Guiding note on operational matters related to National Programmes

UN-REDD PROGRAMME TENTH POLICY BOARD MEETING

26-27 June 2013
Lombok, Indonesia

Background

1. At the ninth Policy Board meeting the Board requested the Secretariat to develop a guiding note on operational matters related to National Programmes for inter-sessional consideration. This guidance note is responding to this request.

2. The [Programme's Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance](#) (RoP) originally developed in 2009 and revised in 2012 provide general guidance on reporting to the Policy Board through annual and semi-annual reports and operational guidance for National Programmes (NPs). The operational guidance focusses on scoping, formulation, validation, and submission to the Policy Board, describing the Secretariat review, Policy Board decision process, the country approval, and the release of funds.

3. From its nine "quick start" NPs, the Programme has rapidly grown and currently has 16 NPs in implementation, of which two have operationally closed. These NPs provide many lessons emerging from implementation, that have helped to adjust the NP cycle with more realistic time-lines, and have also required implementing actions to address bottlenecks and challenges.

4. From 2009 to present the Board has taken several decisions in relation to scoping and implementation of National Programmes (see Annex 1). These include decisions to enhance the independent review process, decision regarding the language of NP reports and the Government revision of these, and the latest decision regarding no-cost extensions which need to be approved by the Policy Board if the duration of the Programme is equal to or exceeds three years.

5. Under the "Support to National Action-Global Programme" (SNA) the Programme has also developed a substantive amount of technical guidelines, methods and tools directed to National Programmes (see Annex 2).

6. Since 2011, and responding to the Policy Board request to enhance coordination with the FCPF and harmonize the support provided through National Programmes and Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PPs). The Programme has developed in collaboration with the FCPF, the harmonized UN-REDD FCPF R-PP template (version 6)

7. In an effort to compile the existing guiding materials and Policy Board decisions in addition to the RoP, the Secretariat has developed a [Handbook for National Programmes and other national-level activities](#) that is available since 2012 as a sourcebook for all involved in implementation of National Programmes.

8. This note summarizes the operational cycle of UN-REDD National Programmes, highlighting the role of the main actors including the Policy Board in the process, the central role of the Government and civil society and indigenous peoples the quality assurance provided by the Secretariat, and the quality assurance and technical support by the participating UN organizations (Agencies).
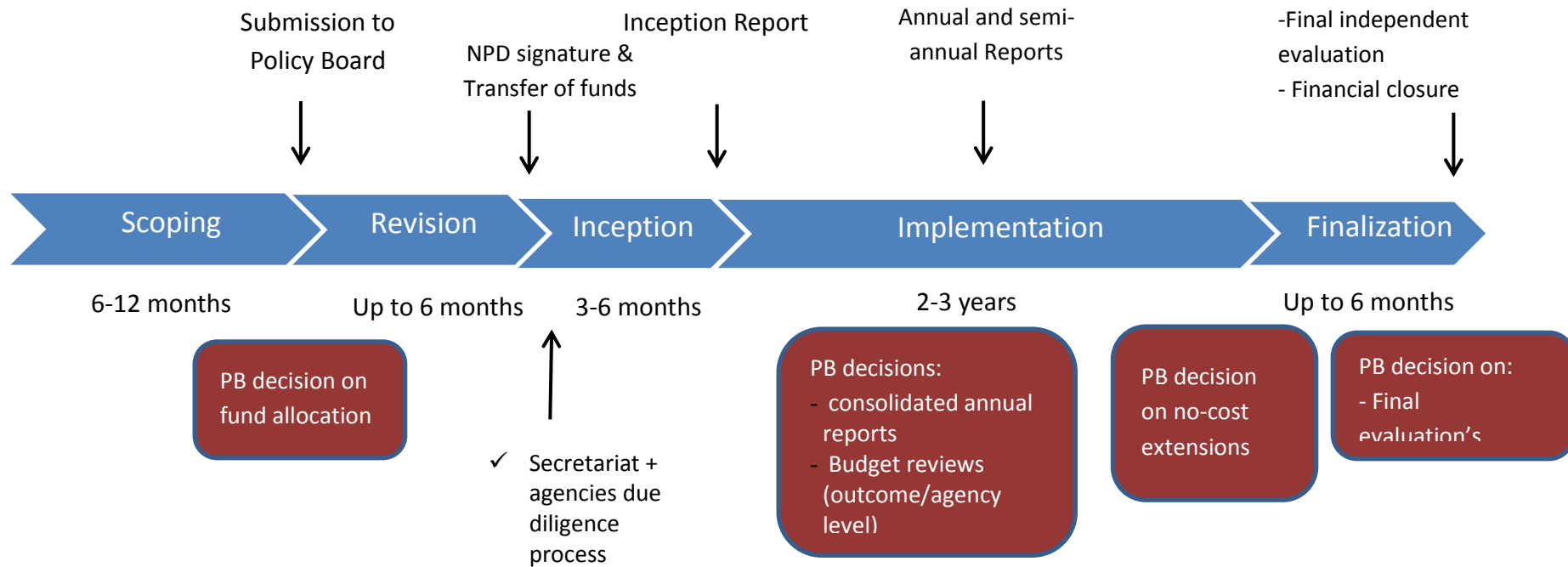
National Programme cycle

Figure 1. National Programme Development process. Decisions by the Policy Board highlighted in red boxes.

