

UN-REDD  
PROGRAMME



UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/Report

# Report

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VIET NAM PHASE II  
EXECUTIVE GROUP MEETING

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26 February 2014  
Hanoi, Viet Nam

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## I. Summary of Decisions

### Session 1 – Opening session

1. The Executive Group adopts the agenda of the meeting with no amendments.

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### Session 2 – Overview of progress

2. The EG approves the progress report and recommends that the next report provides more analytical information and requests more focus on outcomes 5 and 6.
3. Noting with concern the delays against originally planned timelines, the EG recommends that specific measures be taken to (i) accelerate recruitments within UN agencies and within government; (ii) deploy the staff and support needed from the Ministry; (iii) accelerate the process of finalization and approval of the PIM; (iv) finalize Letters of agreement (LoA) with Co-Implementing Partners (CIPs) as anticipated in the Programme document and implement the agreements as soon as possible; selection of and signing of LoAs with additional CIPs, as appropriate, review procurement procedures and initiate the process for contracting other service providers.
4. Adequate capacity being one of the critical elements of success in implementation of the Programme, recommends accelerating the process of selecting and contracting implementing partners based on the most efficient and effective modality. This modality should be agreed by MARD and UN agencies and described in the PIM.

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### Session 3a – Revised results framework

5. Endorses the proposed revised results framework as a framework for the Programme, noting that a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan with monitoring methods would be subsequently developed to allow tracking of progress.

### Session 3b – Approval of 2014 Workplan and Budget

6. Requests the PMU to proactively involve and ensure the participation of CSOs, women and ethnic minorities in the implementation of the Programme.
7. Approves the funding allocation for 2014 based on the proposed AWP with the recommendation of paying adequate attention on Outcomes 5 and 6 and requests the PMU to adjust the Programme according to the recommendations made by the EG as recorded in the EG meeting report.

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8. In the spirit of adaptive management, the EG delegates authority to the PEB to adjust the AWP and budget maximal 25% of or within a range of 250,000 of budget allocation at the outcome level within the year.
9. Recommends that MARD reviews and simplifies procedures to streamline internal decision-making process, strengthen the JCG and empower the NPD for making day-to-day decisions to accelerate the Programme implementation.
10. Recommends the Programme Management Unit (PMU) to work more closely with the Provincial Programme Management Units (PPMUs) to ensure they have enough capacities and fully own the processes, and the implementation of the Programme and its piloting are suitable with local circumstances.

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#### Session 4a – EG TORs

11. Endorses its TORs and conduct of meeting subject to reflecting the modifications suggested pertaining to the participation of CSO and ethnic groups as well as editorial changes.
12. Requests the provision of more analytical documents for its subsequent meetings.

#### Session 4b – Update on the PIM

13. Endorses the proposed approach and timeframe for the completion of the PIM and encourages the PMU and all involved to speed up the process, granting May as the latest deadline for approval of the PIM and requests that in the meantime alternative procedures be applied for the implementation of activities.

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#### Session 5 – Next meeting of the EG

14. Tentatively agrees on the second half of November 2014 for the next EG meeting to be held in Hanoi with dates to be firmed closer to the date.
15. Expresses its appreciation and vote of thanks to the Government of Viet Nam for their hospitality and fruitful meeting.

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## II. Introduction

The Viet Nam Phase II Programme was signed and initiated in June 2014, with a starting date of implementation in July 2014. Based on the Programme governance, the Executive Group (EG) meets once a year or additionally as indicated in the Programme document. This constitutes the first face to face meeting of the EG since the inception of the programme and the present report aims to provide a record of the decisions and key discussions raised in the context of the meeting.

The meeting is chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and EG members comprise (i) a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; (ii) a representative of Norway; (iii) a representative of the UN-REDD programme agencies. The UN-REDD Secretariat provides secretariat services to the EG.

The meeting was held in Hanoi on February 26 and consisted of 4 different sessions, of which 5 items, including the meeting agenda, were presented for approval of the EG. The sessions are presented below succinctly together with a record of discussions that ensued. Decisions are presented at the outset of the document and referred back to in the context of the sessions.

