

Final evaluation of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme



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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDS	benefit distribution system
CBO	community-based organisation
CFM	community forestry management
CoP	Conference of Parties
CPC	Commune People`s Committee
CSO	civil society organisation
DoSTIC	Department of Science, Technology & International Co-operation
DPC	District People`s Committee
ERP	Emissions Reduction Program
ER-PIN	Emission Reductions Program Idea Note
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Assessment
FDS	Forest Development Strategy
FLA	forestland allocation
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance & Trade
FPD	Forest Protection Department
FPDP	Forest Protection & Development Plan
FPIC	free, prior, informed consent
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
ICDP	integrated conservation & development project
JPD	Joint Programme Document
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German development bank)

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MARD	Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NFA	National Forest Assessment
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NFMS	national forest monitoring system
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRAP	National REDD+ Action Programme
NRN	National REDD+ Network
NSA	non-state actor
NSCC	National Strategy on Climate Change
NTP-RCC	National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change
OCA	opportunity cost assessment
ODA	official development assistance
PaM	policies and measures
PCM	participatory carbon monitoring
PFES	Payment for Forest Environmental Services
PGA	participatory governance assessment
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
REDD+	reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
REL	reference emission level
ROtI	review of outcomes to impacts
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
RSC	REDD+ Steering Committee
SEA	strategic environmental assessment
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
SFC	State Forest Company
SFM	sustainable forest management
SNV	The Netherlands Development Organisation
STWG	sub-technical working group
TAR	training & awareness raising
TWG	technical working group
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar
VNFOREST	Viet Nam Administration of Forestry
VNGO	Vietnamese non-governmental organisation
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
VRO	Viet Nam REDD+ Office

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *overall objective* of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam was ‘to assist the Government of Viet Nam in developing an effective REDD+ regime in Viet Nam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emissions.’ while also *contributing* ‘... to the broader goal of ensuring that ... by the end of 2012 Viet Nam (will be) ‘REDD+ ready’ and able to contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation nationally and regionally.’ Programme outcomes to support achievement of the objective were:

- 1. Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam;
- 2. Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services (PES) at district level in support of sustainable development planning and implementation; and
- 3. Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions.

This evaluation assessed the performance and results of Viet Nam’s UN-REDD programme, from its inception in September 2009 until its closure in June 2012, against the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It also sought to ascertain actual and potential impacts of the programme, and their sustainability. The other key objective of the evaluation was to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing among the participating UN organizations and other partners.

RELEVANCE The UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam, and REDD+ in general, are highly relevant to Viet Nam’s international and domestic policy commitments. Lam Dong was an appropriate province for piloting REDD+ because of its high level of forest cover, high localised rates of deforestation in the recent past, the relatively high capacity of its forestry sector, and a progressive and relatively open provincial government. But as a ‘best case’ pilot, Lam Dong had the limitation of being unrepresentative of the broader national situation.

DESIGN Much was unknown about the global REDD+ mechanism at the time of programme design and remains so today. Many elements of the programme’s design were therefore ‘best guesses’ drawn from a generic template. The goal of making Viet Nam ‘REDD ready’ by 2012 was recognised as being ill defined and overly ambitious early in implementation. The timeframe was too short, capacities in the forestry sector too low and international negotiations too inconclusive for this goal to be realistic. Focused on fewer activities, the programme could have been more effective. More robust initial analysis would have better informed subsequent design and policy formulation processes supported by UN-REDD and other REDD+ readiness activities.

Reliance on a prospective World Bank financed project (FCPF) as the source of analytical inputs to Viet Nam’s readiness process was a reasonable assumption in 2009. But UN-REDD should have adapted once it became clear that FCPF was not going to proceed on schedule. Though design limitations of UN-REDD were acknowledged early, the intervention logic remained

mostly unchanged. Procedural and (possibly financial) disincentives discouraged design modifications by the three UN partners.

The unique Vietnamese context was not adequately reflected in the programme's design. While some programme activities attempted to build on experience in the forestry sector, the programme should have engaged more with other on-going field-based sustainable forest management initiatives. The programme opted instead to promote novel REDD+ architecture.

