

Minutes for the Second REDD+ Technical Working Group and Task Forces Workshop

Dates: December 03-05, 2013

Place: Adama German Hotel, Adama, Ethiopia

Participants: Members of REDD+ Ethiopia technical working group (TWG) (see annex 1)

Facilitators: Dr Solomon Zewdie (REDD+ Ethiopia), Ato Getachew Shiferaw (REDD+ Ethiopia)

Rapporteurs: Dr Yigremachew Seyoum (FRC) and Ato Temesgen Yohannes (FRC)

Day 1 - Morning

The Workshop program started at 9:00 a.m.

Agenda 1: Welcoming and Opening Speech

Welcoming

Dr. Yitebitu Moges, the National REDD+ Coordinator, welcomed His Excellency Ato Kebede Yimam, State Minister of Environment and Forest and workshop participants. He briefed the gathering on the agenda of the 3-day workshop and the expected outcomes of the workshop.

Opening Speech

He invited then H.E. Ato Kebede Yimam to make an opening speech.

The State Minister highlighted:

- The link between REDD+ with the CRGE (Climate Resilient Green Economy of Ethiopia) and the government's commitment in establishing a separate forestry institution for accomplishing the goals of these initiatives and addressing other forestry and environmental issues.
- He pointed out that forest is beyond carbon; forests play key roles in providing an array of ecosystem services such as controlling siltation and enhancing water resources for sustainable electricity supply and irrigation development, improving livestock and crop production and ensuring its sustainability. Moreover, he noted, additional roles of forests in timber, coffee and spice production. .
- The need for import substitution by the forest sector e.g., timber is also indicated.
- His Excellency also reassured members that the government's firm stand in supporting REDD+ initiatives. He stressed that the TWG is an important REDD+ management body and as such should take the task of leading the whole REDD+ readiness process and assess the progress made by the REDD+ secretariat. He also asked the following questions and concerns: Why REDD+ readiness phase is taking too long, 3 years? How could regions be involved more in the REDD+ process? He stressed region's participation as essential for the success of REDD+ objectives.

The State Minister then announced that the workshop is officially opened.

After thanking the State Minister's speech, Dr Yitebitu responded to some of the concerns.

- Although the REDD+ readiness process focuses a lot on capacity building, undertaking technical studies, and fulfilling the international readiness requirements, efforts will be made to increase the participation of regions mainly through capacity development and REDD+ piloting. Plans for involving regions during this fiscal year include awareness creation on REDD+ technical training and establishing management bodies. Preparations are underway for identification and selection of REDD+ pilots to be supported during the readiness period. The fund for supporting REDD+ pilots will be available from the additional finance in the coming few months.
- Regarding the Readiness period, the Coordinator noted during the course of the day that according to the R-PP, the implementation of the readiness is estimated to take about three years, and that is what is being followed by the Secretariat

The National REDD+ Pilot Coordinator then introduced the Day 1 program for the workshop participants, which was followed by a short introduction of participants.

Agenda 3: Technical Presentations

Next, two technical presentations were made by the Coordinator:

Presentation 1 - Overview of the REDD+ mechanism

Presentation 2 - REDD+ Annual work and procurement plan for the year 2013/2014 and status of REDD+ readiness

The first presentation mainly addressed the concept and theoretical backgrounds of climate change, and the roles of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation. He also described what REDD+ is and explained how REDD+ works as mitigation mechanism. The second presentation focused on the key elements of readiness process, and their status. The Coordinator presented the approved Annual Work Plan and budget for the FY 2013/14 and suggested that the participants should use that information later as inputs for the planning activities of the TWG and the task forces.

Questions, comments and suggestions raised on the two presentations (Chair: Dr. Tefera Mengistu)

1: Does this forum have the mandate to evaluate the REDD+ Secretariat beyond providing technical guidance to the REDD+ readiness process? How can the REDD+ Secretariat effectively link with other institutions working on related issues? What are the challenges the Secretariat has faced so far?

