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| **Concept Note:**  **Lessons Learned Report** |
| June 2016 UN-REDD PROGRAMME |
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# Introduction

During the past five years, a lot of valuable experience has been generated in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+). The UN-REDD Programme is well placed to facilitate a systematic approach to identify, capture, share and apply lessons learned from experience. Lessons learned can equip a variety of stakeholders with experiential knowledge and advice on important REDD+ topics and as a result offer practical recommendations for action to support countries to be more effective and efficient in the development of REDD+ readiness and implementation.

This document[[1]](#footnote-1) presents a standard format for collecting country partners’ lessons learned on key technical work areas related to meeting UNFCCC REDD+ requirements. These guidelines aim at facilitating and increasing the collection and sharing of lessons learned by UN-REDD Comms/KM staff, Regional Technical Advisors, country teams and national partners.

# Definition of UN-REDD Lessons Learned

Lessons learned convey knowledge or understanding gained from development experience. Lessons stem from successful or unsuccessful practices and frequently “highlight strengths or weaknesses in [programme] preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact”.

Lessons learned must be *significant* in the sense that they have an *effective* influence on processes’ performance or outcomes; they must be *valid* in the sense of being *factually* and *technically* correct; they must be *applicable* in that they identify a *specific* activity that reinforces positive results or reduces negative prospects; and they must be *generalizable* enough so that *other countries* can benefit from their adoption or analysis and *institutionalization* in UN-REDD corporate processes and practices.

# Scope of UN-REDD Lessons Learned

The **Warsaw Framework** for REDD+ and Associated UNFCCC Decisions remain the backbone to documenting how countries are progressing against the framework of the convention. Therefore UN-REDD lessons learned are expected to be delineated by the following topics:

1. National REDD+ Strategy or Action Plan

2. Safeguards and Safeguards Information System

3. National Forest Reference Emission Level/National Forest Reference Level

4. National Forest Monitoring System.

Within this framework multiple grids and entry point are available to identify lessons learned relevant to the UN-REDD programme and partners. Lessons focusing on programme delivery, UN-REDD work areas, or on the national environment may be derived from topics such as:

* **Joint programme (NP or TS)**
  + Development of the joint programme document
    - Scoping, formulation and finalization of the programme document
    - Resource mobilization and partnerships
    - Relevance of the programme
  + Implementation of the joint programme
    - Management of the programme
    - Administrative processes and operations
    - Funds management and procurement
    - Stakeholder engagement in the programme
    - Partnerships
    - Advocacy and communications
    - Knowledge and capacity development
    - Programme monitoring and reporting
    - Overall efficiency of the programme
  + Closure of the joint programme
    - Outcomes of the programme
    - Sustainability of the programme
    - Scaling-up REDD+ pilot projects
* **Technical areas**
  + UN-REDD work areas
    - Safeguards including SIS
    - Social and environmental benefits
    - NFMS and institutional anchorage
    - FRE/FRL development and submission to UNFCCC
    - Estimates of emissions removals
    - Policies and measures
    - Institutional arrangements for RBPs
    - Safeguards operationalization
    - Technical effectiveness of the programme
  + Cross-cutting themes
    - Stakeholder Engagement – Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples and the Private Sector
    - Forest governance
    - Tenure and REDD+
    - Gender and REDD+
    - Cross-technical effectiveness of the programme
* **National REDD+ aspects**
  + National REDD+ strategy

Political and economic aspects

Legal and technical aspects

Institutional arrangements and Governance

* + Management of REDD+ Funds
    - Donor funding coordination
    - Fast start financing
    - Procurement
  + Stakeholder engagement
    - Green economy and private sector engagement
    - Community-based REDD+
    - Indigenous peoples and civil society engagement in REDD+
    - Women’s inclusion in REDD+
  + Implementation of UNFCCC decisions
  + Multiple Benefits of REDD+
    - Strengthening national grievance mechanisms

To the extent possible UN-REDD lessons learned aim for the highest standards and strong credibility supported by evidence of implementation and added value. It is sometimes noted that the fact that lessons are captured does not necessarily mean that they have been learnt, or that the learning has been institutionalized. Some have adopted the phrase ‘lessons to belearned’, rather than ‘lessons learned’ – to emphasize that reflecting on and evaluating an experience is the beginning, not the end, of a process. However UN-REDD lessons learned series strive to document lessons on various areas including challenges faced and how they were **solved,** and the **benefits effectively observed.**

# Target Audiences

A lesson is something that can be taught and will be of most use when the lesson is directed at the user who will benefit most from that lesson. There are several user groups who will contribute to and benefit from the UN-REDD lessons learned, both as people with experience and practical knowledge, and as people and organizations that can apply recommended actions in their work. Depending on the subject and specific lessons, the user groups will need to be identified and communicated with in a way tailored to that audience, to accommodate their technical knowledge, experience base and preferences for learning.

