

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Mechanism

National Consultation and Participation for REDD

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This note presents some technical guidance on how to prepare an effective Consultation and Participation Plan

Introduction

1. Multi-stakeholder consultation and participation will be critical to the effective implementation of REDD, and it will be an essential feature of the FCPF Readiness Mechanism. Forests are the direct source of livelihood for millions of communities around the world, and as such, forest-related policies should be consulted broadly. In the case of REDD, the need for consultations is even greater given the significant information vacuum at the national and local level regarding this new topic. In addition to informing stakeholders about REDD, consultations will play a key role in designing effective and more sustainable REDD policies and programs.

2. Consultations are held for the following reasons and can help achieve the following goals, which apply to REDD readiness as pursued under the FCPF Readiness Mechanism:

- a. Improve the quality of decision-making process by capturing the experience of specialized civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples groups (IPs) and other similar groups;
- b. Tap the knowledge of IPs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) that work at the community level;
- c. Strengthen the voice of the poor and the excluded by consulting with IPs and CSOs whose membership comprises such groups;
- d. Promote sustainability for proposed government reforms, projects, programs, and policies;
- e. Appreciate the variety in the needs of different population groups, including gender, ethnic, socio-economic, or geographical variations;
- f. Set the foundation for broad-based participation in the ensuing design and implementation of development interventions; and
- g. Assist governments in increasing transparency, public understanding and citizen involvement in development decision making.¹

3. Countries participating in the FCPF Readiness Mechanism are expected to implement a Consultation and Participation Plan before and/or while they develop their REDD Strategy.

¹ *Consultations with Civil Society - A Sourcebook (2007)*
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/873204-1111663470099/20489462/ConsultationsSourcebook.pdf>

Key Objectives and Principles of Effective Consultations and Participation

4. Consultation can be defined as a continuous process of participation of all relevant stakeholders in the decisions throughout the formulation and execution of REDD policies and programs.
5. Consultation should be understood as a means to achieve certain goals and not as a goal in itself. Its basic purpose is to make decision-making more inclusive, transparent and accountable - this ultimately will not only enhance its benefits to locally-impacted people and other stakeholders but also increase REDD's long-term viability. Policies to promote REDD will only be successful with meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups such as forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples (IPs), women and youth.
6. Key principles for effective consultations and participation include the following:
 - a. *Consultations should be premised on and facilitate access to information.* Access to information provides an important guard against arbitrariness in public decision making, and can help enhance transparency and accountability. In the context of REDD, information dissemination at all levels will be a critical pre-requisite to meaningful consultations. Public awareness and Information, education and communication campaigns are important vehicles for ensuring that key stakeholders understand the objectives of REDD and their role in the process, and can make informed and substantive contributions to the formulation of REDD strategies and policies.
 - b. *Consultations should facilitate meaningful participation at all levels.* The consultation process should be inclusive and not be seen as top-down process. It is therefore important to establish structures and mechanisms to manage the process which includes a broad range of relevant stakeholders at the national and local level. National REDD committees should have representatives from relevant stakeholder groups with direct participation by indigenous peoples and NGO groups. In addition to setting national committees, participatory forums and structures need to be established at the local level to ensure active engagement of local stakeholders.
 - c. *Consultations should facilitate dialogue, exchange of information and consensus building.* Effective forest governance within REDD will entail genuine ownership by all relevant stakeholders. This requires time for mutual understanding and the acceptance of goals and strategies; and facilitating collaboration and consensus.
 - d. *Mechanisms for grievance, conflict resolution and redress* must be established and accessible during the consultation process, and throughout the implementation of REDD policies and measures.
 - e. *Recognizing diverse stakeholders and strengthen the voice of vulnerable groups especially IPs and forest dwellers.* Different stakeholders have different stakes and /or interest in REDD and some may be positively or negatively impacted, so the consultation should be held at various levels. Special emphasis should be given to the issue of IPs in relation to land tenure and resource use rights and property rights. In many tropical forest countries, land tenure and policy frameworks for IPs are unclear as they often have customary/ancestral rights that are not necessarily

codified in or are inconsistent with national laws. The other important issue to consider for IPs and other forest dwellers is that of livelihoods. Thus clarifying rights to land and carbon assets, including community (collective) rights, and introducing better control over the resources will be critical priorities for REDD plan formulation and implementation. Consultations with IPs and forest dwellers should use wherever possible existing networks and local level institutions. Box1 gives a brief overview of the World Bank Operational Policy 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples, which applies to the FCPF. Countries that have signed on to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be expected to adhere to the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

- f. *Linking consultation processes to planning and decision-making processes.* It is critical to have a feedback loop. Information gleaned from the consultation process has to be incorporated into policy design and decision making processes. It is also important to ensure the public disclosure of all information and analysis gathered from the consultation process. It should be clearly, publicly documented how views gathered through the consultation process have been taken into account and where they have not, explanations provided as to why they were not incorporated.