2: It would have been more convenient if hardcopies of the AWP have been distributed. What are the roles of regions in REDD+ Readiness Process? What are the activities to be implemented by regions? So far, Oromia is the only region with a REDD+ pilot. What is the reason that other regions have no pilots? **3:** Does the REDD+ Secretariat have a project implementation manual (PIM), strategic guidelines and an institutional organogram? Where is the REDD+ focal office at region level? It is better to have TWGs and steering committees in regions and also executing committees at Weredas?

4: Most activities are geared towards awareness creation and practical activities are not progressing. The Secretariat has to consider that aspect. A system that links activities at federal and regional level should be established. Activity plans should also be prepared for regions.

5: The plan is too general; it does not show regions' roles. Responsible entities for activities have to be indicated. Piloting activities are focused on high forests; woodlands should also be considered for piloting.

6: Have we checked other countries experiences? Regions participation is important and the level of participation should be clearly stated. Was there a risk assessment analysis conducted for the project and what were the assumptions?

7: We have to identify the REDD+ activity planned to be implemented in each region, including the budget and the schedule. Moreover, the REDD+ Pilot should not concentrate on high forest areas and lowland forests should also be given equal attention in REDD+ pilot selection.

8: No objection responses always affect action plans. Smooth relationships with World Bank can bring significant influence. Regular reminder and letter from state minister could also help in solving the problem. Staff maintenance is an issue that has to be carefully managed. Salary rate should be set based on a careful analysis.

Dr Yitebetu's reflections on the comments, questions and suggestions were as follows:

- The TWG is mandated to provide technical guidance to the Secretariat and quality control and assurance of technical matters according to the ToR. But a strong support from TWGs is crucial for better performance of the Secretariat.
- Major factors that have challenged the Secretariat include the late start of the project, delayed procurement and staffing.
- The Secretariat has been fully functional only since July 2013 when staffing was moderately adequate and use of the REDD+ readiness fund started.
- The annual work plan was developed with an expert support from the World Bank detailing and translating general components and activities in the project document.
- As indicated in the R-PP in the readiness phase most activities are focused on technical studies and planning, developing a strategy and establishing baselines and MRV systems as required by the global process, mostly carried out by technical experts guided by the TWG and task forces under the coordination of the Secretariat. Thus, REDD+ is essentially a capacity building and a technical intervention. The readiness phase could engage regions mainly in capacity building, consultations and piloting.
- REDD+ focal persons have been identified for 8 regions that will coordinate the capacity building, consultation and piloting activities at the respective regions, and they are all members of the federal REDD+ TWG. The REDD+ Secretariat has involved them in several capacity building activities.
- Oromia was selected as a jurisdictional REDD+ pilot program for as the large part of the high forest in the country is found in the region, the region is institutionally ready for managing the program, and experience and knowledge exists in the region on REDD+ and PFM. It is designed as a national pilot for providing a model approach for REDD+ and drawing lessons to feed into the national REDD+ strategy. Stakeholder mapping is continuously being carried out to identify institutions/organizations that are relevant in REDD+.
- Many of the current activities implemented by FCPF grant are related to procurement of goods and technical services, and as such we don't have a project implementation manual (PIM). As things will be complicated with the additional finance there is a plan to develop a PIM.

- Piloting requires funding; but it is not possible to use the readiness fund (3.6 million USD) for piloting. That is why the regional pilot requests have not been given priority so far.

Additional reflections from members

- A proceeding of an experience sharing workshop on 'linking local REDD+ experiences to national REDD+ strategies' that was held at Awassa should be distributed to this group.
- REDD+ piloting is critically important to get feedback for REDD+ strategy options.
- Regions action plan must be accompanied with the required budget.
- Capacity building to regional focus persons should be intensively carried out.

