

Technical Working Group on Forestry Reform Strengthening Exercise

Introduction

The principal function of the Technical Working Group Forestry Reform (TWG-FR) is a supportive and collaborative role in assisting the Government to progress forestry reform in Cambodia in an accountable, transparent, participatory and inclusive manner. The TWG-FR is a coordination body to promote accountability, transparency, participatory and inclusive strategy development to ensure aid effectiveness and development of partnerships. In pursuance of this, the TWG-FR links with other TWGs and facilitates higher level policy dialogues. The TWG-FR is led and managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, which has nominated the Director General of the Forestry Administration as the Chairman. The development partners have nominated the Delegation of the European Union as Lead Donor Facilitatoras from 2012.

The TWG-FR provides a mechanism at technical level for Government-Donor, Private Sector and Civil Society coordination. The working group aims at identifying forest sector priorities, harmonizing activities, improving the utilization and mobilization of resources and support efforts to strengthen the sector's capacity to contribute to both conservation and economic growth including the poor in this process. Despite this sectoral and technical limitation it is understood that forest conservation and development cannot be separated from wider development issues, especially if forestry is supposed to have a role in environmental sustainability, economic and social development which it can only achieve in combination with wider technical and institutional changes that go beyond the forestry sector.

1. Composition of TWGs: Membership and participation

The TWG-FR and its Secretariat have clear ToR since their establishment in 2004. The ToRs were reviewed and updated in 2013 to meet the development context in Cambodia.

The TWG-FR has members that consist of government institutions and development partners including civil society and private sector that have expressed their interest in this working group and can provide active inputs to the functioning of the TWG. Membership has increased because more partners expressed their interest to join the TWG-FR. TWG-FR membership consists of 32 agency representations, including:

- 11 Government institutions: MAFF, FA, FiA, MoE, MME, MoI, MEF, CDC, MLMUPC, MoC, MND.
- 11 Development Partners: EU, JICA, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, USAID, AFD, SDC, SIDA, ADB, WB.
- 8 NGOs: WCS, RECOFTC, FFI, WWF, NGO-Forum, CI, WA, PACT-Cambodia.
- 2 Private Sector Companies: Cambodia Timber Industry Association; Grandis Timber Ltd.

Generally the participation in the TWG-FR meeting of the members is actively, it is 88% of invited members. The most absence is WB, ADB, PACT-Cambodia and private sector representatives due to less relevant to their business in the forestry sector (have not supported projects).

New members could be envisaged, such as active donors (KOICA) or other relevant private sector actors that work with the FA. Existing members should be reminded of their participation.

1. Size of TWG and requirement for focused sub-groups

The TWG-FR set up two sub-groups for working on the main priorities of the forestry sector: (1) Sustainable Forest Financing Group is looking for innovative forest financing options to support the implementation of NFP; and (2) Community Forestry Development Group is to support the development of Community Forestry to achieve the target of NFP and as well as the TWG-FR's JMI. These sub-groups hold their meetings and regularly report the progress to the DP meeting and the TWG-FR meeting.

2. Capacity and resourcing of secretariat

The TWG-FR has a strong supportive Secretariat that is funded by the EU Delegation that is the Lead DP Facilitator of the TWG-FR. The Secretariat has one coordinator and one assistant that play role insupportingdaily procedural work for the Chairman and the Lead DP Facilitator and in daily communication with the TWG-FR members in sharing information. The main tasksare as below:

- Assist the Chairman and the Co-chair (Lead DP Facilitator) of the TWG-FR for general matters related to policy and strategic guidance of GDCC/CDC on enhancing partnership and aid effectiveness.
- Facilitate the development of annual TWG-FR work plan and for endorsement by TWG-FR.
- Organize four TWG-FR meetings and four DP meetings per year, and timely prepare the minutes of these meetings.
- Facilitate the development of the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMI) for the TWG-FR.
- Prepare the Progress reports of TWG-FR, JMIs and other reports as requested by GDCC/CDC and/or Chairman and Lead Facilitator of the TWG-FR.
- Attend meetings (GDCC, CDCF, EU, FA, MAFF, etc) and workshops and training events that relate to strategic planning and TWG-FR matters for enhancing aid effectiveness.
- Facilitate the development of the National Forest Program work plan of the Forestry Administration.
- Collect and consolidate annual budget plan of forestry and environment sector projects and medium term projects/programs (2014-2018) from RGC, DPs and NGOs.
- Collect and consolidate the progress of the implementation of NFP annual work plan of the forestry and environment sector (expenditure).
- Stimulate pro-active communication and information sharing among the TWG-FR members, in particular among FA/MAFF – GDANCP/MoE – FiA/MAFF, and relevant other parties.
- Facilitate studies, review missions, workshops as endorsed by Chairman and the Lead Facilitator.
- Maintain and update the TWG-FR website (www.twgfr.org).
- Support and help to co-ordinate ad-hoc thematic EU meetings and workshops (e.g. on cross-sector reforms and key policy issues, FLEGT, biodiversity, climate change, environment, etc).

3. Roles and Functions of TWGs

a) NSDP linkages and sector alignment

The Cambodia forest resources are under the management of two main ministries, MAFF and MoE. These two ministries follow “**Rectangular Strategy-Phase III**”and their strategic planscontributeto the NSDP 2014-2018. The TWG-FR JMIs are aligned to NSDP indicators.

b) Sector/Thematic Strategies and policy dialogue

The Forestry Administration/MAFF has clear sector strategy is the National Forest Program (NFP)2010-2029 that isa 20 years mission for managingthe forest resources. The NFP is under implementation with the support of RGC, DPs, NGOs and Private Sector.