## III. Session 1 – Opening and approval of agenda

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/I/1b – Provisional Agenda

Minister Phat opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and highlighting the main purpose and outcomes expected from the meeting.

*Decision 1 was agreed by consensus*

## IV. Session 2 – Overview of progress

### Session 2a – Overview of progress and results

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/II/2a – Draft Annual Narrative Report

#### **NPD**

The National Programme Director (NPD) presented an overview of progress since the inception of the Programme and introduced results achieved to date in the areas of programme management, awareness raising and technical assistance. He also provided a summary of the key challenges and weaknesses faced in this first startup period and proposed solutions to address them. These include:

- finalizing the Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) with harmonized and simplified rules and procedures;
- accelerating the recruitment of staff and consultants; and
- engaging more closely within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and other Ministries.

## Session 2b – Financial status

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/II/2b – Funding Framework

### **MPTF – O**

Presented overview of funding framework, deposits and transfers to date and confirmed the budget available for programming of US\$ 6 million.

### **Discussions**

#### **UN-REDD**

Praised Viet Nam as one of the most dynamic, fast-moving countries that has distinguished itself on innovation in piloting FPIC, benefit sharing, MRV and establishing a strong baseline in terms of Phase I as well as being one of the first countries to launch Phase II.

Gave assurances that all UN agencies will provide the same level of support as the partners and will strive to provide Viet Nam with the highest quality services in its endeavors.

Highlighted that REDD+ is one of the most important ways to participate in climate change mitigation but also acknowledged the potential for engagement in adaptation activities through REDD+ funding. It was, however, noted that significant progress needs to be made to address existing bottlenecks and to tap into emerging opportunities.

Welcomed Viet Nam's vision on adjusting the Programme to align it with the UNFCCC Warsaw Framework and extended an invitation to provide a presentation on this at the forthcoming UN-REDD Programme Policy Board meeting to be held in Lima, Peru as it would be of interest and value to other partners.

Invited Viet Nam to consider playing a role with regard to the land use and forest sector at the UNSG's Climate Summit (September 2014) and extended the support of the UN-REDD Programme to explore ways to raise awareness of Viet Nam's achievements to date.

#### **Norway**

Endorsed the comments made by the UN-REDD Programme, and welcomed the progress of the last few months, recognizing that they constitute significant gains needed to be built on for the continuation of the Programme.

Noted with regret delays incurred with regard to the initiation of the Programme, noting however, that these concerns have been alleviated by the positive prospects of enhanced implementation ability.

Commented on specific aspects of progress so far:

- Appreciated the reporting format as well as the open and frank assessment of what has and has not been achieved; recommended maintaining the same format and candid reporting and requested more analytical information on the how, what and why for future iterations of the

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report. In particular, a narrative text to accompany the budget and workplan was requested for the next EG.

- Noted the inequality between progress in outcomes of the Programme and expressed concern about the lower attention afforded to outcomes 5 and 6; emphasizing that it is critically important to ensure equal implementation of all outcomes.
- Endorsed the proposed solutions to the challenges as presented by the NPD and requested information on progress related to the PIM, which is yet to be provided in its draft form to EG.
- Requested that the necessary staffing at all levels, UN and others be provided appropriately and swiftly, so as to meet the timelines and commitments taken by all without compromising on quality of delivery.
- Requested the completion of agreements with the Co-implementing partners (CIP) and other service providers, noting there should be no reason preventing their immediate implementation.

#### **UN-REDD**

Provided an update regarding the recruitment process anticipated in the Programme for the two international staff as well as expected dates of approval.

Flagged that the CIP modality is key for the timely implementation of the Programme and urged the Ministry to contract the CIPs identified in the Programme Document as they were intentionally selected and identified with a view to accelerate contracting processes.

Indicated that the UN agencies recognize that the harmonized approach has been delayed, however informed that the last pending transfer for 2013 has been processed and communicated the UN's commitment to explore other modalities for enhanced fund transfer. Acknowledged that the message of concern expressed from both the Vietnamese and Norwegian sides had been clearly heard and that the agencies have resolved the short-term issue and are also diligently working to resolve the longer term issue.

