



## ENSURING FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION FOR ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN REDD+

One of the seven Cancun safeguards is the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders in actions to reduce emissions from forests. But what does this mean in practice, and more importantly, what steps can countries take to ensure that this safeguard is respected?

This challenge has recently been tackled by the REDD+ Taskforce Secretariat in Cambodia. Overall guidance and coordination for the REDD+ programme in Cambodia is provided by the National REDD+ Taskforce. But, under Cambodian law, members of a Taskforce must be government officials. Therefore, a way had to be found to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can have their views heard by the Taskforce. The solution identified in Cambodia's REDD+ Readiness Roadmap was the establishment of a "Consultation Group" (CG) that would work side-by-side with the Taskforce. The process adopted by Cambodia in establishing the CG, and lessons learnt from that process are described in a new UN-REDD report: "[Selection Process for REDD+ Consultation Group Representatives in Cambodia](#)". General information on the CG can be found at: <http://www.cambodia-redd.org/category/national-redd-framework/consultation-group>

The CG selection process was guided by the joint UN-REDD/FCPF stakeholder engagement guidelines. A key point in the guidelines is to allow all stakeholder groups to self-select their representatives. One of the key factors that contributed to the success of the process was the establishment of a "Voluntary Facilitation Committee" (VFC), which was made up of volunteers from NGOs, IP groups, government, development partners, and the private sector who were willing to contribute their time to design all aspects of the process. This ensured that no one group could be accused of influencing the design of the process.

The VFC met an impressive 15 times between February and August 2013, and reached decisions on: which stakeholder groups to engage with (nine groups were identified), the process of the call for candidates and criteria for candidates to meet; the form of voting, eligible voter lists, and the organization of the selection workshop. Eligible voters for most groups were able to vote on-line or in person, and a postal vote was also planned, but proved not to be necessary. One exception was the process for IPs, which was based on election of provincial IP delegates, who then met and elected their representatives from among themselves.

The CG is now in place, but significant challenges remain. The role of the 18 members (2 representatives from each of the nine stakeholder groups) is not to inform the Taskforce of their own views on any given topic, but the views of their constituents. This means that there needs to be an effective and efficient process for two-way communications between each CG member and his or her constituents. The design of such a process is obviously challenging in the case of stakeholder groups who live in remote locations. These processes are now being developed, and the VFC, whose mandate officially terminated with the selection of the CG, is continuing to play a role in the design of appropriate processes.

Although it is unlikely that Cambodia's approach can be adopted in its entirety by other countries, the lessons are applicable to everyone, and for this reason, should be considered by all national REDD+ programmes.

*As contributors to Go-REDD+, we aim to stimulate debate by commenting on some of the latest papers and publications related to REDD+. The conclusions we draw, and the questions we pose, are intended to facilitate critical examination of these papers.*

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