Following the discussion the chairperson drew the following conclusions:

1. Regional expectations have been noted to be higher than what has been possible at federal level. The discrepancy mainly lies on the lack of common understanding on the nature of the readiness process which focuses largely on technical preparations to produce data and strategy to make the country ready for participation on the global REDD+ mechanism. At the readiness phase, capacity building and awareness creation are critical and the possibility for on the ground activities is limited to pilots which require funding from donors, the first of this funding is due to be signed soon.
2. REDD+ activity assignments and organizational attachments at regional level should go beyond assigned focal persons and should involve hiring more technical experts, and the existing focal persons should fully devote their time to the REDD+ process.
3. The communication and bureaucratic links between federal and regional offices require further considerations, more so in light of the new institutional restructuring for the forest sector.

Agenda 4: Minute endorsement from last TWG meeting

The next activity the REDD+ Coordinator presented was the minutes for the first Federal REDD+ TWG meeting that was held on July 2013 to members. He also explained the major actions taken by the Secretariat in response to comments and recommendations from the last meeting which were:

- Preparing the draft minutes and sharing with members and finalizing it,
- Sharing REDD+ related documents to members,
- Revising the AWP and developing the procurement plan,
- Carrying out strategic planning to increase fund disbursement in this fiscal year,
- Strengthening the Secretariat by recruiting more staff including an international MRV and REDD+ Technical Advisor,
- Revising ToRs for MRV and SESA task force, and
- Revision of ToR or by-laws of the TWG based on comments.

Comments:

1. The culture of minute's endorsement has to be appreciated.
2. Awareness creation should be planned for the 8 regions.
3. Website should be developed to increase efficiency of communication about REDD+.

The minute was endorsed by the members.

Day 1 - Afternoon

Agenda 5: Developing action plans for TWG and Regions

The next event of the workshop was a group discussion for the whole afternoon. Participants were grouped into 3 as MRV, SESA and REDD+ Strategy TFs while the remaining members were distributed among these groups. The discussion points were:

- 1) Prepare an action plan (with time frames) for the TWG and make general comments on the contents of the action plan;
- 2) Develop action plan for the regions and the contribution of regions and focal persons and possible institutional set up for REDD+ coordination at regional level; and
- 3) Propose working modalities with TWG/TFs such as allowances for members, incentives and bureaucratic linkages of the different management bodies including regional Focal Persons with the REDD+ Secretariat.

Day 2 – Morning

The group discussion continued until 10:00 am as members required more time to finalize the group discussion.

Group Presentations

The three groups presentations followed chaired by AtoTsegayeTadessefrom GGGI and a member of REDD+ StrategyTask Force.

Group 1

Key points of the presentations

- This group suggested that the criteria for selecting candidates for capacity building activities such as training and visits (one of the activities in the action plan) should be left to the Secretariat.
- REDD+ units should be established in regions (possibly at MOA and MEF) for effective coordination especially in regions with lots of work on REDD+ such as Oromia, rather than depending on a Focal Person who may not devote full time for coordination. Focal Persons must be relieved of other tasks and focus on REDD+ coordination.
- REDD+ awareness creation, and cascading of the ToTwere given at Wondo Genet.And possibly establishing REDD+ management bodiesshould be carried out at regional levels during this fiscal year.
- Providing reasonable daily allowances and incentives will motivate members to participate and contribute to the readiness process. The decision should be left to the Secretariat, but the experience on REDD+ finance that was usedbythe previous EPA and experiences from other countries should be assessed to determine attractive incentives and allowances.

Participants' reflections on Group 1 presentation

- Why do we need to have REDD+ units in MoA?

- Why do you leave the decision of the incentives to the REDD+ Secretariat?
- Group 1 lacks an activity plan.

Group 2 Presentation

Key points of the presentation

- The group set activities that have to be implemented during the rest of the fiscal year 2013/14.
- The group emphasized regions participation is essential, but did not present action plan for regions
- Proposed incentives amounting to 8000 birr/month for members assuming that each member will devote at least 4 hours per week for REDD+ activities and 500 Birr/hour.

Participant reflections

- The list of the activities in the work plan is too much and seems the taskforce is completely overtaking the Secretariat's job.
- The number of study tours is high and how is it possible to realize it, as members are also engaged in other commitments?
- The time in the work plan shall follow the Ethiopian calendar.

