

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Norad

REGIONAL PARTNERS' DIALOGUE

SUSTAINABLE FOREST TRADE
IN THE LOWER MEKONG REGION
(SFT-LMR)

UN-REDD
Global Technical Assistance

UN-REDD Programme
20 November 2020



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BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

Background

In March 2020, a new UN-REDD Programme initiative for Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region (SFT-LMR) was approved by the Government of Norway. The initiative is implemented in five Lower Mekong (LMR) countries, namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. It is intended to promote dialogue, policy alignment, and institutional inter-compatibility within the LMR, boost cooperation between LMR countries and China, and effectively address the challenges of forest crime.

With an implementation period of two years, the project underwent a six-month inception phase, during which country-level preparation, consultation, and scoping were carried out. The inception phase culminated with a "Regional Partners' Dialogue" consultation and inception meeting held on 20 November 2020, which provided a regional dimension to the results of country-level consultations and work planning. All five target countries of the initiative - Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam; partner organisations, including CITES, GGSC, UNODC, the ITTO, RECOFTC, FSC, PEFC, CIFOR, WWF, and USAID; the Government of Norway; and staff from the UN-REDD Programme and two of its member agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), participated in the virtual event.

Objectives and expected outcomes

The objective of the UN-REDD Regional Partners' Dialogue event was to introduce the SFT-LMR initiative's areas of work (regional and national) as consulted throughout the inception phase and to reach a shared understanding of the project's main areas of work among the key project stakeholders. This event was organised in place of a regional workshop, considering the travel constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Event agenda and structure

The Regional Partners' Dialogue featured three main sessions, each of which was broadly aligned with one of the three SFT-LMR outcomes. Session 1 featured a presentation of and discussion about trends in timber trade and the status of illegal logging in the LMR. Session 2 explored forest certification and included a panel discussion on the role of finance and the banking sector in promoting sustainable forest trade. Session 3 discussed developments in forest and land use monitoring, including the monitoring of social and environmental factors.

The event used a combination of plenary presentations, panel discussions and online surveys informed by discussions in breakout groups. In some countries, participants were able to meet in person following national COVID-19 regulations, connecting to the web event; others' participation was entirely virtual. For each session, participants were assigned to breakout groups to discuss and jointly respond to online survey questions; breakout groups were country-specific, for the LMR countries, or composed of regional partners.

| TIME | AGENDA |
|---------------|--|
| 14:30 – 15:00 | <p>Opening session</p> <p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs, Senior Forestry Officer and REDD+ Team Leader – Leif John Fosse, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway <hr/> <p>Orientation to the workshop & participants' introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Workshop structure & tools – Interactive session –Self introduction per country / partner groups |
| 15:00 – 15:40 | <p>Session 1</p> <p>Online survey (15min)</p> <hr/> <p>Presentation: Trends in timber trade; plantation sector growth; wood processing industry growth in the LMR</p> <hr/> <p>Open Q&A and survey results</p> |
| 15:40 – 16:25 | <p>Session 2</p> <p>Online survey (10min)</p> <hr/> <p>Panel discussion on challenges and opportunities for sustainable financing in the forest sector of the Mekong Region</p> <hr/> <p>Survey results and Q&A</p> |
| 16:25 – 17:05 | <p>Session 3</p> <p>Online survey (10min)</p> <hr/> <p>Presentation: developments in forest & land use monitoring, including social and environmental factors</p> <hr/> <p>Open Q&A and survey results</p> |
| 17:05 – 17:35 | <p>Closing session</p> <p>Online survey (5min)</p> <hr/> <p>Open Q&A and survey results</p> <hr/> <p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mario Boccucci, Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat |



EVENT PROCEEDINGS

Opening session

Opening remarks:

- Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs, Senior Forestry Officer and REDD+ Team Leader, FAO
- Leif John Fosse, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway

On behalf of the UN-REDD Programme and the Government of Norway, respectively, Ms Buszko-Briggs and Mr Fosse welcomed participants and opened the event. Ms Buszko-Briggs outlined the ambitions for the SFT-LMR initiative, engaging key institutions in the LMR countries and in China to strengthen forest governance and increase regional commitment and capacities to achieve sustainable trade and investment in wood products across the region, and address illegal activities that may inhibit this. She expressed appreciation for the flexibility demonstrated by all countries and partners and the constructive work to define project activities in the inception phase, and highlighted the need for implementation to continue to adapt to the uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms Buszko-Briggs recalled the longstanding collaboration of the UN-REDD Programme with the Lower Mekong countries to reduce forest degradation and deforestation and promote sustainable management of forests, ultimately reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change, while Mr Fosse linked the approach to regional collaboration of the SFT-LMR initiative with Phase II of the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam. While recognizing the challenges of working in a regional context, he shared the positive results of strengthened cooperation on forest issues at provincial level between Lao PDR (Bolikhamxay and Khamouane provinces) and Viet Nam (Ha Tinh province) during the Programme, facilitating legal trade in wood products and making illegal trade more difficult. Mr Fosse expressed the Government of Norway's hope that the SFT-LMR

nurtures such cooperative efforts at provincial and local levels, complementing ongoing efforts at national, regional, and international levels. He observed that national government bans by LMR countries in recent years, such as on the export of unprocessed logs, have made pronounced changes on the trend of legal timber trade in recent years, however, the actual implications and status of illegal forest trade remains difficult to gauge.