Box 1: World Bank Operational Policy 4.10 – Indigenous Peoples

This policy aims to ensure that the development process fully respects the dignity, human rights, economies, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. The policy calls for the recipient country to engage in a process of free, prior, and informed consultation, and the Bank provides financing only where free, prior, and informed consultation results in broad community support to the project by the affected Indigenous Peoples. The policy includes measures to (a) avoid potentially adverse effects on the Indigenous Peoples' communities; or (b) when avoidance is not feasible, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for such effects. Operations are also designed to ensure that the Indigenous Peoples receive social and economic benefits that are culturally appropriate and gender and inter-generationally inclusive.

Capacity Building

7. In order for the consultations to be meaningful, it is important to build local capacity, especially of IPs and other forest dwellers. This involves providing them with information, knowledge and awareness so that they have a solid understanding of REDD and can engage in the consultations more effectively. The capacity building should focus on three key issues:

- a. Promoting awareness about the impacts of avoided deforestation and forest degradation;
- b. Building understanding of the technicalities of REDD and of trade-offs involved; and
- c. Promoting the active participation of local communities in identifying context-specific solutions and strengthening their role in decision-making and planning processes.

Elements of an effective Consultation and Participation Plan

8. A good consultation and participation process is one that is carefully planned with clear goals and responsibilities agreed to by all institutions involved. To ensure positive outcomes, the scope and objectives must be clarified at the outset and responsibilities should be clearly defined and agreed to by all implementing institutions.
9. A good consultation should:
 - a. Effectively provide information to stakeholders about all key issues pertaining to REDD;
 - b. Enable different stakeholders to express their particular interests and points of view;
 - c. Realistically assess the socio-political and socio-economic context; and
 - d. Identify the stakes of different stakeholders.
10. Annex 1 proposes a series of practical steps to design, carry out and learn from consultations.

Annex 1: A Practical Guide to Carry Out Consultations

This annex proposes a series of practical steps to design, carry out and learn from consultations. For each step, a checklist in the form of questions is proposed to help assess that the objectives of the step have been met.

Step 1

Planning: Define the desired outcomes of consultations

A good consultation and participation process is one that is carefully planned and contains clear goals. One of the first steps in assembling the consultation plan would be the preparation of a realistic budget and financial plan. This should be done by the National REDD Committee or the agency(ies) or committee(s) responsible for REDD policy design.

Step 2

Planning: Develop a Consultation and Participation Plan and request endorsement through a national stakeholder workshop

A national level workshop should be held to initiate the consultation and participation process. The workshop should include a broad range of local and national stakeholders (please see Step 5). The goal of this workshop is to endorse the Consultation and Participation Plan proposed by the national government. This draft plan includes the elements contained in Steps 3-8 below. It is important to ensure that the initial consultation phase not be open-ended to avoid raising undue expectations on the part of communities.

Step 3

Planning: Select the consultation and outreach methods

The most effective consultations are custom-designed to place and purpose and provide for adequate budgets and human resources. A variety of tools and methods can be used to allow for bottom-up participation and ensure that information is rigorously gathered and fairly presented.

The following methods/tools could be considered for consultation:

- Workshops (at national, regional or local level, with the selection of appropriate time, location, and participation);
- Surveys;
- Focus group discussions at community levels;
- Advisory groups;
- Information and education campaigns.

The communication and outreach methods should ensure that adequate and timely information is provided to all stakeholders in an accessible language and style. A choice could be made amongst the various forms of communication media. This could include various media, such as:

- Printed materials;
- Displays and exhibits;
- Electronic media;
- Informational sessions;
- Community radios;
- Local drama.