Summary of operations by stage

1. **Scoping**
- The Government supported by the Agencies prepares the draft RPP following the harmonized RPP template and conduct consultations and a validation meeting in accordance with the "Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities".
- Civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives review and provide inputs to the RPP.
- The Secretariat provides templates and guidelines and answers any queries, tasks an independent reviews by experts from the common roster of experts (FCPF-UN-REDD) and prepares the submission form (decision document) on the country's National Programme.
- The Government and Agencies review and clear RPP.
- The Government presents the RPP to the Policy Board.
- The Policy Board reviews the RPP and decides on the fund allocation request presented on the submission form[1].

2. **Revision**
- The Government supported by the Agencies review the RPP incorporating the comments from the Policy Board, independent reviewers, and Secretariat and prepares a response matrix.
- The Government and the Agencies also prepare and finalize the National Programme Document (NPD, grant agreement) following each agency's due diligence process.
- The Secretariat reviews the final RPP and response and verifies that the comments have been addressed.
- The Agencies and National Implementing partners sign the NPD.
- Upon receiving the signed National Programme Document and final RPP, the Secretariat requests the transfer of funds from the MPTF and posts the documentation in the UN-REDD workspace.
- The Policy Board is informed by the Secretariat on the signature of the NPD and can access the document on the workspace.

3. **Inception**
- The Government and the Agencies prepare and carry out the inception workshop with the participation of civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives.
- The Secretariat posts the inception workshop report on the workspace.

4. **Implementation**
- National Programmes are implemented following each Agencies' policies and procedures, and the UN-REDD guiding documents, tools and approaches (Annex 2).
- The Agencies prepare National Programme semi-annual and annual reports, send them for comments from the Government and civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives, send them for Government's signature, and send it to the Secretariat and MPTF-O.

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[1] According the rules of procedure the following decisions can be taken:
- Approve the entire programme budget (including approvals subject to minor revisions)
- Approve a portion of the programme budget (including approvals subject to minor revisions)
- Approve an initial programme budget tranche (including approvals subject to minor revisions)
- Reject the National Programme and request re-submission.

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- The Secretariat develops and updates guidance materials and templates related to implementation of National Programmes integrating recommendations from the Policy Board.
- The Secretariat and the MPTF office prepare the consolidated semi-annual and annual reports based on the information received from each National Programme.
- The national-level Project Steering Committee or Project Executive Board approves annual work-plans, and no-cost extension requests.
- The Secretariat registers no-cost extensions for Programmes with duration of less than three years.
- The Policy Board decides on approval of consolidated semi-annual and annual reports, approvals of no-cost extensions for Programmes with duration of three years or longer, and on budget revisions at outcome/agency level.

5. **Finalization**
- The Agencies prepare the National Programme final report, send it for comments from the Government and civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives, incorporate the comments and send it for Government's signature, and then to the Secretariat and MPTF-O.
- Financial closure is completed as per each agency's financial regulations.
- The Secretariat prepares and evaluation plan and coordinates the final evaluation of the National Programme.
- The Agencies prepare the Management Response to the final evaluation.
- The Government prepares the Government response to the final evaluation.
- The Policy Board decides on final evaluation recommendations and responses.

Annex 1.

Decisions relating to enhanced/improved delivery of National Programmes.

Policy Board meeting	Decision
9	7. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to further work on analysing means of enhancing implementation of National Programmes, and to prepare a document, to be submitted to the Policy Board for its consideration. The Board also requested the Secretariat to develop a guiding note on operational matters related to National Programmes, for inter-sessional consideration. 8. The Board encouraged countries that are implementing National Programmes to, when reporting to the UN-REDD Programme, include all REDD readiness activities funded by other sources, in addition to the activities funded by UN-REDD. 9. The Board decided that requests for no-cost extensions of National Programmes with a duration of more than three years should be submitted for consideration by the Board inter-sessionally, justifying the reasons for the request, including proposed actions to enhance implementation.
8	**4**: The Board welcomed the improvement in the UN-REDD National Programme (NP) reports and requested further improvements in coordination be made to ensure inclusion of the full range of information from government, stakeholders and UN agencies, and previous approval by the government and the UN Resident Coordinator.
7	**3:** Welcomed the new reporting templates for National Programmes and requested the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat to a) include intermediate indicators to assess progress against the targets of the National Programme and b) to reflect the flow of contributions and expenditures by outputs.
6	**13:** For consistency between the different Policy Board documents, the Secretariat proposed that the co-Chairs sign the submission forms after the approval of the meeting report, which will record a summary of comments and the decisions made by consensus, and recommended that additional individual comments can be shared with the country by email, and posted on the workspace. The Board endorsed this proposal emphasizing that this should not cause delays in the approval process. **14:** The Board reconfirmed its stance not to earmark funds for any future requests for National Programmes. **15:** The Board also recognized that there are needs for additional funding for National Programmes and proposed that options, such as the Tier 2 funding window, be explored to meet such needs. The Board requested that the UN-REDD Programme develop options to utilize the Tier 2 mechanism.
5	**3:** The Board welcomed the progress made in the Programme. It specifically noted the increased number of Partner countries; increased funding portfolio, as well as the significantly enhanced cooperation with FCPF and FIP, the REDD+ initiatives hosted by the Word Bank.

