Note Outlining Measures Taken within the UN-REDD/Myanmar Programme to Build National Capacities

Background

At the first meeting of the Development Assistance Coordination Unit-DACU and the Cooperation Partners Group, State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as Chair of DACU, observed that:

- DACU’s work will be based on internationally-accepted principles of development assistance, namely: that Myanmar, as host country, should exercise ownership, leadership and guidance;
- It is in all of our interests to ensure that ‘development assistance’ in Myanmar has a good name. In many other developing countries today, ‘development assistance’ is now viewed with scepticism, and seen as donor-driven and inefficient … [b]ut through improved coordination, and through DACU working closely with Partners in Development, I believe we can avoid a similar situation here in Myanmar;
- Consultants must of course have subject-matter expertise, but they also need to have a sensitivity and awareness to the country context, and a readiness to collaborate and transfer knowledge.

Decision 4/10 of the UN-REDD PEB stated:

“The PEB instructs the PMU to prepare a note clarifying how national capacity is being built through the programme, as required by DACU”

Progress

The Programme has assisted in establishing mechanisms, initially at the national level, to oversee the development, and subsequent implementation of REDD+ in Myanmar. These mechanisms consist primarily of a National REDD+ Taskforce, supported by three Technical Working Groups. All members of these bodies are Myanmar Nationals, representing government and Myanmar non-governmental organizations. Thus ownership, leadership and guidance to the overall REDD+ process is provided by Myanmar.

As a matter of principle, the Programme preferentially makes use of national consultants, and contracts national organizations to provide technical inputs whenever possible. Among the many examples of this are:

- A national organization (FREDA) was contracted to provide training on REDD+ to a wide range of stakeholders (Outcome 1);
- A national organization (MERN) was contracted to organize and deliver sub-national consultations on proposals for policies and measures in 12 of the 15 states/regions (Outcome 5);
- A national consultant was recruited to undertake an analysis of benefits and risks of proposed policies and measures;
A national consultant was recruited to undertake study on drivers on deforestation and forest degradation;
A national consultant was contracted to do REDD+ Related Projects Mapping

In addition to this, several components of the programme have developed guidance or “roadmaps” that have highlighted the development of national capacities. For example:

- One of the earliest activities of the Programme was the development of “Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines. In these guidelines, it is stated that:
  “Some stakeholders are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to engagement. There can be several reasons for this, including a lack of familiarity with such processes, a lack of technical capacity, and a lack of interest or disrespect/hostility from other stakeholders. Ethnic nationalities, women, forest dependent communities and the youth in Myanmar need special attention to overcome disadvantages”
Consequently, the guidelines provide detailed instructions on how to overcome these constraints.
- The UN-REDD Programme supported the development of the REDD+ Myanmar “Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy”. One of the Principles outlined in the strategy is that it should “design and deliver products aligned to the needs and capacities of all stakeholder groups, taking account of gender and ethnicity”.
- The “Safeguards Roadmap” was developed in collaboration with the Technical Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement and Safeguards. Step 1 of the roadmap is “Stakeholder engagement, including continuous updating of stakeholder mapping, training and capacity-building, and exchange of information on safeguards”;
- The “Forest Emissions Level” Roadmap was developed in collaboration with the Technical Working group on MRV. The first of five “major outcome areas” is “Multi-stakeholder participation and consultation during FREL development”, which called for a capacity building plan, to be delivered by national NGO’s and/or consultants;
- The “National Forest Monitoring System” Roadmap was also developed in collaboration with the Technical Working group on MRV. “Capacity building and training” is one of the cross-cutting issues identified in the roadmap. Among the activities specified in the roadmap are:
  - Develop a human resource development plan for the NFMS in relevant government institutions (FD, FRI)
  - Develop proposals for the inclusion of national forest monitoring and inventory planning and implementing into academic curricula (undergraduate and postgraduate)

Capacity building under the UN-REDD Programme is also coordinated and synchronized with other projects and initiatives such as the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Luke) activities with the Forest Department, the International Centre for Integrate Mountain Development (ICIMOD) project, the Servir Mekong-USDAF project on Land Cover mapping and the upcoming Forest Type mapping project of MONREC with the Smithsonian Institute.