Mr Fosse reiterated that the initiative should enable the sustainable use of forest products for economic development and support the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and local communities to ensure sustainable use of forest resources and avoid deforestation. Linking up with private sector and forestry financing institutions and promoting private sector commitments to cut illegal timber and forest products, he said, and safeguarding remaining natural forests by establishing plantations that supply regional timber processing industries are additional strategies for achieving sustainable forest use and achieving emissions reductions. While underlining the importance of data as a core tool for monitoring forests, detecting illegal logging and planning for legal forestry business, Mr Fosse announced that Norway will make high-resolution satellite images available free of charge. He reminded the audience that the SFT-LMR has an initial scope of two years, and aims to continue beyond 2021 to focus on incentives for removing deforestation from production and trade in a range of commodities beyond timber.

Introduction of national and regional partners:

Following the opening remarks, the five LMR countries introduced their government delegations and other national participants, as well as the priority activities defined via national consultations. Thereafter, key project partners

introduced themselves and their focus areas in contribution to achieving the SFT-LMR initiative's objectives. A complete list of workshop participants is available in Annex A.



CAMBODIA

The Ministry of Environment and the Forest Administration were both represented at high level, notably by His Excellency Kim Nong, Director General, General Directorate of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection in the Ministry of Environment as well as by Mr Chan Ponika, Deputy Director General, Department of Forest Industry and International Cooperation in the Forest Administration. The RECOFTC country office and FAO country office also participated. National context for the initiative, which will inform country activities, is provided below.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Total area of land: 181,035 km²

Forest cover: 46.86% (MOE, 2018)

Timber production source: plantation, Land concessions

Import: 1,752 m³ (FA, 2019)

Export: 3,080 m³ and 1,632 steres (FA, 2019)

Production Forest: 1,189,891.72 ha

Trade:

- Bilateral agreements with neighboring countries
- MOU with Viet Nam (in 2012, ext. 2017, 5yrs)
- MOU with Laos in process

Online application:

<http://cambodia-nfms.org/>

NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

FLEGT

- RGC expressed interest for VPA negotiation in 2011
- FAO-EU FLEGT support: including developing TLD, policy &
- law amendment, capacity development, timber harvest
- piloting

CERTIFICATION

- Promote collaboration with Private Sector with certification scheme i.e GRANDIS

LAW & POLICIES

- Law on Forestry August 2002 (under revision)
- National Forest Programme 2010-2029
- National REDD+ Strategy 2017-2025
- Production Forest Strategic Plan (draft)

Other:

UNFCCC, Paris Agreements, CITES, CBD



LAO PDR

The Department of Forestry and Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) both participated in the dialogue, as did the RECOFTC, PEFC and WWF country offices, the FAO country office and a representative of the Lao Bankers' Association. National context relevant to the SFT-LMR initiative, which will inform country activities, is provided below.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

7.016 million people (2018)
GDP per capital was USD 2,585

Forest areas: 14.692,927 million hectares, or 62.05% of total land area in 2019

(Source: DOFI).

Timber plantation:

- Rubber: 276,131 ha in 2020,
- Others approximately 210,000 (teak, Eucalyptus Industrial trees planted by individuals and businesses (Source: ACIAR project report)

Export:

- No. 1360 and PM15 Decree Order banned timber exported
- 36,000 cubic meters (m3) of timbers exported to Vietnam in 2016
- 161,000 m3 of timbers from January to December 2016 exported to China,

Sources: (1) *Scaling-Up Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Project (SUFORD-SU) (P130222) WB*, (2) *THE FIRST BIENNIAL UPDATE REPORT 2020*, (3) *Forest Sector Strategy to 2020*, (4) *UNFCCC report in Laos REDD+ 2018*, (5) *Forest Trends Report Series: Forest Policy, Trade, and Finance 2017*

NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

FLEGT

- Lao PDR and the EU are negotiating on the VPA focusing on the Lao timber legality assurance system, timber legality definitions, supply chain control and verification

CERTIFICATION

- Forestry law 2019 has promoted (TLAS implementation; forest management and chain of custody (CoC) certification; PSFM; Plantation forestry in PFAs; Promoting and streamlining smallholder plantation forestry; Promoting private industrial plantation forestry; and village forestry)

FORESTRY POLICY & LAW

- Revised Forest Law (2019)
- Lao PDR Decree on Climate Change (2019)
- Lao Land law revision (2019)
- Lao Law on Environmental Protection, (2012)
- Laos expected to meet the 70 percent of forest cover by 2025



MYANMAR

The Forest Department and Forestry Research Institute participated in the workshop, as did the RECOFTC country office and FAO country office. National context for the initiative, which will inform country activities, is provided below.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Total Land Area: 67.6 M ha

Forest Area (2019): 28.5 M ha,

- Forest Cover: 42.19% (GFRA 2020)

Timber Production (2018-2019):

- Teak wood: 22698 m³ (19979 m³ from natural forests while 2719 m³ from plantations)
- Other hardwood species: 553845 m³ (extracted from natural forests)

Export (2018):

All timbers (teak, hardwood, timber):
70.265 million USD (121406 m³)

Source: Myanmar Timber Enterprises, MONREC



NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

FLEGT

- Entered into EU FLEG-T VPA process since March 2014
- Development of Timber Legality Assurance System (Based on the result of independent gap analysis of proposed MTLAS)

CERTIFICATION

- Myanmar Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification is being developed.