	11: The Board requested the Secretariat to set out a proposal at the next meeting on how to further improve the independent review process; and to propose how targets for National Programmes might be set to enable assessment of progress.
4	**Session II: Sharing information and progress** **1:** The Board welcomed the new countries and the progress made in the UN-REDD Programme's "Quick Start" phase. It specifically noted the rapid progress in programming the funds since the First Policy Board meeting in March 2009, 12 months ago, but also noted with concern that funds are being rapidly depleted. In this context, the Board requested the Secretariat to urgently mobilize new funds. **5:** The Board recommended that each country establish a national coordination unit for all REDD+ related programmes and projects. **Session III: Strategic Issues** **4:** Acknowledging the calls from member states and the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board members for REDD+ initiatives hosted by the United Nations and the World Bank systems to work more closely together, the Board requested: (a) The UN-REDD Programme Secretariat work with the Facility Management Team of the FCPF to integrate Policy Board meetings and FCPF Participants Committee/Assembly meetings, including the proposal for a joint platform for sharing country experiences and lessons as well as policy discussions. (b) The UN and WB systems to coordinate delivery mechanisms to REDD+ countries, and asked the Secretariat to report back to the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board on progress. Specific outcomes should include: o Objective and targets of joint delivery services for countries o Exploring joint fiduciary and operational arrangements o Using single National Readiness formats and procedures when requested by countries **Session IV: Programme budget allocation requests** **1:** To follow up on progress made with the development of the National Programmes and to ensure that the comments are included, the Board agreed that the National Programme documents should include an action plan (with priorities, benchmarks and timeframes for action) and that progress should be reported in the following Policy Board meeting. **2:** The Board noted that there should be a balance between producing a "perfect NP document" and the need to get started and improve the process based on experience and lessons. The Secretariat will identify which recommendations must be addressed in the National Programme document prior to its signature, and which can be included in the action plan to be addressed during implementation. This information should be made available to the Policy Board. **3:** To encourage rapid progress from preparation to implementation of the National Programmes, the Board decided that the National Programme document should be finalized no later than six months from the dates of approval of funding allocations by the Policy Board. The

	Board also urged the Secretariat to provide all necessary support to ensure that the document is finalized as soon and as cost-effectively as possible. **4:** The Board also decided that if it is not possible to finalize the document within six months, the submitting country is requested to ask the Board for an extension, justifying the reasons for it. **5:** The Board asked that the Secretariat to review the submission form template to incorporate a review on governance issues, for consideration by the Policy Board. **8:** To improve transparency in the process of revising National Programme documents, the Board requested that the Secretariat report back to the Policy Board on how recommendations from the Secretariat, Independent Technical Review, and Policy Board are incorporated into the final National Programme document and action plans.
3	**Session IV: National Programmes** **2:** The Board took note of emerging approaches, particularly as regards establishing national readiness management arrangements and increasing stakeholder engagement. It welcomed the Secretariat's commitment to the document and shared them and expressed the need for better disclosure of National Programme Documents prior to Policy Board meetings.

Annex 2

UN-REDD Programme guiding documents, tools and approaches according to components of REDD+ Readiness (as reflected in the harmonized R-PP)[2]

Component	UN-REDD Programme guiding documents, tools and approaches
1. Organize and consult	- Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities* - UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) working final - The Business case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+
2. Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy	- Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities - Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) - UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) - The Business case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+ - Guidance on Conducting REDD+ Corruption Risk Assessment
3. Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level	National Forest Monitoring Systems: Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (M & MRV) in the context of REDD+ Activities
4. Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards	- National Forest Monitoring Systems: Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (M & MRV) in the context of REDD+ Activities - Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) - Participatory Governance Assessment - Multiple benefits toolbox - Guidance on Conducting REDD+ Corruption Risk Assessment
5. Schedule and Budget	NA
6. Design a Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	National Programme's Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Framework

* To be applied on a mandatory-basis to all UN-REDD Programme supporting activities.

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[2] The list of UN-REDD Programme guiding documents, tools and approaches, will be periodically updated and changes will be reflected in the Handbook for National Programmes and other national-level activities