

Lessons Learned from the Implementation of MRV Systems for REDD+

- Significant technical and financial support has been provided in the last 10 years to help REDD+ countries develop National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) for the purpose of REDD+ Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV)
- Lessons have been learned in this period on common obstacles and successes
- These lessons learned resulted in recommendations to help guide the delivery of support to countries for REDD+ MRV and National Forest Monitoring Systems by donors and technical partners

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Over the past 10 years, significant technical and financial support has been invested through bilateral and multilateral facilities to help countries to develop National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) for the purpose of REDD+ Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV). Despite the many successes in developing REDD+ submissions and outputs, several obstacles have also limited the implementation of fully operational and sustainable NFMS. This means that many countries still don't have a fully operationalized and institutionalized NFMS.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT NOW?

REDD+ countries are now moving closer to the reporting phase of REDD+ MRV, with many preparing for reporting under results-based payment agreements. Their REDD+ MRV systems need to be operational and sustainable to allow these countries to report on a regular basis. As the REDD+ Readiness phase is coming to an end, it is expected that donor funding and support for REDD+ MRV and NFMS will decrease. This means an urgent need to make efficient and

better coordinated use of available support to fill any remaining gaps and ensure that all REDD+ Countries can report their REDD+ results.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

This section outlines a series of recommendations generated by a case study analysis. The recommendations are focused on:

- i. Key considerations and enabling conditions that facilitate successful MRV Support
- ii. Characteristics of REDD+ MRV systems that promote efficiency and sustainability
- iii. Modalities for the delivering effective support.

The recommendations are primarily targeted towards donors, technical partners, and consultants, but will also be of relevance to countries, NGOs and other stakeholders. The full report entitled Lessons Learned from the Implementation of MRV Systems for REDD+ provides the full context to the lessons and recommendations. These recommendations are

universal, because they derive from obstacles and successes common to all the countries reviewed. However, it cannot be denied that there are wide differences in national context. The implementation of these recommendations must therefore be shaped, as appropriate, to fit an individual country context.

Key considerations and enabling conditions that facilitate successful MRV Support

Implement consistent long-term funding and support: Financial, technical and programmatic support should be long-term, aligning with the time frames for developing operational systems (rather than with individual system outputs or components). For LDC/LMI countries, consistency is particularly important, in the form of close, regular program support alongside detailed technical support. The time and effort needed to build capacity in countries with subnational jurisdictional systems may be much larger than for those with centralized systems. This needs to be factored into the readiness and operational budgeting of the system, commensurate with what is ultimately likely to be sustainable for the country.

Ensure effective donor coordination: Donors should coordinate when support from more than one donor is being delivered at the same time. This is particularly important for low-capacity countries. Any new program of support should be developed in the context of the support, systems, and processes that have already been put in place by the countries and through earlier support. Donors should coordinate in a manner suited to the needs and context of the country, rather than any preconceived priorities or approaches favored by a donor.

Foster ongoing political support: Support for the implementation of the NFMS should include fostering political support for the NFMS through avenues such as: communicating to

senior executives and ministers the benefits of REDD+; identifying a clear financial benefit for the system; broadening the scope of the system so that it has multiple uses and provides greater value; celebrating milestone successes in the MRV development process; and developing high-level bilateral and multilateral partnerships and relationships, at both ministerial and senior executive level.

Provide basic infrastructure and satellite data support: Support for basic infrastructure (such as internet connectivity, IT hardware) is important in some contexts, with LDC and LMI countries more likely to encounter difficulties with this. Support for infrastructure should be based on an assessment of IT needs and existing infrastructure, ensuring that the maintenance and ongoing renewal of IT infrastructure is technically and financially sustainable. Donors should continue activities to facilitate access to satellite data that is ready for analysis, while ensuring that the provisioning of data is proportionate to the scale and financial or budgetary limitations of a system.

Characteristics of REDD+ MRV systems that promote efficiency and sustainability

Ensure collaboration and engagement between all stakeholders is central to the support. Collaboration and engagement across all stakeholders should be at the core of the program of support. Regular engagement between parties helps to build trust and ensures that issues, questions and developments are effectively communicated. By contrast, infrequent engagement leads to surprises, incorrect assumptions, confusion and a lack of buy-in.

Collaboration and engagement needs to be designed individually for each country to suit the staff and institutions responsible for REDD+ MRV and other stakeholders. Working Groups

comprising national government and MRV support providers are a notable example of a mechanism that has worked well.

Ensure sustainability is at the heart of all support:

Support programs should simultaneously address technical, institutional, and program management aspects of REDD+ MRV. Sustainability is particularly relevant to countries with low resources, limited baseline capacity (LDC/LMI countries, small population countries), limited political support, and few opportunities for results-based payments (RBP). Sustainability can be significantly jeopardized by staff turnover, and loss of capacity is a significant issue. Approaches to manage this include: specific planning for staff turnover; development of clear SOPs; working with

national research institutions to train a pool of experts; and ensuring multiple staff are able to implement each component of the system.

Focus on system operationality within a consistent framework:

Begin in a simple way, within a strategic framework that is progressively refined to develop the REDD+ MRV system. This has many benefits including: the regular and early generation of results; progressive development of knowledge and capacity; and the accumulation of experience in operating MRV as a system, rather than as the precursor to a single report. Semi-automation of processes can facilitate more efficient reporting, particularly when countries can use or adapt existing tools and systems to meet their needs.



Modalities for the delivering effective support

Ensure support is focused on the development of in-country capacity for system operation: Support should be designed and delivered in a way that includes capacity development as a universal constituent element. Alongside frequent consultations, activities such as the Country Needs Assessments, and system roadmaps, should be used to help identify capacity needs, particularly for LDC/LMI countries and those in the early development phase. At the delivery stage of support, it is important for donor staff and consultants to understand how their work Provide opportunities for knowledge sharing. This involves a two-way exchange of knowledge, involving REDD+ countries, donors and consultants.

Facilitate country-driven systems and processes: The stronger the role the country takes in designing, developing and implementing the system, the better it is able to coordinate and control the outcomes. Donors should therefore take care to deliver support that will not indirectly disempower the country. Whatever the current stage of development or operation of the REDD+ MRV system, having a strategic road map in place is an effective mechanism for countries to help guide the support that is provided in the most effective way.

Donors, GFOI Leads and countries should work together to develop common technologies and state-of-the-art approaches: A collaborative approach should be adopted to developing consistent and sophisticated tools (by contrast with ad hoc or donor-driven processes). Collaboration will remain important as the demand for REDD+ MRV systems continues to increase. The GFOI has a potential role to play to support coordination between countries and organizations on the technologies and state-of-the-art approaches that could be developed collaboratively. Forest degradation

remains a huge technical challenge for all the countries, and the widespread application of robust methods for the MRV of degradation is not in place. A coordinated approach to developing solutions to forest degradation, harnessing state-of-the-art approaches, could be an effective means to support all countries.

Develop workshops that target specific outcomes for the country: Country staff often have a large array of responsibilities, and limited time. Workshops and training activities should be targeted towards the needs of a country and clearly identified strategic requirements through a mix of theoretical and practical learning, alongside opportunities to share knowledge. The sharing of generic or high-level concepts may be necessary, but where possible these concepts should be linked to tangible and practical examples.

SOURCES:

World Bank. 2021. Lessons Learned from the Implementation of MRV Systems for REDD+. ©World Bank