FORESTRY POLICY & LAW

- Forest Laws (2018)
- National Landuse Policy (2016)
- National Environmental Policy (2017)
- National Climate Change Policy (2019)
- Protection of Biodiversity and Protected areas Laws (2018)
- Community Forestry Instructions (CFI) 2019
- Myanmar Forest Policy (1995)



THAILAND

The Royal Forest Department, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, the Land Development Department and Geo-Informatics and the Space Technology Development Agency participated in the workshop, as did the Thailand Forest Certification Council, Thai Timber Association, Thai Panel Product Industry Club, Thai Hevea Wood Association, and Kasetsart University, PEFC, the RECOFTC country office and the FSC regional representation based in Bangkok. National context relevant to the SFT-LMR initiative, which will inform country activities, is provided below.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Forest area: 16.4 million ha

- 25% Conserved forest
- 15% Economic forest

Timber production:

Rubber wood (3.5 million ha), Eucalyptus, Teak

Export: (2019) 2.36M m³, 4.8 billion USD in 2019 (99% Timber and 47% wood products to China)

Import: (2018) 955K m³, 273 million USD Conifer, Teak, Kempas, Oak from Malaysia and New Zealand

Online applications:

RFD: Forest4Thai, Pitakpai,

E-TREE, Forest Fire

DNP: THAIFORM, Web Portal

Source: MOC Wood Statistic Report (2019)



NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

FLEGT

- TEFSO Office (2016-2020)
- FLEGT VPA Negotiation (2020)
- Supply chain control, Self-declaration, Import Control
- THTLAS - In review process by AHWG

CERTIFICATION

- National Standard FM (TISI2861) and CoC (TIS14061)
- PEFC CoC endorsement
- FSC on rubber wood plantations with govt enterprise (FIO,RAOT)
- Imitative on group certification via related timber associations

FORESTRY POLICY & LAW

- Goal: 31.68% -> 40% forest cover and 55% with green cover
- Allow to grow and harvest any species in private lands
- Strengthen capacity building, forest governance. Update law and regulation to reflect the current trend of forest trade

Source: National Strategy on Forest Resources Development (2019)



VIET NAM

The Forest Protection Department and Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) participated in the workshop, as did the WWF, RECOFTC and FSC country offices, CIFOR, the FAO country office and UNEP staff. National context relevant for the SFT-LMR initiative, which will inform country activities, is provided below.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Total Land Area: 33M ha

Forest Area (2019): 14.6 M ha,

- Natural Forest: 10.3M ha,
- Plantation: 4.3M ha,
- Forest Cover: 41.9%

Timber Production (2018): 27.5M m³,

- Plantations: 67%,
- Scattered trees, home garden: 13%,
- Rubber: 20%

Export (2018): \$9.4B, biggest export market: USA, China, EU, Korea, Japan

Import: 9.7M m³ round timber equivalent, including round, sawn and other wood products

Source: VNFOREST, VIFOREST



NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

FLEGT

- Signed FLEGT VPA with EU in 2019
- Development of Timber Legality Assurance System (VNTLA)

CERTIFICATION

- FSC: 237,386 ha
- VFCS/PEFC: 266,974 ha
- Target: 1000,000 ha planted forest certified in 2030

FORESTRY POLICY & LAW

- Forestry Law and associated regulations
- National Forestry Development Strategy 2006 – 2020 and 2021 - 2030 toward 2050 (being developed, tentative approval in 2021)
- Target Sustainable Forest Development Programme 2016 - 2020 and 2021 - 2025 (being developed)
- PM Decision on Sustainable Forest Management
- National REDD+ Programme to 2030
- FLEGT VPA Viet Nam - EU

Introduction of key project partners and the UN project team:

Following the introduction of participants from the LMR countries, regional partners and their work areas were presented, and members of the UN-REDD, FAO, and UNEP project team were briefly introduced. The PowerPoint slides are available in [Annex C](#).

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

The contribution of PEFC to the SFT-LMR project will be to:

- (a) Build forest certification Quality Infrastructure (QI) within all five countries to support sustainable forest practices;
- (b) Support the development of national certification standards; and
- (c) Build capacities of national institutions to operationalise systems that improved forest governance, sustainable forest management and forest product trade.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

It is foreseen that FSC will contribute to the SFT-LMR project by creating a sustainable tropical timber product network that links suppliers of sustainable timber in the LMR with buyers in China.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat will contribute to the project by:

- (a) organising an event to 'diagnose' sustainable forestry priorities in the LMR for CITES-listed tree species
- (b) improving legality, permitting systems and timber identification of CITES species; and
- (c) providing training on physical inspection of timber shipments.

RECOFTC

Contributions from RECOFTC to the SFT-LMR project are related to:

- (a) capacity development of national institutes, community-based groups and smallholders and
- (b) strengthening the enabling environment of certification mechanisms to enhance the inclusiveness of downstream actors.

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

It is foreseen that the ITTO will partner with the SFT-LMR project to facilitate linkages with the Chinese private sector, namely through ITTO's Global Green Supply Chain (GGSC) and enhancing the conservation and sustainable management of teak forests.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

The WWF is working across critical landscapes in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam on transboundary conservation initiatives including (a) Promoting inclusive forest governance in the Mekong region, (b) Strengthening sustainable forest management and certification (c) Working with financial institutions to remove illegal logging and land conversion from lending and investment portfolios. WWF will support creating a finance platform that will develop banks' capacity to collaborate and understand the nature and extent of illegal logging and land conversion. This will enhance prudent banking policies on forest-based projects to enable banks and other financial service providers to be more active in identifying and dealing with financial transactions related to their customers' unsustainable and illicit activities.