The programme was largely supply-driven and political imperatives drove hasty implementation over a tight timeframe. The GoV partner, civil society and other key stakeholders were not much involved in programme design. A systematic roadmap for achieving REDD+ readiness was not developed. Civil society's role in programme implementation was confined to participation in the National REDD+ Network and sub-technical working groups supported by the programme and/or as subcontracted service providers to the programme. Subcontracting NGOs as service providers was efficient but engendered weaker ownership of resulting processes and products than if they had been more equal partners in the readiness process.

IMPLEMENTATION The programme was essentially an extended inception phase for a much larger 'Phase 2' and it will enhance the results of this second phase. But from the perspective of a final evaluation, the programme can also be seen as a costly, hastily assembled pilot, loosely administered by the UN system though well managed by its PMU. Its results were satisfactory though limited by the need to work on planning the larger Phase 2 programme.

Programme delivery was complicated by working with three more or less independent UN organisations, each with different *modus operandi*, organisational cultures and visions of UN-REDD. The three UN organisations may feel that the challenges of working together were mostly addressed over the life of Phase I. The GoV partner is concerned that these problems have *not* been adequately resolved and that working with the 'three UNs' imposes unacceptable transaction costs. These costs were controlled in Phase I mostly by remarkable personal efforts from individuals involved, rather than being resolved at the institutional level.

The programme brought a number of Vietnamese partners into programme implementation. Remaining challenges include:

- identifying of incentives to encourage the engagement of other potential partners;
- enhancing the involvement of key partners outside the host office; and
- ensuring good communications between central and provincial level administrations;

The programme made valuable contributions to the GoV's adoption of robust coordination mechanisms: a National REDD+ Network, sub-technical working groups and the Viet Nam REDD+ Office. The effects of these outputs were limited by the widespread over-commitment of many participants in different activities supported by UN-REDD. UN-REDD's vigorous communication activities may have inadvertently reduced the effectiveness of national coordination, at least in the first half of the programme, when UN-REDD was sometimes seen by other partners as being synonymous with the country's national REDD+ programme. Overall there was insufficient interaction between UN-REDD and other initiatives focussed on improving forestry management, including other REDD+ activities.

The UN-REDD programme's Project Management Unit (PMU) assured day to day management of the programme but was not designed to engage and coordinate activities of the rapidly expanding community of development partners and service providers investing in REDD+. UN-REDD's diffuse leadership was focused on technical problems and under pressure to 'produce outputs' in the absence of a coherent 'road map' or broad ownership among government and non-government stakeholders. The result was a "Ready – Fire – Aim" approach. The Viet Nam REDD+ Office, with UN-REDD support, exercised greater leadership over time. This leadership was stronger in specific technical areas than in overall coordination and strategic vision.

OUTPUTS UN-REDD's most remarkable contribution to Viet Nam's REDD+ readiness at the national level was their support for national coordination capacity. A National REDD+ Action Programme emerged following preparation of a far longer and rather different background document proposed by UN-REDD consultants. Their contribution to development of an initial framework for a national system of measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) GHG emission reductions and enhanced removals from REDD+ was among the more technically sound and valued outputs. Like much other work on specific instruments, work done on the MRV framework does not yet include prescriptions of how to MRV GHG emission reductions, nor has the programme developed the required national capacity to operate a practical system.

UN-REDD 're-learned' key lessons about some outputs that shouldn't have needed re-learning:

- Avoid using obscure jargon when reaching out to diverse stakeholders at multiple levels.
- Avoid elaborate FPIC processes when there is not yet anything to consent to.
- Appropriate BDS cannot be established until a range of policies and measures are in place.
- Premature discussion of benefits with poor villagers can create problematic expectations.

The programme also generated rich lessons about the challenges of integrating the three UN's operational procedures and these were adjusted somewhat. But gains were mostly in terms of learning to work together rather than significant changes to the way the three UN's operate.

OUTCOMES 1& 2 – CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT The UN-REDD Viet Nam programme was not alone in underestimating the challenge of making a country 'REDD ready'. While the programme did *not* result in national 'REDD readiness', it *did* enhance Viet Nam's capacity for accessing future results-based financing, and greatly facilitated development of Phase 2.