GDANCP/MoE is developing the National Protected Areas Strategic Management Plan (NPASM). It will be ready by end of 2015.

The Fisheries Administration/MAFF has sector strategy is the National Fisheries Strategic Plan which includes the management of Flooded Forest and Mangrove Forest.

The above strategies had been developed in broad consultations with forestry stakeholders including RGC institutions, local authorities, DPs, NGOs, private sector and local communities in term of the policy and technical issues.

During the implementation the issues are emerging and have been brought to discussion in the TWG-FR and sometimes outside the TWG-FR forum to find solutions.

c) Financing and resource mobilization

The implementation of the NFP has been funded by RGC, DPs, NGOs and private sector (mostly tree plantation). The financing mobilization is under modality of each agency's policy. The resource mobilization is considered to improve better alignment to the NFP results framework and the coming the NPASM, Fisheries Strategic Plan (flooded Forests management). The information on the funded projects/programs are collected by the Secretariat in term of information sharing and consolidated into the medium term plan and annual plan of the NFP.

d) Capacity Development and systems strengthening (including main reforms)

There is little consideration on the capacity development and strengthening the systems due to limited support of RGC in term of funding and incentives, and the commitment of DP support for a harmonized system. It will be strengthened when EU's program of Natural Resource management will be launched in 2017.

e) Partnerships and Aid/Development Effectiveness

The partnership and collaboration are gradually improved through the TWG-FR mechanism dialogue and field visit at the project's areas that funded by RGC, DPs and NGOs. FA, MoE, FiA have MoU with NGOs for implementing projects. Members understand better the field challenges.

f) Reporting and Review (including use of the JMIs and other M&E)

The TWG-FR usually report to and proposed JMI to MAFF for approval. DP meeting and TWG-FR meeting regularly include agenda of update the progress of TWG-FR's JMIs; and the progress of the implementation of annual NFP work plan in term of assessment of the expenditure of each project. The members could request for intervention or collaboration from FA and MoE to achieve their project's outputs.

Members should be reminded of the JMIs regularly and donors should request their partners to report according to them.

4. Conduct of Meetings (leadership, preparation, follow-up)

TWG-FR has annual work plan. TWG-FR is always looking for opportunities to coordinate donor efforts with Government plans. Since its establishment, the TWG-FR holds regular meeting four times per year. So far, a number of DP meeting and 43 TWG-FR meetings have been conducted and two TWG-FR retreats (field visits) were organized. Minutes of the TWG-FR meeting and DP meeting have been taken and follow up actions. Generally, the Development Partner Group organizes one or two DP meetings before each full TWG-FR meeting to identify key issues for discussion and proposing agenda for the TWG-FR meeting.

The agenda of TWG-FR meeting always consists of four main parts that focus on the strategic management of the whole national forest estate including:

- I. Policy and Strategic Management dialogue;
- II. National Forest Programme implementation (FA/MAFF);
- III. Protected Areas Management (GDANCP/MoE);
- IV. Flooded Forest Management (Fisheries Administration/MAFF).

TWG-FR has website (www.twgfr.org), where information including Minutes, Reports, Plans, law/regulations, etc has been regularly posted for public visitors.

5. CDC support

The CDC support could be the advice for better functioning of TWG and guidance of PBA, country system and policy, and exchange lessons learnt and experiences among TWGs. CDC could guide partnering

between RGC institutions and DPs in improvement of TWG's performance. CDC could play as catalyst role in monitoring the progress of TWG and NSDP 's JMIs.

6. Issues beyond the scope of the TWG that affect performance

Some representatives of RGC institutions, DP agencies and NGOs do not regularly attend the meeting. Some members lack sufficient standing to voice opinions and as a result are reluctant to speak.

- DPs strictly use own financing modalities.
- Alignment to NFP, NPASM and the Fisheries Strategic Plan (focus on the Flooded Forest management) need to be strengthened.
- Limited participation of the private sector representatives.
- Information-sharing need to be further strengthened. Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms are weak (without funding support) in order to monitor the implementation of NFP, the Strategic Management of Protected Areas and the Fisheries Strategy.
- Use of the country system is limited due to lack of funding and commitment of both RGC and DPs in setting up a joint forest financing mechanism.
- The current implementation of a comprehensive forest sector "Program Based Approach" (PBA) need to be further strengthened.

Recommendations:

- Development of projects/programs has to be consulted with the Forestry Administration (support to NFP), with GDANCP/MoE (support to NPASM), Fisheries Administration (support to Fisheries Strategic Plan) and relevant government institutions and DPs in order to ensure the alignment and harmonization with these strategies; and for good facilitation and cooperation.
- DPs that are funding and supporting companies or NGOs for the implementation of forest projects/programs have to report to FA, MoE and FiA and copy to TWG-FR Secretariat.
- Establish a forest development fund and other funds that could increase support to the implementation of the NFP, NPASM, and Flooded Forest management.
- Strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism including capacity of M&E officials for Monitoring and Evaluation the implementation of projects/programs of all development actors.
- Promote the use of PBA as well as country systems. This need commitment of RGC and DPs as well to support the development of institutional and human capacity in the sector (FA, GDANCP, FiA).
- Hold a seminar per year among TWG-FR, TWG-Fi and TWG-A&W to discuss the common issues that affect the goals of the three sectors.
- Use the CDC PBA clinic more effectively.

Endorsed by:

Date: 9 April 2015



Lead DP Facilitator: Ms. Elodie MARIA-SUBE

Endorsed by:

Date: 9 April 2015



TWG-FR Chair: Dr. Chheng Kimsun