Checklist:

- *Is the chosen method suitable for the objective?*
- *Is the technique appropriate for the size and kind of audience?*
- *Is the method appropriate for the technical knowledge of the participants?*
- *Will the proposed method create an environment conducive to open and honest communication with a high level of trust even among the most vulnerable groups?*
- *Are sufficient budgets allocated to undertake the proposed activities?*
- *Have participants been informed well in advance?*
- *Will suitably qualified staff be involved?*
- *Has sufficient information been provided for participants to make informed judgments?*
- *Is the technical level of the information suited to different stakeholders?*
- *Are the appropriate language and vocabulary used?*

Step 4

Planning: Define the issues to consult on

The key issues should broadly correspond to the R-Plan components. In the case of REDD, issues for consultation may include (but are not limited to):

- Current status of national forests ;
- Previous and current policies to halt deforestation and forest degradation, their successes and failures (lessons learned);
- Main causes and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- Proposed REDD strategies;
- Inclusive participation in the design and implementation of REDD strategies;
- Institutional, policy and regulatory frameworks;
- Opportunity costs of land use;
- Issues of land use rights/ land tenure systems;
- Issues on forest governance;

- Interests of Indigenous Peoples and other forest dwellers;
- The economic, social and environmental impacts of REDD and the mitigation of risks;
- The role of the private sector;
- Groups likely to gain or lose from REDD activities;
- Equitable and effective distribution of REDD revenues; or
- Existing and future monitoring systems to keep track of forests and forest emissions.

Checklist

- *Does the Consultation and Outreach Plan include all activities envisaged in the R-Plan?*
- *Is the list of issues sufficient to provide a comprehensive discussion of REDD in your country?*
- *Does the consultation plan include a holistic approach to REDD, including all relevant sectors?*
- *Is the list of issues focused enough to reach the desired outcome of the consultations?*
- *Does the list of issues correspond well to the consultation method and budget allocation?*

Step 5

Planning: Identify stakeholders

The planners need to identify the groups that have a stake/interest in the forest and those that will be affected by REDD activities. The stakeholder groups should have appropriate knowledge about the issues to be consulted upon. If their existing level of information and knowledge is not sufficient, proper steps should be taken to provide information, prior to the start of the consultations.

Stakeholders may include:

- Government agencies (environment, agriculture, energy, transportation, finance, planning; national, state, local, etc.);
- Environmental law enforcement agencies;
- Private sector (loggers, ranchers, energy producers, industry, farmers, agri-business etc.);
- Civil society (NGOs, community associations, etc.);
- Indigenous Peoples and other forest dwellers;
- Local communities, pastoralists, farmers who depend on forests for livelihoods;
- Vulnerable groups (women, youth, etc.);
- Academia.

The following question can help identify some of the stakeholders affected vis-à-vis REDD strategy(ies):

- How have deforestation and forest degradation affected the affected forest dependent communities and Indigenous Peoples?
- How will the poor and marginalized groups fare in proposed REDD strategy? Are there any threats to their land tenure rights? How to guarantee their equitable share of REDD benefits?
- What stakeholder interests conflict with project/policy goals?
- What are the relationships between the various stakeholders? Who has power over whom? Who is dependent on whom?
- Who has control over resources?
- Who has control over information?
- Could benefits from REDD activities be captured by elites? What kind of opposition/ distortion of activities by influential stakeholders are to be expected? How to overcome those?

Checklist

- *Are representatives of the public involved in selecting stakeholders?*
- *Have all potential stakeholders been identified? If not, have the consultations been announced publicly so that all interested parties may participate?*
- *Have Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and marginalized groups been included?*
- *Are the proposed consultation methods effective in reaching the target audience?*

Step 6

Planning: Establish grievance and redress mechanism

The consultation process should define specific grievance, resolution and grievance redress mechanisms. This could include both local and national level conflict management systems.

Step 7

Implementation: Conduct the consultations

Consultations should be held with relevant stakeholders at different levels. This should include:

- Consultations with national/local government stakeholders;
- Separate consultations with IPs and forest communities ensuring geographic and regional balance;
- Consultations with key private sector organizations.

Checklist

- *Are consultations conducted in a socially and culturally appropriate manner?*
- *Are views of Indigenous Peoples and community forest dwellers and other social groups being recorded?*
- *Will they be analyzed?*
- *Will suitably qualified staff be involved in data analysis?*
- *Will the data from the analysis feed back into decision making & planning processes?*

Step 8

Implementation: Disseminate results

The findings from the various consultations should be reported and discussed once again in a national forum with representative stakeholder groups. Providing timely feedback is also important to sustain interest in and commitment to the process.

The national forum should achieve the following:

- Present the government's proposed Consultation and Participation Plan, including the issues covered under steps 3-7 above;
- Report the findings of all the consultations;
- Acknowledge key issues raised during consultations and respond as appropriate;
- Describe how the outcomes of the consultation process will be incorporated into REDD policies and programs.

In addition, the findings of all the consultations could be disclosed through existing communication channels, including government websites, written press and national and community radios.

Checklist

- *Are the results of the consultation provided in time to inform decision-makers?*
- *Are stakeholders informed of the outcomes and how their input was used?*
- *Has a summary of the consultation phase been provided in a form that is understandable to the stakeholders?*