Capacities were developed at national, provincial, district and village levels. Some of the largest capacity development efforts aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of REDD+ issues. The results were mixed. Most capacity development under the programme remains vested in a small group of individuals. Understanding of the concepts and potential of REDD+ diminishes sharply outside the Viet Nam REDD+ Office. Capacities for consultative dialogues on forest management and governance issues have been strengthened. The REDD+ readiness process in Viet Nam has witnessed unprecedented levels of involvement from civil society players in national-level policy dialogue. At sub-national levels, awareness of the REDD+ mechanism has been enhanced, though understanding is sometimes distorted. Capacity developed at all levels, has been mostly capacity to *understand* REDD+ rather than capacity to *implement* REDD+.

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National ownership or commitment to REDD+ is hard to gauge. A small group of NGOs, service providers, participants in the different working groups network, and the Viet Nam REDD+ Office are committed. It's not clear that UN-REDD outputs have much national ownership outside this group. The evaluation *can* confirm that some national and sub-national stakeholders, outside this group, at least partially *understand* REDD+, thanks in large part to the UN-REDD Phase 1 programme, but not that they necessarily support it.

REDD+, with direct support from UN-REDD, has been integrated into the Forest Development and Protection Master Plan of Lam Dong province. REDD+ is also recognised in Viet Nam's new national strategies for 'Green Growth and Development' and Climate Change. REDD+ approaches still need to be woven into many other existing policies, plans, programmes, practices and processes.

The programme has developed interesting and *potentially* valuable approaches to working at sub-national levels, such as a process of intensive consultation with communities assumed to be forest dependent. Their value was diminished by uncertainty about how the national government will actually reduce GHG emissions and/or enhance removals under a national REDD+ programme.

Villagers involved in UN-REDD awareness building activities now know about potential impacts of climate change, the carbon and oxygen cycles in forest ecosystems and the role of trees in carbon sequestration. Whether such awareness building was *necessary* to achieve an 'effective REDD regime' is less clear. A simpler approach could have built on local stakeholder's understanding of existing forest protection activities. On the other hand, UN-REDD's support for mapping of twenty years of change in forest cover in the two pilot districts was appreciated as a valuable contribution to improved forest management.

Sub-national level capacities remain insufficient to effectively operate a future provincial REDD+ programme. Without further analysis of required policies and measures, the actual capacities required to implement REDD+ in Viet Nam remain unknown. In the absence of further REDD+ readiness investments, some of the capacities already developed by UN-REDD in Lam Dong would erode faster than national capacities. But facilitators trained by the programme to work at the village level are an important, and potentially, sustainable capacity development result.

OUTCOME 3: Very modest results to date reflect the lack of a clear plan at the time of project design. For more significant progress in Phase 2, it will be necessary to address fundamental issues not addressed in Phase I, such as analysis of regional stakeholders. The rationale for including this outcome in Vietnam's national UN-REDD programme is not clear.

GENDER ISSUES The participation of women was visible at the national and sub-national levels in most parts of the programme, particularly awareness building activities at local levels. But there was no discrete strategy for gender mainstreaming to guide programme activities. UN-REDD consultants are currently assessing the options for handling gender issues in Phase 2.

SUSTAINABILITY None of the programme's outputs are sustainable in the long-term without further investments in the REDD+ process; and Vietnam has secured tens of millions of USD in such investments during and since the UN-REDD programme's implementation. However, Viet Nam continues to show strong commitment to REDD+, forest protection and climate change mitigation. From the GoV's perspective, REDD+ is another *potential* mechanism for attracting investment in the forest sector, but has not yet demonstrated its cost-effectiveness.

The National REDD+ Action Programme, REDD+ Steering Committee, Viet Nam REDD+ Office, National REDD+ Network and sub-technical working groups are all crucial for establishing a sound foundation for others to build upon. Yet human resource limitations pose significant risks to the institutional sustainability of these efforts. Capacity development by the programme was invested in too few people to ensure self-sustaining REDD+ readiness efforts. The sustainability of the UN-REDD programme's efforts in Viet Nam are threatened by persistent uncertainties surrounding negotiation of long-term financing for results-based action under REDD+.

To date, none of the programme's technical outputs have been formally endorsed nationally. All require further political process to see their technical contents embedded in national policy or regulatory frameworks.

