get both FLEGT Steering committees and REDD+ TF meet and discuss practical synergies.

**List of Attendees:**

1. Khamsene Ounekham (REDD+ Div., DoF)
2. Khamfeua Sirivongs (FLEGT SO., DOFI)
3. Sebastian Koch (CliPAD)
4. Jens Kallabinski (CliPAD)
5. Heiko Woerner (ProFLEGT)
6. Paula Williams (FCPF)
7. Aidan Flannigan (SUFORD)
8. Eiji Egashira (F-REDD)
9. Nori Kitamura (F-REDD/FCPF)
10. Khankham Duangvila (PSNUA)
11. Thoumthone Vongvisouk (FOF, NUOL)
12. Thomas Okfen (CliPAD)
13. Jeremy Broadhead (EFI)
14. Josil Murray (FAO-FLEGT)
15. Akiko Inoguchi (FAO-REDD+)