UN project implementation team:

UN-REDD project team: project coordinator; national project coordinators and assistants in all 5 LMR countries; technical advisors from FAO (including the REDD+/National Forest Monitoring cluster, FAO-EU FLEGT Programme and the Forest Products and Statistics team), UNEP and UNEP-WCMC based in the LMR countries and across the world.

Session 1 - Outcome 1

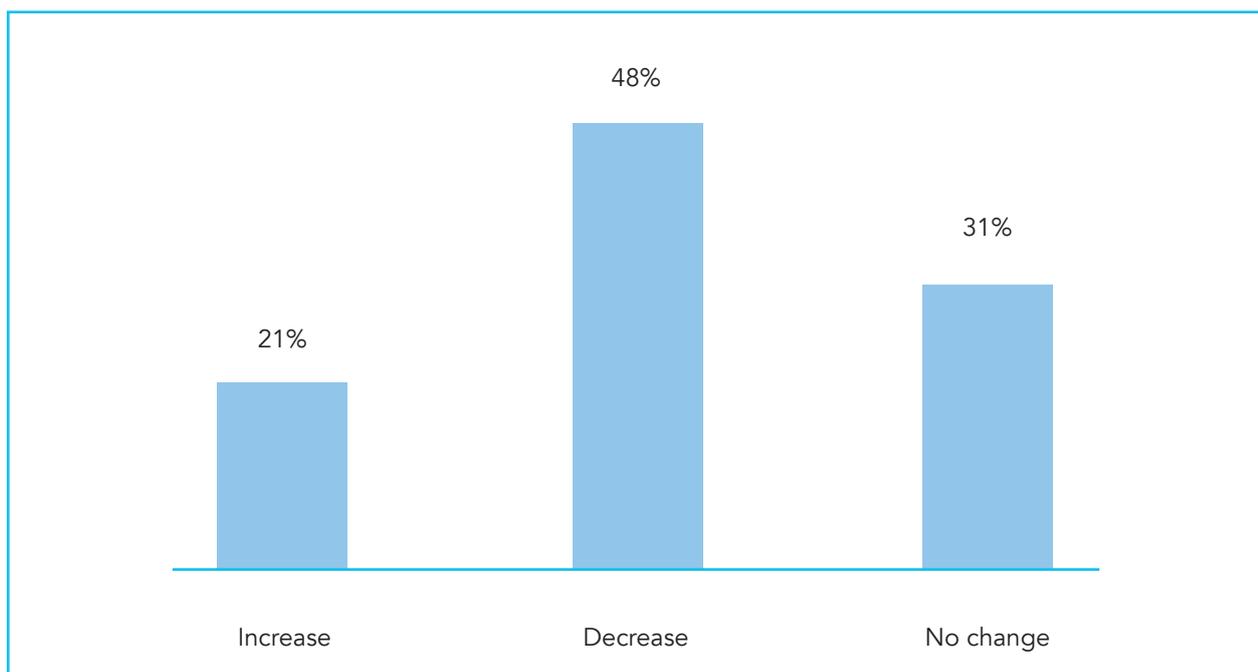
Strengthened bilateral and regional cooperation in place to facilitate legal and sustainable trade in forest products across the LMR and China

The session opened with breakout groups, which were assigned to respond collectively to an online survey, the responses to which follow below. This was followed by a plenary presentation, a Q&A session and a discussion of survey results.



Online survey responses:

Q1: What are your impressions on the trends of illegal logging in the LMR in the past decade?





Q2: Are you aware of any statistics that support your impression from the previous question?

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| EIA reports | From RFD's information record. | No I am not. It is an impression (or a hope and an expectation given how much attention has increased over the last few years) |
| Chatham House report | FAO stats, background (supporting) documents for CITES listing | |
| FAO Asia Pacific Outlook Study; | guess-estimate, no strong or solid evidences ,all information comes from single events | RFD statistics show declining numbers in the last decade including ONEP statistic but more on forest fire, and agriculture land use |
| No. Most information comes from reports that address general trends or individual cases. | Customs data from the Forest Trends report; 2015 WWF report;; Forest Watch; DoFI report | FRA results (2010-2020) show active deforestation in Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao, meaning that there is no sustainable forest management. In parallel, wood processing activities (production and export) increased a lot in Vietnam and China (FAOSTAT) |
| Yes, WWF are releasing a big report on illegal logging and deforestation in January that draws from 5 datasets including WRI, Hansen, FAO etc | ITTO, FAO and timber association info, plus personal discussion with the forestry industry in the region. | |