Qualified political commitment to REDD+ is reflected in the Prime Minister's approval of the National REDD+ Action Programme. The GoV's Action Plan on Climate Change and national Climate Change and Green Growth strategies all acknowledge the role of forests in mitigating climate change. At local levels, it is benefits, not raised awareness, that will enhance commitment to sustained improvement in forest protection.

Sustainability of UN-REDD results is also threatened by weak co-ordination capacities within and outside the GoV. Yet this co-ordination will be needed to mainstream REDD+ into activities that drive deforestation and degradation, such as perennial cash cropping and aquaculture. The programme engaged with private sector stakeholders implicated in these activities, but belatedly and superficially. Although a more diverse collection of stakeholders was engaged at sub-national levels, key players, such as forest owners (particularly State forest management boards), were inadequately engaged during programme implementation.

IMPACTS Viet Nam is not REDD+ ready but the Phase 1 programme *has* achieved the rapid introduction of new, complex REDD+ concepts to a number of stakeholders. The programme has helped establish a partial foundation of institutions and capacities, *some* of the key elements of national REDD+ architecture. Viet Nam has good prospects to access FCPF Carbon Fund financing, for example, based on its readiness track record to which UN-REDD made significant contributions.

There have not yet been significant, tangible social or environmental improvements, though there is potential for positive social impacts from BDS.

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CONCLUSIONS about the performance of the UN-REDD are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Summary of evaluation ratings of programme performance

Criteria	Ratings	Comments
Agency Coordination and implementation		
Overall Quality of Project Implementation	MS	See discussion in text, section 3
<i>Agency coordination</i>	MU	“
<i>Programme Supervision</i>	MS	“
<i>Efficiency</i>	MS	“
Programme Outcomes¹		
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	MS	See sub-ratings & discussion, section 4
<i>Relevance of Outcomes</i>	R	See sub ratings & discussion, section 2
<i>Effectiveness of Outcomes</i>	MS	See sub ratings & discussion, section 4
Sustainability & Impacts		
<i>Sustainability of Outcomes</i>	ML	See sub ratings & discussion, section 5
<i>Impacts of Outcomes</i>	M	See sub ratings & discussion, section 6
Overall Programme Results	MS	

RECOMMENDATIONS Much experience gained in the Phase 1 programme is reflected in the design of Phase 2. The first set of recommendations below is intended primarily for these future UN-REDD activities in Viet Nam, although they are also relevant for programmes emerging in other countries. These recommendations focus on areas where the evaluators feel the Phase 1 experience may not yet have sufficiently influenced plans for the future. The last five recommendations are intended more for UN-REDD programmes in other countries that may be in a position to benefit from the Vietnamese experience. Here again however, these recommendations could prove to be of value for the second Phase of UN-REDD activities in Viet Nam – depending on how much flexibility exists in their programme.

Agency coordination and implementation; outcomes; overall programme results: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).

Relevance: relevant (R) or not relevant (NR).

Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N).

Recommendations for UN-REDD in Viet Nam, and other countries

1. Adopt more “demand driven” programme implementation and a relationship of service provider and client between the UN-REDD programme and its diverse national stakeholders. This will mean finding ways to reduce or remove institutional disincentives to flexibility among the three UN partner organisations, thereby enhancing the programme’s ability to adapt UN-REDD activities to evolving national requirements. For example, do not set overall budgets for each partner for the full life of the programme; instead allocate funds for specific project activities every year or two years, based on past performance, evolving circumstances and emerging needs. Adapt normative products to provide guidance where this is required but tailor them carefully to specific national and sub-national circumstances.
2. Adopt a single, available and knowledgeable focal point for the three UN organisations that can regularly speak with one voice to government counterparts and other stakeholders involved in REDD+. This can significantly reduce the transaction time imposed on the GoV partner by the three UN partners. It would require these organisations to dedicate time and effort to this harmonisation process, then to exercise the discipline needed to ensure its effectiveness.
3. Vigorously support development of the necessary national capacity for engaging and coordinating a broad, multi-sectoral community of REDD+ participants. The national REDD office and their UN supporters will need to be able to proactively reach out to a wide range of stakeholders and identify incentives for them to engage in REDD+. In the process, they will need to minimise the use of arcane REDD+ jargon and ‘off the shelf’, unadapted REDD+ messages and methods.
4. Acknowledge the risks inherent to piloting REDD+ activities and establish the mechanisms needed to mitigate and manage these risks and present stakeholders with a balanced appraisal of the risks and benefits of all aspects of REDD+ readiness. Managing expectations in the face of persistent uncertainties is a key imperative.
5. Address regional ‘leakage’ issues through a discrete regional initiative that complements national programmes and other REDD+ readiness initiatives.