#### **Chair**

Recommended that the EG takes note of and endorses the report, taking into consideration the recommendations and requests of the EG for the next report. Resolved to address implementation delays, strictly follow timing and accelerate the recruitment of experts for key positions; expressed gratitude for the suggestions to the Ministry and indicated all efforts will be deployed to address issues internally with a view to carrying out implementation as planned.

*Decisions 2, 3 and 4 were agreed by consensus.*

### **V. Session 3 – Revised results framework and 2014 workplan**

This session covered two important elements for decision of the EG. First the approval of the revised results framework which was developed on the basis of the agreed framework as part of the project development and taking into account feedback from the consultative process undertaken. Second the approval of the proposed workplan and budget allocation for 2014, resulting as needed in the request of an additional transfer by the donor.

#### **Session 3a – Revised results framework**

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/III/3a – Updated Results Framework

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The NPD presented key changes to the results framework and highlighted the main issues that were addressed during the inception phase, including a consultative process to seek feedback and inputs to the results framework. The revised document was presented for approval of the EG.

### **Discussion**

#### **Norway**

Indicated the changes to the results framework are acceptable and in line with the emerging results framework negotiated in the run up to the signature of the Programme Document.

Commended Vietnamese and UN partners for the broad consultation on the results framework with a number of stakeholders and the participatory process applied in its revision.

Recognized that this type of instrument is never perfect but the current draft constitutes a workable basis for proceeding, and recommended its approval as a framework for Programme implementation.

Indicated that some follow-up is needed by the Programme in terms of methodologies and weighing different elements in the process of monitoring and measuring results; acknowledged that it has been agreed to follow-up on the results framework as a living document, and will therefore not require the EG's decision.

Commended the attention brought to ensuring links and consistency with the language and substance of the decisions of the UNFCCC negotiations and outcomes of the Warsaw COP.

#### **UN-REDD**

Endorsed the changes to the results framework and seconded comments made by Norway.

Noting that it is usually impossible to capture all the different elements in such a tool, stressed the importance of taking the next step and developing a monitoring plan.

Welcomed the participation of CSOs and IPs during the development of the results framework as well as their presence and participation in the EG, offered to share experience and support with the self-selection process conducted at a global level in the context of the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board.

#### **Observer and temporary representative of CSOs**

Provided information on the self-selection process for temporary representation of CSOs, and representativeness of the network of NGOs that have taken part in the process.

With a view to reporting back to the network of CSOs represented here, inquired about the modalities for the participation of CSOs in the implementation of UN-REDD Phase II Programme.

Requested additional information on how gender issues can be addressed in the context of the Programme.

Confirmed the willingness to contribute from the CSO perspective and reiterated the privilege of participating in the meeting.

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#### **NPD**

Clarified the process followed for the consultation with the CSOs in the preparation and inception phases and indicated that CIP, service provider and consultative function were the main modalities for involvement in the implementation of the Phase 2 Programme.

Requested CSOs to send a concept providing an overview of their vision regarding their potential role in being part of the Phase II Programme implementation, which on the basis of the results framework, would highlight their knowledge of the issues, provinces and stakeholders.

#### **Representative of Ethnic Minorities**

Clarified that ethnic people are not structured or represented by CSOs or organizations thereby hindering their involvement in REDD+ implementation; this is notably due to the fact that ethnic minorities do not have their own organizations.

Stressed that as ethnic minorities do not have their own channels to convey messages and concerns, this can prove to be quite time-consuming. Subsequently requested support from the Programme for capacity building for ethnic minorities to get organized and better structured to support REDD+ implementation.

Inquired how many staff from ethnic minorities are represented in the PMUs, at which level they can convey the voices of the ethnic minorities to the authorities.

Called for more communication and awareness raising with ethnic people at the local level in order to better understand the repercussions of REDD+ on their livelihoods and their lifestyle.

#### **NPD**

Provided information on the FPIC guidelines and the involvement of communities in village development plans and village development funds.

Informed that agencies for the establishment of these funds have been announced and there will be an opportunity for broader participation of ethnic minorities in the consultation process, in the identification of priorities and in the implementation of selected REDD+ actions.