Q&A

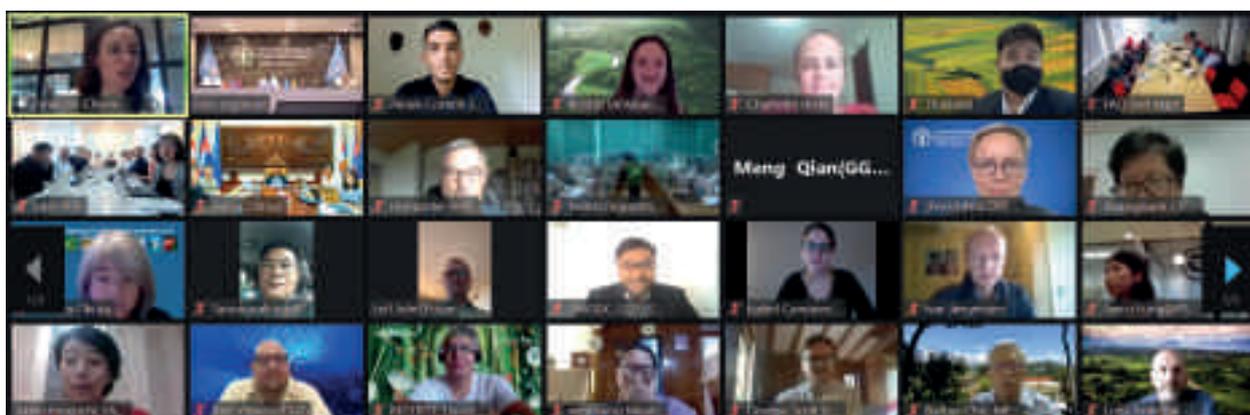
The issue of illegal logging is largely to do with natural timber (high-value timber), so what is the role of certification?

- Certification alone cannot address illegal logging, but sharing information between countries within LMR and beyond is crucial as part of the solution.
- Robust and compulsory traceability is key to legality. Voluntary forest certification schemes should work with governments to improve the enabling environment for legal trade. Government can facilitate the recognition of forest certification schemes in national policies.
- CITES parties are now required to submit an annual illegal trade report - records of seizures and interceptions of the illicit trade in CITES-listed species.
- How can we measure illegal trade?
- There is still a significant gap in better understanding illegal trade including (legal) trade flows reported by countries. It is also essential to have an idea about legal trade figures. Strengthening governments' statistic capacity to document this information is important.

Session 2 - Outcome 2

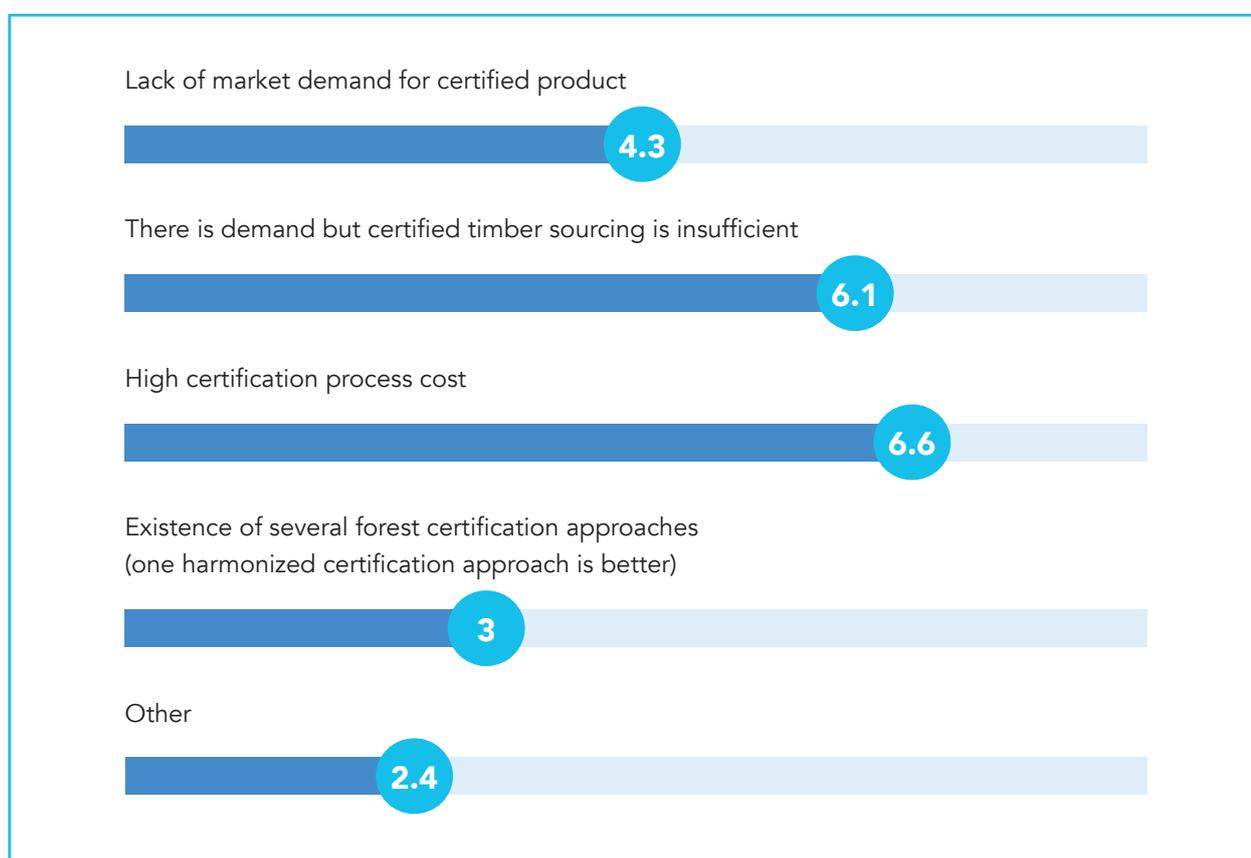
Improved forest governance for legal and sustainable trade of forest related products

The session opened with breakout groups, which were assigned to respond collectively to an online survey, the responses to which follow below. This was followed by a panel discussion, a Q&A session, and a discussion of survey results.