An archetype of possible areas of interest of different target audiences is provided in table 1.

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| **Audience** | **Sample Knowledge Needs** |
| National REDD+ programme manager | Lessons on programme implementation, management of REDD+ funds, administration and operations, stakeholder engagement, up-scaling-up REDD+ pilot projects, monitoring and reporting, communications, visibility and outreach, knowledge management, programme closure |
| National REDD+ government staff | Lessons on institutional arrangements, programme governance, outcomes and sustainability, national REDD+ governance, stakeholder engagement, community-based REDD+, visibility and outreach, monitoring, reporting and evaluation |
| Regional technical advisor and programme staff | Lessons on programme effectiveness and outcomes, scientific and technical areas of work, cross-technical collaborations, drivers of change, up-scaling |
| UN-REDD HQ staff | Lessons on programme relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes and sustainability, REDD+ readiness, scalability, monitoring and reporting, evaluation |
| National civil society organization representative | Programme relevance, outcomes, sustainability, stakeholder engagement, community-based REDD+, women’s inclusion in REDD+ |
| UNFCCC secretariat | Programme outcomes and sustainability, implementation of UNFCCC decisions, lessons scientific or technical |
| Donors to REDD+ | Lessons on programme relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes, sustainability, partnerships, implementation of UNFCCC decisions |
| REDD+ Community (i.e. other organizations beyond UN-REDD working on REDD+) | Development of joint programme document and national REDD+ strategy, stakeholder engagement |
| Local communities | Stakeholder engagement, Community-based REDD+, |

Table 1: Sample focus of Lessons Learned and target audiences

# Methodology and Process

The mega process for managing lessons learned is composed of 5 steps as outlined in Figure 1.

Promotion and action

Identification

Synthesis

Capture

Review

Figure 1: Lessons Learned development process

This five steps cycle entails the following activities:

1. **Lessons identification**: important topics, milestones and opportunities to identify learning from experience.
2. **Lessons capture**: documentation of lessons learned from experience: written, photos, videos, audio; tagged with key words.
3. **Synthesis of lessons**: identification of high value lessons, review by subject matter experts and synthesized for action.
4. **Promotion and action**: identification of most relevant user(s) of lessons, promotion, recommended actions.
5. **Review of lessons learned**: review of lessons learned knowledge base by subject matter experts, feedback from users on the application of the recommended actions provided in lessons learned summaries. Identification of new lessons (point 1).

* What did you set out to achieve?
* What was your plan to achieve this?
* How did this evolve as you progressed?
* What went well and why?
* What could have gone better?
* What advice would you give yourself if you were to go back to where you were at the start of the programme or activity?
* What were the two or three key lessons you would share with others?
* What next for you in terms of this programme or activity?
* Can you think of a story that summarizes your experience of work on this programme or activity?
* In your opinion, what has been the most significant change achieved by the programme or activity?
* What should we have learned from this programme or activity a year from now?
* Are there any lessons for you personally?

Data collection for the identification and documentation of lessons learned should rely on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include interviews with key people engaged with NP from various sectors (country programme unit, government, private sector, civil society, IPs and agencies). Approximately 10 people should be interviewed using a questionnaire with common questions to guide the process –cf. Box 1- as well as open questions related to particular programme activities or work processes.

Secondary sources should involve project outputs, progress reports, mid-term reviews and evaluations, programme guidelines, previous UN-REDD lessons learned, and external resources (e.g. UNFCCC, technical areas, etc.)

In order to ensure validity and robustness of findings, data should be triangulated. Furthermore, quality assurance should also involve Regional Technical Advisors that should provide feedback and review lessons learned and assist in the synthesizing of lessons learned into summaries with recommended actions.

Box 1: Sample interview canvas

# Formulation and Format

The UN-REDD programme has developed a range of standard knowledge products and templates that integrate sometimes lessons learned as a standalone section or blended in the body of the publication. While these guidelines can certainly help in the identification and formulation of lessons learned that will be mainstreamed in other UN-REDD publications, their primary focus is on describing the development of full-fledged Lessons Learned products. Such products are of two types. Standard UN-REDD Lessons Learned are formulated either in a couple of pages in the form of a *Lessons Learned Brief* or in the longer form of a study as a *Lessons Learned Booklet*.