#### **UN-REDD**

In relation to the question on gender, informed that Viet Nam had been invited to the regional workshop in Bangkok on 26 – 27 March with the aim to share lessons from the regional study on gender and REDD+ being undertaken jointly with LEAF and WOCAM.

#### **Session 3 b – Proposed Annual Workplan 2014**

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/III/3b – Annual Workplan 2014

The NPD presented the approach for the development of the workplan and highlighted key activities envisaged for 2014. The presentation concluded with a report of the ODA component of the budget allocation per outcome and per agency, the investment for 2014 representing US\$ 14,430,054 of which 10 million is proposed to be transferred to the Vietnamese implementing partner for implementation.

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## Discussions

### Norway

Commended the PMU for conducting a comprehensive and consultative workplanning exercise and for presenting a workplan which is clearly built on the approved results framework and outputs and activities planned in the project document.

Recommended that the EG approves the workplan and provided comments for the preparation and implementation in 2014:

- Recommended supplementing the workplan with more strategic explanatory analytical text justifying priorities and complementing the detailed worksheet with a narrative.
- Appreciated that the workplan is extremely ambitious in light of the lost time and attempts to catch up on the delays; appreciates intention and ambition however requests the PMU to inform the EG and consult intersessionally in case serious deviations occur.
- Noted that the focus on outcomes 5 and 6 is comparatively lower than on other outcomes and in comparing with the overall amounts allocated to these outcomes over the lifetime of the Programme; recommended giving additional priority to these outcomes in particular in view of the comments made by the CSO and IPs.
- In view of the need for flexibility, suggested delegating to the PEB decision for the reallocation of funding between different outcomes in the order of up to 25% or up to US\$250,000 per outcome and requested the Secretariat to prepare specific language for adoption as a decision of the EG.
- Flagged the importance of seeking synergies with other initiatives that are related to REDD+ and provide the baseline or additional support; requested the next report to include some information.
- Reiterating that the level of ambition is quite high, recommended the PMU to undertake a proper assessment of the time and staff resources that would be needed and encouraged the Joint Coordination Group (JCG) to review the workplan from the point of view of staff allocation across the board.
- Re-emphasized the importance of entering into contracts with the CIPs and service providers in view of the level of ambition, either through the UN agencies or the Ministry itself as is more suitable.
- While congratulating the Government of Vietnam and the UN family for achievements since 2009 and the initiation of the quick-start programme, expressed concern that there is much to do and will require streamlined structure to support implementation. Indicated that the UN family and the collaborative partnership needs to review opportunities for streamlining.
- Stressed the need to have an efficient structure within government that is commensurate with the level of ambition. Stressed that a closer look and effort at streamlining further the decision-making processes is necessary; suggested that the JCG could be given the authority under the PEB to move more rapidly on what needs to be done and on decisions to be made.
- While welcoming the developments for new international staff as reported by the UN, stressed that the capacity gap at the local level will be a challenge and signaled the importance of closely monitoring capacity gaps and taking a pro-active approach in identifying service providers.

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- Emphasized the need to tap into the expertise of CSOs using available modalities and recommended that these arrangements be formalized as soon as possible either through CIP arrangements or as service providers.
- Appreciated the comments and responses related to gender equality which has been at the core for the government and UN family; acknowledging that how to do it is a question that still needs to be addressed, and the challenges and benefits that arise from engaging with relevant institutions at province level. Requested all partners to be cognizant of the fact that while broad inclusiveness might be time and resource consuming, the proper participation of ethnic minorities, women and other stakeholders will enhance the results on the ground.
- Stressed that all three outputs under outcome 6 are critical and suggested that starting with Lao PDR would be a priority option as the level of awareness is high and it is a country which could swiftly engage in this area, in particular as one of the pilot provinces borders Lao PDR.

## **UN-REDD**

Joined Norway in congratulating the PMU and team for the thoughtful work and consultative process and agreed with the suggested approach by Norway for the approval of the workplan.

