

Viet Nam's NJP: Progress Report

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

June 2009



The budget allocation for the Viet Nam UN-REDD programme was approved by the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board at its first meeting, March 9, 2009, in Panama. Since then, the following activities have been undertaken towards signature of the Joint Programme (JP) document.

1. Revision of JP document and preparation of “Detailed Project Outline” (DPO): March 10-30

The JP document was revised in the following manner:

- Modifications to address comments submitted by the independent reviewer and members of the UN-REDD Programme Coordination team;
- Preparation of first year annual work plan, based on inputs prepared and submitted by representatives of the three participating UN agencies
- Preparation of a detailed risk log
- Review of implementation arrangements, in consultation with the MDTF Office
- Preparation of ToR for staff positions.

In parallel to this, as part of the approval process of the Government of Viet Nam, a DPO was prepared, consisting of extracts from the revised and expanded JP document. The DPO must pass through a lengthy review and approval process, involving the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (the National Focal Agency on Climate change issue), the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Investment, and relevant line ministries. The Programme Executing Agency – the Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has received formal comments from the above-mentioned organizations and revised the DPO. The Ministry of Planning and Investment is preparing a recommendation letter to the Prime Minister for an official approval.

2. Review of implementation arrangements with the Government of Viet Nam: April 15-18

Representatives of UNDP and FAO met with representatives of the Government of Viet Nam (Ministry of Planning and Investment and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to review and discuss implementation arrangements, and to ensure that the proposed arrangements reflected lessons from previous and current joint programmes in Viet Nam. As a result of the meeting, the implementation arrangements section of the JP document was expanded significantly, with substantial additional detail, and this new text was circulated among the three participating UN agencies for their consideration (which took place during the period April 19 – May 8).

3. Finalization of implementation arrangements and incorporation into JP document and DPO: May 8-16

Representatives of UNDP and UNEP met in Bangkok on May 8th to reach agreement on proposed implementation arrangements. Representatives of UNDP and FAO met in Hanoi on May 12th for the same purpose. As a result of these meetings, representatives of UNDP met with the Government of Viet Nam REDD Focal Point on May 13th to discuss the finalized

implementation arrangements. The finalized implementation arrangements were reflected in revised JP Document and DPO, at which point the DPO could commence the process of internal Government of Vietnam approval.

4. DPO review and approval: May 17-June 20

The process of DPO review and approval can typically take 2-3 months, or even longer. In this case, the process will be completed in approximately four weeks, due to the strong support from the government agencies for the implementation of REDD Programme and active and personal involvement of the Viet Nam REDD Focal Point in briefing each ministry/agency on key issues in the DPO. The DPO and recommendation letter from the Ministry of Planning and Investment were submitted to the Prime Minister during the week of June 8-12.

5. Planning of inception workshop and hiring of programme staff: May 17 onwards

In order for an inception workshop for the Viet Nam UN-REDD programme to take place as soon as possible after signature of the document, planning began while the DPO approval process was underway. Tentative dates for the workshop were set for July 6-10.

Although recruitment of project staff is expected to take place only after approval of the DPO, with special agreement from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, recruitment was begun during the DPO approval process.

Lessons for UN-REDD JP processing

- a) Internal government approval processes are often lengthy, so opportunities to shorten the process through parallel processing of documents need to be explored.
- b) As Viet Nam was the first UN-REDD programme country to approach project signature, principles and practices of implementation had not previously been discussed in details. This impacted the speed at which the Viet Nam documents could be processed; other countries will benefit from these discussions having taken place in the context of Viet Nam.
- c) The rapidly evolving REDD international negotiation and policy environment and the desire of many development partners to support REDD readiness make it very difficult for the JP document to remain up-to-date. At some point, an acceptance that new developments will not be reflected in the document but can be addressed during the inception workshop needs to be reached.