**Lessons Learned Briefs**

The “*UN-REDD Lessons Learned Briefs*” are 2-pagers that compile lessons learned identified at national level that should be globally disseminated. The short format of the publication is helpful to collect information in a matter of a few days or remotely. These products are especially appropriate for collecting and disseminating lessons learned from on-going NP. For instance production can be synchronized with the preparation of the annual report. The full-color 2-pagers feature complementary and nationally-appropriate pictures and graphics to go along with the text. A template is provided in Annex 1.

**Lessons Learned Booklets**

The *"UN-REDD Lessons Learned Booklets*” are concise yet substantive 4 to 12-page national or regionalpublications (length depending on available content) that present the most important, nationally or regionally-based lessons learned by UN-REDD Programme partner countries. These booklets are intended to present tangible examples of approaches and methodologies that have already been used and the lessons that have emerged from these experiences. The goal of these booklets is to facilitate knowledge-sharing, not only among UN-REDD Programme partner countries, but to a wide range of audiences "in the know" on REDD+. When focusing on national level lessons learned, these booklets are especially appropriate for closing NP. A template of the Lessons Learned Booklet is presented in Annex 2.

*Writing Style*

Lessons learned should be concrete and to the point. Wherever possible, lessons learned should either be phrased as specific, actionable recommendations; or they should be accompanied by concrete recommendations explaining what should be done, by whom, and by when. The publication should present intellectual information in a clear, concise way that is easy to read and digest. The style of the writing should be fairly academic, but free of jargon and long, complex sentences. Examples, rather than abstract statements, will be used to convey and illustrate lessons learned. While challenges can be highlighted, the focus of the publication will be on positive and constructive examples of what has worked for countries in implementing REDD+ readiness. Conclusions can be drawn, as long as they are not too politically sensitive.

UN-REDD lessons learned are made available in English, French, and Spanish. To the extent possible lessons learned will be translated or developed in national or local languages.

# Dissemination and Uptake

Knowledge diffusion and institutionalization of the lessons learned are the most important components of the cycle. Yet, this step is frequently overlooked. A comprehensive review of the lessons learned should be performed at the initial stages and key steps of the UN-REDD programme.

Closure

Programme scoping and formulation

Programme implementation

Revision and finalization of the project document

Review:

* LL of comparable programmes

Review:

* LL of comparable programmes during inception workshop
* LL from past period during annual work planning
* LL from other programmes

Review:

* LL of the programme
* LL of comparable programmes during evaluation

Review:

* LL of comparable programmes

The UN-REDD Programme offers a wide range of channels and media to disseminate lessons learned in full or abbreviate versions:

* UN-REDD Newsletter
* UN-REDD website
* Collaborative workspace
* Annual report
* Social media channels
* Workshops
* REDD+ Academy
* Webinars

In order to facilitate retrieval, the tag “Lessons learned” should be created in the UN-REDD collaborative workspace.

To the extent possible, country teams should support country partners in disseminating Lessons Learned Briefs at national level. Regional Technical Advisors and regional KM specialists should jointly reflect on the best countries where to target a dissemination campaign for both the Lessons Learned Briefs and Booklets. UN-REDD HQ Programme staff should review how/if lessons learned would have any influence on programming policies and guidelines.

# Annex 1: Template for Lessons Learned Briefs

**Description:**

The *"UN-REDD Lessons Learned Briefs*” are 2-pagers that feature the top lessons learned per country, with flexibility to feature more or less lessons, depending on the national context. Rather than grouping lessons learned by theme or work area, it's suggested that briefs are structured to simply identify and flesh out a "top 5" list of lessons learned. In addition to an introduction and conclusion section at the beginning and end of the brief, information on each lesson learned could be structured in the following way:

* **Context**: what is the issue the lesson is about? How has the issue been addressed/delivered on the ground?
* **Challenges and Best practices**: What are the challenges and best practices that have emerged on this issue?
* **Looking Ahead**: What is the way forward and how is UN-REDD planning to continue this support?

**Purpose:**

These briefs are intended to present tangible examples of approaches and methodologies that have already been used and the lessons that have emerged from these experiences. The goal of these briefs is to facilitate knowledge-sharing, not only among UN-REDD Programme partner countries, but to a wide range of audiences "in the know" on REDD+. These briefs are especially relevant for NP or TS still under implementation.