Recommendations for UN-REDD in other countries, and for Phase 2 in Viet Nam

6. Help country-led REDD readiness processes to define the rationale and scope for specific national REDD+ activities, based on clear identification of the national drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Identify possible national and local level policies and measures that can address these drivers. Carefully gauge the relative costs and benefits of preferred policies and measures and clearly determine different stakeholders’ interests and roles in implementing them.
7. Carry out systematic analysis of the national context. Identify key entry points into existing national policy and sub-national, country specific practices. Define where REDD+ can cost-effectively strengthen the performance of existing policies and measures. Ensure that experience from such existing policies and practices informs national REDD+ programmes.

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8. Develop robust and comprehensive theories of change and associated results chains for each desired outcome of the national UN-REDD programme. Use well designed consultative processes to ensure the validity of intervention logic and broad stakeholder ownership of the programme.
-
9. Ensure that programme communications activities and management arrangements maintain a clear and unequivocal distinction between the emerging national REDD+ programme and the temporary financial and technical assistance provided by UN-REDD.
10. Apply mandatory requirements of UN programmes such as FPIC only after extensive consultation with diverse national and sub-national stakeholders; then carefully adapt mandatory requirements to local circumstances.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purposes of the evaluation

UN-REDD and REDD+

The United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (UN-REDD) in developing countries was launched in 2008. Under UN-REDD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) jointly support national level processes called “REDD+” (signifying “REDD plus conservation of existing carbon stocks and enhancement of carbon stocks”).

UN-REDD and REDD+ in Viet Nam

While not suffering from the same extreme levels of deforestation seen in some other South East Asian countries, deforestation is locally significant in Viet Nam, especially in the Central Highlands. Forest degradation is also significant in natural forests: in 2004 over two-thirds of the country’s natural forests were classed as “poor” or “regenerating” while species rich, closed-canopy stands constituted less than 5% of total forested area. Rapid economic growth, include rapidly growing exports of commodities like coffee are driving deforestation and forest degradation.

The UN-REDD Programme for Viet Nam was designed to ‘address deforestation and forest degradation through capacity building at national and local levels’ with the understanding that these capacities needed to be enhanced in order to improve the access to carbon credits in exchange for Viet Nam reducing Carbon emissions and sequestering substantial stocks of Carbon in its standing forests. In the years immediately prior to the programme’s initiation, and in the years since, there was much optimism internationally about the potential for this new source of financing to support improved forest management and protection. National REDD+ programmes such as Viet Nam’s prospective programme were needed to strengthen national capacities to “measure and verify emissions associated with forests and bring these assets to market as soon as (an) international regulatory framework is in place”.²

With support of the FAO, UNDP and UNEP, the Government of Viet Nam (GoV) launched their UN-REDD programme, one of the nine original national programmes in a new global UN-REDD initiative. The *overall objective* of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam was ‘to assist the Government of Viet Nam in developing an effective REDD+ regime in Viet Nam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emissions.’ while also *contributing* ‘... to the broader goal of ensuring that ... by the end of 2012 Viet Nam (will be) ‘REDD+ ready’ and able to contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation nationally and regionally.’

²Kosoy, A. 2008. State and Trends of the Global Carbon Market. Santiago de Chile : World Bank.
Kosoy, A. et al. 2012. State and Trends of the Global Carbon Market. Washington: World Bank

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This objective was to be achieved through the following three outcomes:

- improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam;
- improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services (PES) at district level in support of sustainable development planning and implementation; and
- improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions.