Confirmed that from experience gathered so far throughout the UN-REDD Programme, safeguards are fundamental and much attention is needed; recommended strengthened focus on outcome 6 and committed that the UN will look into means to accelerate the focus on these outcomes.

Supported comments and suggested approaches on streamlining processes and deploying capacity.

Emphasized the need to take an approach of adaptive management and for flexibility in managing the budget and activities to allow for necessary changes in view of the complexity and innovation of the Programme, therefore supporting the suggested delegation of authority, within limits, to the PEB.

Re-emphasized the need to delegate many of the activities to CIPs and partners so as to broaden the reach and responsibility to them rather than burdening the staff of the PMU.

*Decisions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were agreed by consensus*

## **VI. Session 4 – Programme governance**

This session comprises two items, one of which for decision and the second for information of the EG. The decision item relates to the TOR of the EG, rules of procedure and conduct of meetings. The second item of the session relates to the PIM, one of the critical pre-requisites of the fund. By virtue of its importance this item was included in the agenda for the EG to provide an overview of the process and progress so far.

### **Session 4a – EG TORs and conduct of meetings**

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/IV/4a – EG TOR

The UN-REDD Secretariat read out the version of the EG TOR as included in the programme document as well as an elaboration of the conduct of meetings of the EG. The document was provided to the EG for suggested modifications and approval.

## **UN-REDD**

Recommended the adoption of the TOR subject to minor editorial corrections, the inclusion of H.E. the MARD Minister as chair, and suggested the inclusion of a representative of ethnic minorities as observers in addition to the CSOs.

## **Norway**

Recommended the approval of the TOR as they remain in line with what has been discussed during the Programme preparation process and provide important clarification for the preparation and conduct of the EG meetings.

Noted the weakness in preparing for this meeting, in particular the delays in receiving all necessary documents two weeks in advance of the EG, based on some misunderstanding between the parties on responsibilities. Noted that processes adopted to address these should avoid similar occurrences in preparation of EG meetings.

*Decisions 11 and 12 were agreed by consensus.*

## **Session 4b – Update on the PIM**

UN-REDD/VIET/EG1/2014/IV/4b – Progress update on the development of the PIM

The NPD presented an update on progress and process so far in developing the PIM, informed the EG that it was at an advanced stage and proposed to the EG a set of timelines and subsequent steps towards the finalization of the PIM indicating it would be available to the EG for approval by May 2014.

*Decision 13 was agreed by consensus*

## **VII. Session 5 – Next meeting**

Following a short statement by the UN-REDD Secretariat concerning provisions in the programme document and calendar issues to be taken into consideration, tentative dates were indicated as the last two weeks of November 2014, in Hanoi. Dates to be confirmed three months ahead of time. The EG flagged that this was predicated on the PEB meeting being one month ahead of the EG meeting taking into consideration the sequence of events.

*Decision 14 was agreed by consensus.*

## **VIII. Closing remarks**

In closing, the EG provided general feedback and closing remarks to the NPD, thanked the government of Vietnam and made observations of general order in relation to REDD+ progress.

## **UN-REDD**

Expressed thanks to the Government of Vietnam, to the PMU and to the other partners in conducting and holding the meeting which is a significant milestone in progress.

Acknowledged the critical importance of this Phase II Programme and acknowledged that Vietnam is under the international spotlight as it pioneers this path forward.

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**Norway**

Delivered closing remarks on the bigger plan, the hope that there will be a second phase and acknowledged that Vietnam has come very far, and is delivering and leading thanks primarily to the leadership of the government.

Commended the work of the UN organizations in delivering essential development efforts, demonstrating a quality environmental and climate related programme and success in pursuing reform. Highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum and demonstrating the feasibility of REDD+ as a lever of sustainable and green development pathways and, while warning of the potential leakage effects, recommended to keep in mind the potential to reach out to neighbors through regional cooperation and recognized the potential to boost the momentum for REDD+ in the sub-region.

Acknowledged once again the leadership of the government, recognizing the many challenges faced and encouraging innovative and daring solutions to those.

On behalf of the participants, the co-chair offered congratulations to all.

Meeting was adjourned with congratulations to all and sincere thanks to the support teams.

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