**Target audience:**

Lessons Learned Briefs are intended as a knowledge product that can be developed for the needs of specific target audiences such as:

* National REDD+ programme manager
* National REDD+ government staff
* Regional technical advisor and programme staff
* UN-REDD HQ staff
* National civil society organization representative
* UNFCCC secretariat
* Donors to REDD+
* ‘REDD+ Community’ organizations (other organizations beyond UN-REDD working on REDD+)
* Students
* Local communities

**Producers of Lessons Learned Briefs:**

Lessons Learned Briefs are written by country teams or produced by regional FAO/UNDP/UNEP technical experts, advisors, specialists and programme staff, drawing on their support and analysis of UN-REDD programme implementation and monitoring.

**Quality assurance process:**

Lessons Learned Briefs should follow the steps of the quality assurance process as spelled out in *UN-REDD Programme Workflow Process for the Production of Information Materials*. This includes steps such as filling the *Concept Brief template for Information Materials*, circulating it to relevant focal points, and **peer reviewing** the Brief before finalization and dissemination. It is important to note that for country publications and to respect their ownership of the REDD+ process, final word in approvals most of the time comes from the **Ministry of Environment or lead government counterpart** involved**.**

**Resources and References:**

* Template for UN-REDD Lessons Learned:
* *To be developed*
* UN-REDD Information Materials Workflow Process for global products:

<http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&view=document&alias=14360-information-materials-workflow-process&category_slug=communications&Itemid=134>

**Format/minimum content standards:**

|  |  |
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| **Lessons Learned Brief**  **Maximum: 2 pages** | |
|  | Title  Authors |
| **1. Introduction** | Brief opening overview stating the context, purpose of the document, and points covered.   * A paragraph about the UN-REDD Programme * Historical perspective * About REDD, REDD+ and the WFR * A paragraph on the Brief * State the main topic presented * Briefly describe the methodology for data collection * Outline what the reader can expect to find |
| **2. Problem statement** | A section on the context and rationale for project intervention. This may include:   * The context related to the project intervention (timeframe, location, actors) * Main issues / challenges and technical area involved * Lessons learned from previous experiences, local complications, drivers of change |
| **3. Programme intervention** | This section should describe what was supposed to happen, what actually happened, and what the differences were: the initial objectives of a policy/strategy, project, activity, event or task versus the actual results. Be as specific as possible from this point on – giving examples from your own or the team’s actual experiences. State what were the consequences or results – direct and indirect, desired and undesired. This section may include:   * Objectives and solutions in implementation * Methodologies * Activities conducted and outputs * Consequences or results – direct and indirect, desired and undesired and supporting evidence |
| **4. Lessons Learned** | The 5 top lessons learned:   * **Context**: what is the issue the lesson is about? How has the issue been addressed/delivered on the ground? * **Challenges and Best practices**: What are the challenges and best practices that have emerged on this issue? * **Looking Ahead**: What is the way forward and how is UN-REDD planning to continue this support? * Boxes that can either: * Provide complementary scientific / technical data to the section * Convey quotes/citations from programme partners * Pictures that show actors or area of project intervention |
| **5. Conclusion** | This section should outlines how the lessons learned can best be incorporated into future practice. It suggests parallel projects, activities or processes to which the lessons learned could be applied. |
| **References** | List of references formatted according to UN-REDD style guide |
| **Endnotes** | Complementary notes (optional) |
| **Acknowledgements** | List of persons consulted (optional) |
| **More information** | Selected list of resources and further reading with hyperlinks to web-based UN-REDD/other resources (optional) |
| **About UN-REDD** | Box presenting UN-REDD services and points of contact (optional) |

# Annex 2: Template for Lessons Learned Booklet

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| **Lessons Learned Booklet** |

**Description:**

The *"UN-REDD Lessons Learned Booklets*” are concise yet substantive 4 to 12-page national or regionalpublications (length depending on available content) that present the most important, nationally or regionally-based lessons learned by UN-REDD Programme partner countries. The full-color booklets feature complementary and regionally-appropriate pictures and graphics to go along with the text. The cover (in heavier stock) would feature a simple, stylized treatment of the document title, along with a map of the region or a regionally-appropriate central image focused on tropical forests. The inside pages would be designed to mirror the style and colors established on the cover. The booklets will be printed on recycled paper. The inside front cover would feature the UN-REDD Programme boilerplate; the inside back cover would feature acknowledgement to contributors, photo credits and recycling logo; and the back cover would feature contact information for both the Secretariat and regional UN-REDD Programme offices.