Group 3 Presentation

Key points of the presentation

- The group has produced a clear and feasible action plan for the TWG for the rest of this fiscal year.
- The group has suggested that the incentive mechanism is critical and stressed that the incentive mechanism and allowance rates that were used during the R-PP preparation from FCPF grant (the same donor and World Bank as fund trustee) should be applied during the readiness period. The R-PP preparation Coordinator, Ato Shimels Sima promised to share the experience.
- The Coordinator made remarks on the presentations from the three groups as providing essential inputs that will help facilitate the work of the TWG and the Secretariat , and reassured that critical issues from the presentations will be evaluated and considered that the issue of regions could be addressed
- Only the establishment of 3 regional steering committees was indicated in the action plan, there is a possibility to establish 8 regional steering committees/TWGs
- As per the comments, capacity building activities will be enhanced.
- Inputs from the three presentations will be consolidated and communicated to the members.

- It is an advantage that there was an incentive mechanism implemented in the previous R-PP preparation phase, which would be easier to adopt and efforts will be made so that that experience will be endorsed by the REDD+ Steering Committee.

Issues for General Discussion (Chair Ato Shimels Sima)

The Chairperson collected issues that need to be discussed at this stage by the TWG and the following have been identified and endorsed.

1. Organizational issues
2. REDD+ strategy development
3. Piloting
4. Consolidation of activities by the three task forces
5. The Scope of REDD+

1-Organizational issues

Discussions addressed different organization related issues.

- The workload in the regions demands more than one focal person and a unit should be established. For the unit additional payment as a top up should be arranged. The unit shall be a replica of the federal REDD+ Secretariat. Regional EPAs, OFWE can also be used. The existing units shall continue as they are. Unit establishment can vary depending on the volume of the activities the regions are engaged in. If budget is limited to pay salaries, the units shall continue with government paid salaries.
- It was proposed that REDD+ unit should be established both in MoA and MoEF. However, placing the unit in to two separate ministries may result in difficult coordination. Thus, it was generally agreed that the REDD+ unit shall be placed in the newly established regional offices (regional Bureau of Environment and Forest), but until institutional set up is finalized, the ministry should distribute a circular or similar instrument for the regions clarifying how and by whom the REDD+ process is coordinated in the interim period.

Dr Yitebetu Moges believed that establishing REDD+ unit at regional level shall be a gradual process as regions activities are not uniform across the board, and this view was supported by some participants.

Finally, a consensus was reached in that institutionalization of REDD+ in regions as REDD+ unit must be targeted, but if work is not too much REDD+ Focal Persons might continue to do the coordination until sometime. There were also suggestions to establish REDD+ structures at lower administrative units such as Zones and Weredas.

It was mentioned that there is budget for activities but not for top-up payments. This issue should be presented to the steering committees and should be solved.

2-REDD+ strategy development

The groups stressed that the CRGE should be followed during strategy development. During the process, experiences from Oromia and elsewhere should be consolidated and used as inputs. Studies on causes of deforestation should be taken as major inputs of the strategy development process. It should also be planned in-line with outputs of SESA and ESMF to make the strategy people and environment friendly. The use of piloting as a means of backing up the strategy development should be ensured. The entire process should give due emphasis to consultations and participations of the stakeholders at different levels.

3-Pilot selection

The decisions on pilot site selection should take forest types into account including woodlands. As piloting is basically targeted at acquiring lessons, all forest types shall be considered. Moreover, the issue of equity is critical and resource distribution should be fair. Because our focus is usually the high forest we have to make sure that the forest definition, which will also determine our pilot sites, is not biased. There are pilots already proposed by regions, but there was no response from the Secretariat.

Oromia has got a separate fund and the selection of this region is based on the forest size, institutional readiness (OFWE) and REDD+ and PFM experience. DrYitebetu revealed the first financial resource for piloting is yet expected to come. He stressed that we need to prioritize pilots in order to efficiently utilize available resources using objectively set criteria.