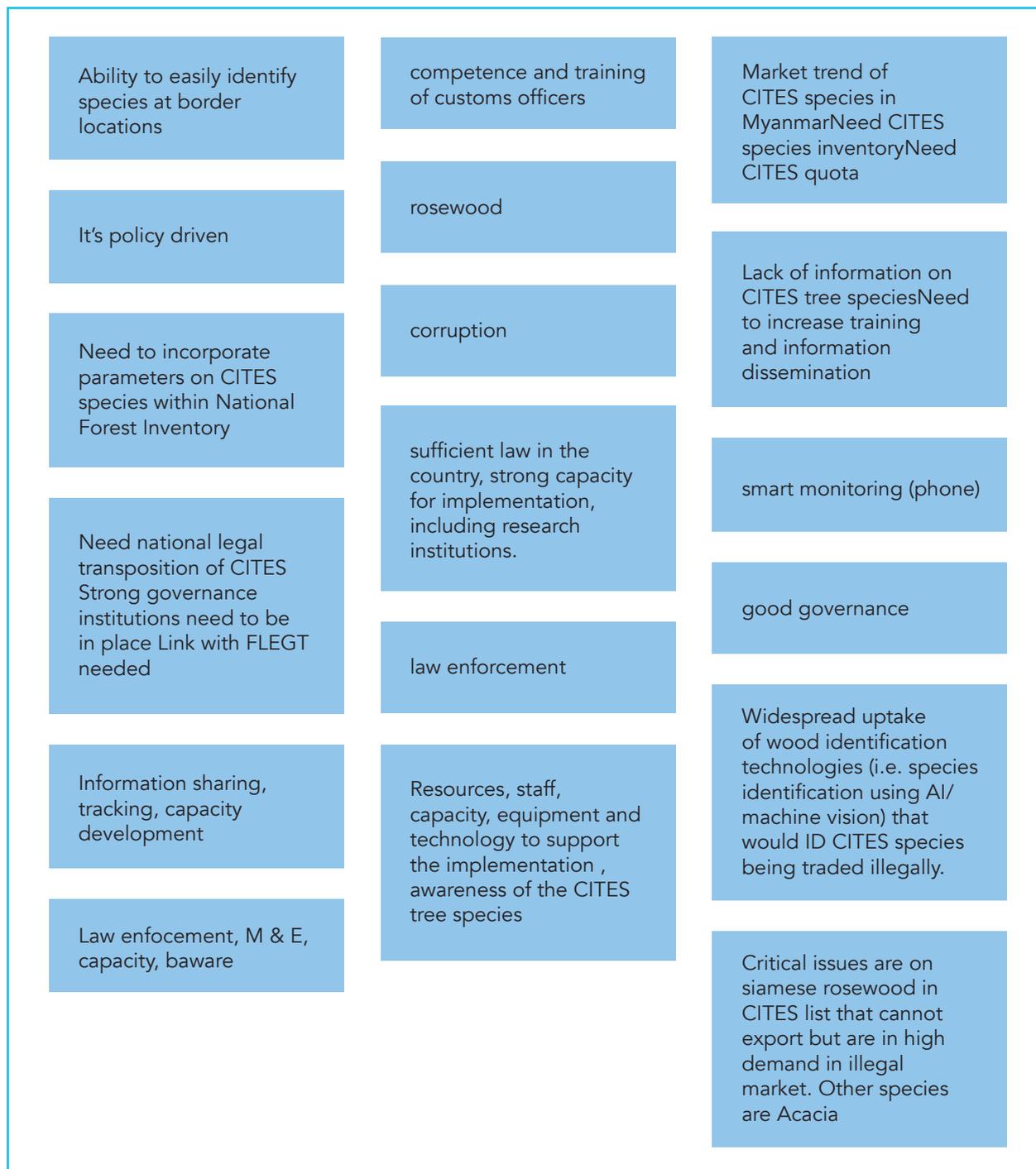


Online survey responses:

Question 4: What are the main challenges to forest certification in your country?



Q5: What are the gaps and needs to implement the CITES Convention for tree species in your country?



Plenary presentation

Trends of timber trade; plantation sector growth; wood processing industry growth in the LMR:

- Panellists: Alistair Monument, Conservation Impact Director, Asia Pacific WWF; Sengdavone Bangonesengdet, Secretary General ,Lao Bankers' Association; Ryan Bjorkquist, Director of Environmental and Social Risk Management, Standard Chartered Bank
- Moderator: George Scott, Private Sector and Finance Specialist, UNEP



Delegation of Lao PDR to the Regional Partners' Dialogue

Key messages:

- Without bank financing, many forest projects would not be commercially feasible.
- Banks serve as essential players in the trade of products produced by forest-based industries.
- Banks involved in financing high-risk forest-based industries face a range of different risks relating to the project's technical feasibility or activity and its ability to make repayments servicing their loan.
- Banking regulations require that banks know their customers, manage risk, and avoid financing projects that may be harmful to the environment.
- In addition to a range of risks associated with deforestation and forest degradation, there are also many investment opportunities that are developing due to changing approaches toward forest protection and the emergence of sustainable timber production models, aligned with the objectives of sustainable forest management.
- The issue of forest crime and unsustainable forest use is very complicated to address for banks. It requires both understanding the risks, as well as developing internal systems to mitigate those risks.
- Barriers to financing for national banks include:
 - Smallholders/forest groups do not have an existing relationship with the bank.
 - Banks do not have products tailored to forestry or plantations.
 - Typical loan tenure offered by banks is too short for plantation development.
 - Lack of collaterals for receiving a loan, where land titles cannot be issued is a significant issue. For example, in Lao PDR, land titles cannot be currently issued for forestland, as this is considered State land.