**Purpose:**

These booklets are intended to present tangible examples of approaches and methodologies that have already been used and the lessons that have emerged from these experiences. The goal of these booklets is to facilitate knowledge-sharing, not only among UN-REDD Programme partner countries, but to a wide range of audiences "in the know" on REDD+. When focusing on national level lessons learned, these booklets are especially appropriate for closing NP and/or And or highlighting LL in a specific process related to REDD+ preparation, implementation.

**Target audience:**

Lessons Learned Booklets are intended as a knowledge product that can be developed for the needs of specific target audiences such as:

* National REDD+ programme manager
* National REDD+ government staff
* Regional technical advisor and programme staff
* UN-REDD HQ staff
* National civil society organization representative
* UNFCCC secretariat
* Donors to REDD+
* ‘REDD+ Community’ organizations (other organizations beyond UN-REDD working on REDD+)
* Students
* Local communities

**Producers of Lessons Learned Booklets:**

Lessons Learned Booklets are written by regional KM specialists in collaboration with country teams, national partners, and regional technical advisors. Alternatively, regional KM specialists can guide the local team and consultants in charge of locally producing the Booklet.

**Quality assurance process:**

Lessons Learned Booklets should follow the steps of the quality assurance process as spelled out in *UN-REDD Programme Workflow Process for the Production of Information Materials*. This includes steps such as filling the *Concept Brief template for Information Materials*, circulating it to relevant focal points, and **peer reviewing** the Booklet before finalization and dissemination. It is important to note that for country publications and to respect their ownership of the REDD+ process, final word in approvals most of the time comes from the **Ministry of Environment or lead government counterpart** involved**.**

**Resources and References:**

* Template for UN-REDD Lessons Learned:
* *To be developed*
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<http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&view=document&alias=14360-information-materials-workflow-process&category_slug=communications&Itemid=134>

**Format/minimum content standards:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lessons Learned Booklet**  **Maximum: 12 pages** | |
|  | Title  Authors |
| **1. Introduction** | An opening overview stating the context, purpose of the document, and points covered.   * A paragraph about the UN-REDD Programme * Historical perspective * About REDD, REDD+ and the WFR * A paragraph on the Booklet * State the main topic presented * Briefly describe the methodology for data collection * Outline what the reader can expect to find |
| **2. Problem statement** | A section on the context and rationale for project intervention. This may include:   * The context related to the project intervention (timeframe, location, actors) * Main issues / challenges and technical area involved * Lessons learned from previous experiences, local complications, drivers of change |
| **3. Programme intervention** | This section should describe what was supposed to happen, what actually happened, and what were the differences: the initial objectives of a policy/strategy, project, activity, event or task versus the actual results. Be as specific as possible from this point on – giving examples from your own or the team’s actual experiences. State what were the consequences or results – direct and indirect, desired and undesired. This section may include:   * Detailed objectives and solutions in implementation * Methodologies * Activities conducted and outputs * Consequences or results – direct and indirect, desired and undesired and supporting evidence * Boxes that can either: * Provide complementary scientific / technical data to the section * Convey quotes/citations from programme partners * Pictures that show actors or area of project intervention |
| **4. Lessons Learned** | The final section concentrates on specific lessons. This section should be based on an analysis of the experience and context above. It should answer the following questions: ‘if you could do this all over again, what would you do differently?’; or otherwise ‘what is worthwhile repeating elsewhere’?  Lessons learned should be concrete and to the point. Wherever possible, lessons learned should be either phrased as specific, actionable recommendations; or they should be accompanied by concrete recommendations explaining what should be done, by whom, and by when.  This section can be structured by themes, each with a clear and descriptive heading, to allow the reader to easily capture the main issues. |
| **5. Conclusion** | This section should outlines how the lessons learned can best be incorporated into future practice. It suggests parallel projects, activities or processes to which the lessons learned could be applied. |
| **References** | List of references formatted according to UN-REDD style guide |
| **Endnotes** | Complementary notes (optional) |
| **Acknowledgements** | List of persons consulted (optional) |
| **More information** | Selected list of resources and further reading with hyperlinks to web-based UN-REDD/other resources (optional) |
| **About UN-REDD** | Box presenting UN-REDD services and points of contact (optional) |

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