4-Consolidation of presentations

It was commented that issues related with institutionalization and linkages need to be consolidated. With regard to incentives and modalities the proposal presented by group 3 referring the experience during the R-PP development phase was suggested as more reasonable. This proposal was agreed to be presented to the steering committee for decision.

5- The scope of REDD+ (conservation vs. afforestation)

The scope of REDD+ activities depends on the adopted strategy. As indicated in Ethiopia's CRGE afforestation and reforestation are key strategic levers in REDD+ for addressing deforestation and forest degradation, and as such the REDD+ scope encompasses plantation development/reforestation of degraded forestlands.

Agenda XXX: Establishing Forest Definition Team and Election of a Chair for the TWG

Dr. Yitebetu informed the participants that two issues need a short discussion and decision before we proceed to the general discussion. He informed members that there is a critical need to form a team that will work on forest definition, and we need to establish a team working on this task. Further he said that due to the structuring the Chairperson for the Federal REDD+ TWG needs to change and the members have to provide recommendation.

1) Selection of the Chairperson for the Federal REDD+ TWG.

DrYitbetu explained that the chairman of the TWG (as per the previous organizational arrangement) was the Deputy Director for Natural Resources Directorate at the MoA. Following the transfer of the REDD+ Secretariat to the new ministry (MoFE), there is a need to assign a new chairperson. He suggested that Director leading a directorate that is mandated to deal with issues related to forest carbon might be appropriate for the position and requested

the forum to comment on his proposal. After a short deliberation, the participants unanimously endorsed the assignment of the new chairperson from that directorate.

2) Forest Definition Team

Dr Yitebetu Mogese explained the need for an agreed upon forest definition as crucial for REDD+ program and he invited the participants to deliberate on the issue. Accordingly, the forum reflected on the issue and diverse views were forwarded. These include:

- Adopting the forest definition employed for CDM is adequate by EPA;
- The possibility of adopting FAO's forest definition;
- Providing forest definition should be the authority of the Ministry of Environment and Forest
- The need to consider the forest definition provided in Proclamation no 542/2007
- The possibility of adopting definitions provided in the IPCC guidelines (with some modifications considering the national context) as is the case in some countries.

After a lengthy deliberation, the forum decided that let the MRV TF consider the different options and come up with a forest definition within one month, which will be presented on a national consultation workshop after which the ministry can declare it as an official forest definition.

Other relevant experts could also be involved as needed to help the MRV TF members.

Day 2 –Afternoon

Agenda XXX Electing Leadership and developing Action Plan for the three Task Forces

Dr. Solomon Zewdie announced the agenda for the 2nd day of the workshop. He explained that the members will again split into three groups following the task forces membership, and will cover the following tasks:

1. Election of a Chairperson, Co-chair and Co-secretary for each Task Force.
2. Review and validate the draft ToRs for each task force developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with World Bank experts.
3. Prepare action plan for each task force for this fiscal year following the annual work plan.

Each task force should compile a presentation on the discussion. The group discussion continued throughout the afternoon.

Day 3 - Morning

Group presentations

The three taskforces presented their reports followed by a general discussion on issues that stem from the presentations. The three task forces have commented and revised their respective draft ToRs and validated them and have identified their leadership as presented in Annex 2. They also developed action plans that must be implemented during the rest of this fiscal year (leadership took note of the plans and the plans might need consolidation).

The Task Force leadership is presented below.

Leadership for the three Task Forces

SESA Task Force – Chairperson (Climate Change Forum-Ethiopia), Co-chair (Farm Africa), Co-secretary (FRC).

MRV/RL Task Force - Chairperson (Wondo Genet College of Forestry & Natural Resources), Co-Chair (Addis Ababa University), Co-secretary (FRC)

REDD+ Strategy Task Force - Chairperson (Ministry of Environment & Forest),Co-chair (MoA/NRM), Co-secretary (REDD+ Secretary member),Co-secretary (EWNRA)

The three-day workshop was closed at 11:30 a.m on December 5, 2013.

Annex. List of participants