Q&A

- How can government support banks in addressing challenges and financing sustainable activities?
 - Legislation around illegal logging/sourcing exists; the issue is implementing and enforcing this legislation. The first step is for governments to step up law enforcement and legal oversight.
 - Governments will also play an important role in facilitating access to finance to smallholders and indigenous communities who are the main custodians of forest resources in the region.
 - Banks welcome communicating around how to support bank policies. There is a need to understand more about the platform to see how to engage better with it.
- Larger companies and banks want to exclude conversion timber (legal and illegal) or timber/wood products from plantations established on former forest lands that have been converted. How can certification systems provide this assurance through means other than forest management certification?
 - FSC has a non-conversion policy. There are discussions about introducing remedy policy on historical conversion. The direction is clear that big companies need to be engaged and be responsible for doing restoration.

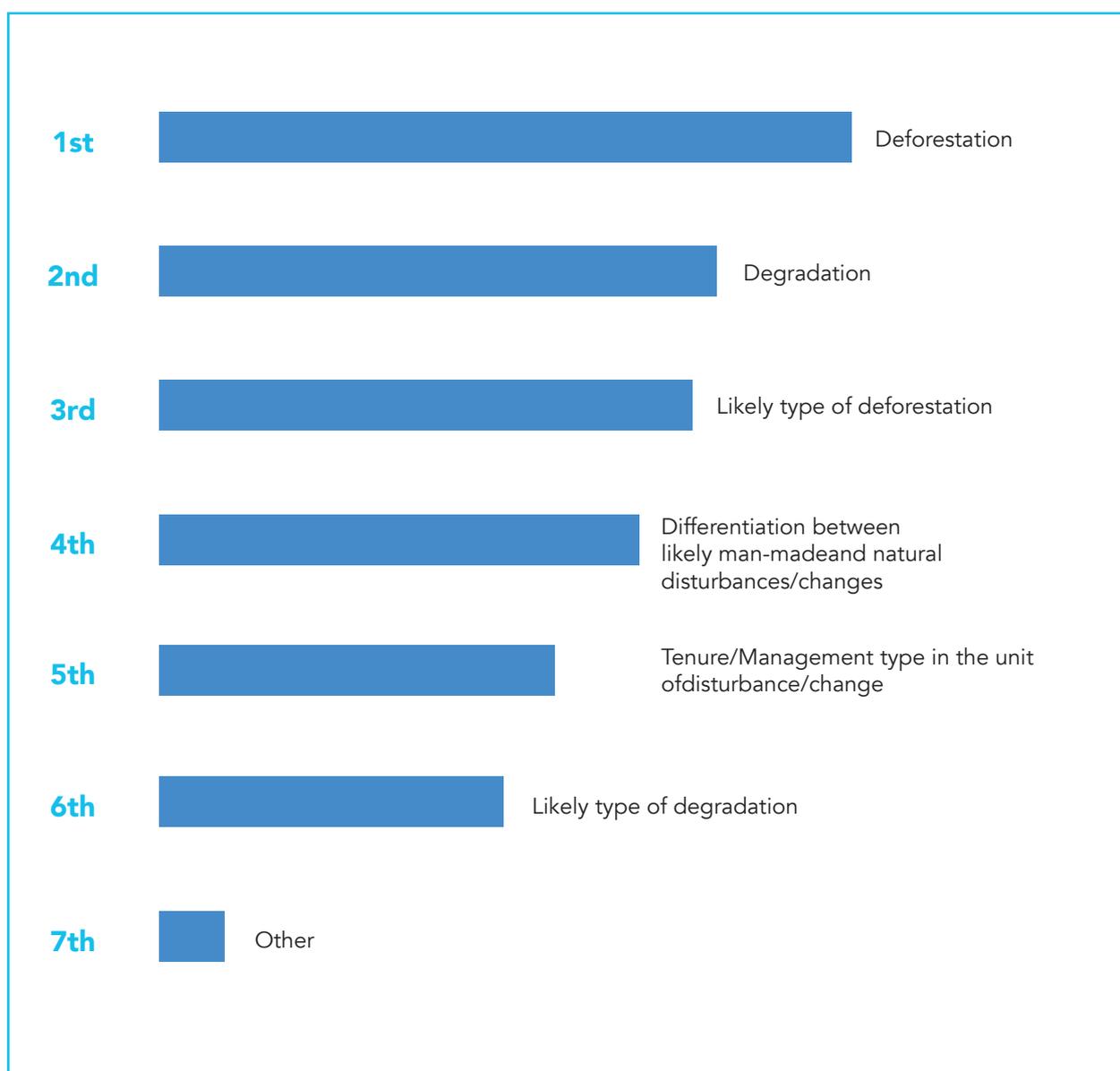
Session 3 - Outcome 3

Improved monitoring of forest and land use through enhanced data accessibility and management

The session opened with breakout groups, which were assigned to respond collectively to an online survey, the responses to which follow below. This was followed by a plenary presentation, a Q&A session, and a discussion of survey results.

Online survey responses:

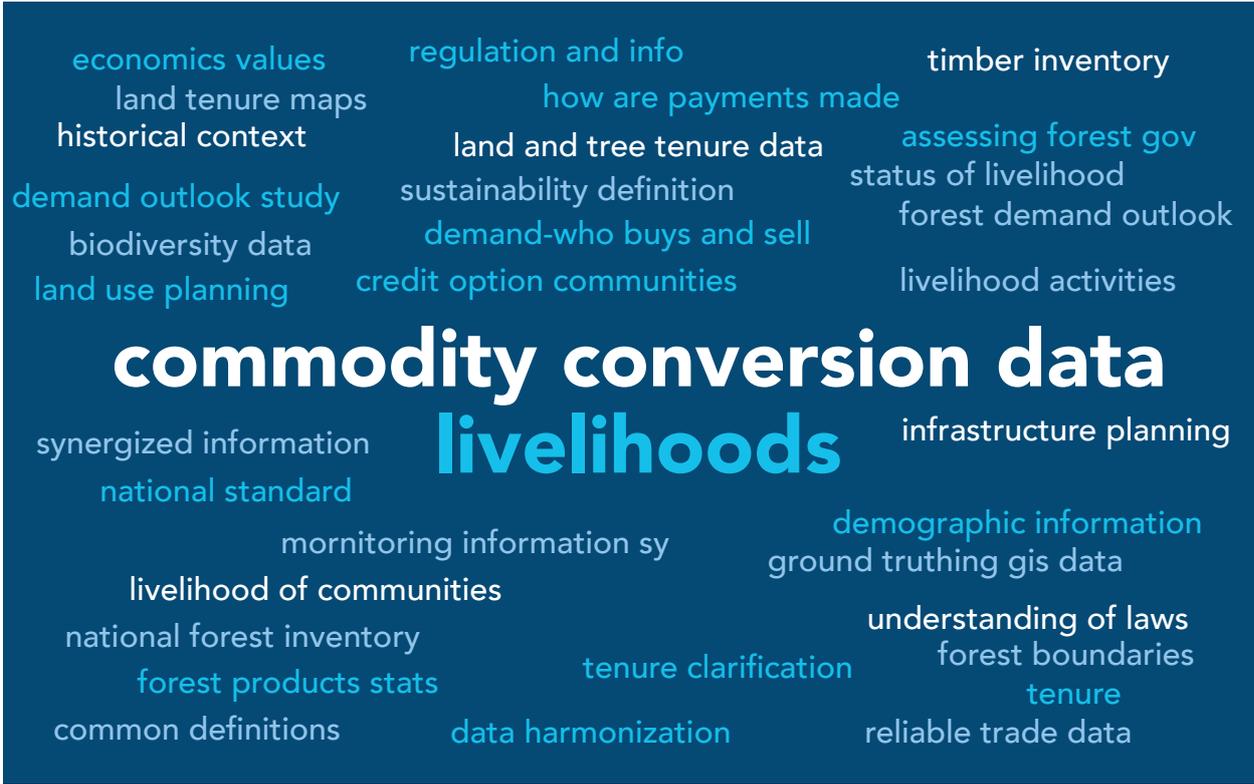
Q6: In your opinion, what would be the key information that would come from near real-time forest monitoring?



Q7: In your opinion, what are the main data gaps in understanding legal forest activities and trade in the LMR?



Q8: In your opinion, what social, economic and environmental information are most needed for better forest governance in the LMR?



Plenary presentation

➡ Developments in forest & land use monitoring, including social and environmental factors - Outcome 3 of the SFT-LMR initiative

- Mathieu van Rijn, Forestry Officer, FAO
- Charlotte Hicks, Senior Technical Officer, UNEP-WCMC



Key messages:

The presentations indicated that baseline data is available in countries, in part through past support by the UN-REDD Programme. Most LMR countries have already established forest reference (emission) levels (FRL/FRELS), National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS), and national forest and trade statistics systems. The presentations also indicated the aims of one of the initiative's output, namely improving information sharing from existing data through the aforementioned systems and building the capacities of key institutions in the LMR countries to collect, manage, analyse, and share priority data to support the tracking of social and environmental impacts in forest sector. There are a wide range of information systems and datasets at the national, regional, and global levels that may be relevant to tracking social and environmental outcomes,

from REDD+ Safeguards Information Systems (SIS) to biodiversity monitoring, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reporting systems, and other databases.

The survey responses and discussion during this session indicated that participants perceive key information needs from near-real-time forest monitoring to be information on deforestation, degradation and likely types of deforestation, and that questions remain around how to account for national forest definition in global/regional data. Some priority gaps/challenges mentioned were related to data on legal forest activities and trade in the region, land tenure, forest boundaries and forest livelihoods, as well as issues such as ensuring data harmonisation and transparency.

Closing session

- Mario Boccucci, Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat
- In his closing remarks, Mr Boccucci recognised the project's progress despite the COVID-19 limitations since March 2020, noting that forests are the most advanced forms of Nature-based solutions (NbS) to address several crises - the climate, biodiversity, and the COVID-19 crises. NbS are being recognised and supported

by global leadership. As the UN-REDD Programme has learned in the decade since its inception, addressing climate change and sustainable natural resources use requires working at different levels, from global to regional, national, and local levels. There is hope that the SFT-LMR can advance this agenda, particularly at regional and national levels, building on the work accomplished by the countries and partners.



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