Viet Nam's UN-REDD programme has aimed to address these issues through capacity building at national and local levels. At the national level, it has attempted to develop the capacities needed to coordinate and manage the establishment of those tools needed to implement a REDD programme that can: 1) effectively demonstrate real and measurable reductions in Carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; and 2) ensure effective, transparent and equitable transfer of international payments for carbon conservation to local stakeholders, tied to performance standards.

At the local (i.e., provincial, district and commune) level Viet Nam's UN-REDD programme aimed to develop capacities for effective approaches to planning and implementing emission reduction measures, including participatory monitoring of Carbon stocks, and ensure fair and equitable distribution of benefits.

On the regional scale, the programme was not designed to actually reduce displacement of Carbon emissions; this was deemed an unrealistic objective within the anticipated twenty month time frame of the programme. Instead the programme was designed to begin the process of quantifying and assessing this problem, although this output was eventually modified.

The programme's overall "Implementing Partner" has been the Government of Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). A National Programme Director (NPD) appointed by MARD is accountable to the Government of Viet Nam and to three participating UN organisations. The MARD and other implementing agencies within the Government of Viet Nam (e.g., Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Lam Dong Province or DARD) are accountable to these organisations for funds provided by them to carry out various programme activities.

Effective coordination and management systems were required to face the complex collection of issues and stakeholders encompassed within the scope of the programme. A Program Coordination Group (PMG) comprised of managers from the three UN organisations and the REDD focal point in the MARD was proposed to be responsible for:

- Operational coordination
- Appointing a programme manager
- Managing programme resources
- Establishing programme reporting mechanisms
- Integrating work plans, budgets, reports and other programme related documents; and addressing possible budgetary duplication or gaps
- Providing technical and substantive leadership for activities outlined in the Annual Work Plan

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- Agreeing on budgetary revisions and making recommendations to the NSC as appropriate
Addressing management and implementation problems
- Identifying emerging lessons learned
- Establishing communication and public information plans

This PMG mechanism, however, was never operationalised.

A programme management unit (PMU) in Hanoi was responsible for day-to-day management of the programme, including the preparation of annual and three-monthly workplans, and financial and progress reports.

This coordination and management structure was tasked with carrying out a diversity of tasks, including contracting and managing almost ten person years worth of short term national and international consultants for more than thirty different assignments, procuring over half a million dollars worth of specialised equipment, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management.

Final evaluation of UN-REDD in Viet Nam

The evaluation assessed the performance and results of this programme - from its inception in September 2009 until its closure in June 2012 - against the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (Evaluation Terms of Reference are provided in Annex A). It also attempted to ascertain actual and potential impacts of the programme, and their sustainability. The other key objective of the evaluation was to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing among the participating UN organizations and other partners.

The core evaluation team consisted of a nationally-based specialist, Mr. Steven Swan based in Ha Noi, and an international, Mr. Howard Stewart based in Vancouver. Brief profiles of the evaluation team are provided in Annex B.

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

Following preparation of a draft and final Inception Report in November 2012, the Evaluation process involved the following major steps:

- Review of literature (documents reviewed are listed in Annex C)
- Stakeholder interviews (stakeholders interviewed are listed in Annex D)
- Stakeholder debriefing in Ha Noi on December 20, 2012

Stakeholder interviews

The evaluation team carried out semi-structured interviews with the programme's key informants, stakeholders and participants - at the national, provincial, district, commune and village levels (listed in Annex D). This itinerary of evaluation meetings in Ha Noi and Lam Dong province was very effectively organised first by the PMU of the UN-REDD VN and then the national REDD office, in collaboration with the evaluation team.

Stakeholder debriefing

At the end of their second round of evaluation interviews and following their analysis of preliminary evaluation results, the evaluation team debriefed stakeholders in Ha Noi on their preliminary conclusions and recommendations and solicited stakeholder feedback on the same. Stakeholders participating in the debriefing represented UNDP, FAO, VN FOREST and the UN-REDD programme management unit.

2. CONCEPT AND RELEVANCE

2.1 Relevance

Table 2 - Summary of relevance ratings

Outcome 1	Relevant
Outcome 2	Relevant
Outcome 3	Not Relevant ³
OVERALL	Relevant

International policy commitments

The UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam, and REDD+ in general, are highly relevant to the international policy commitments of Viet Nam and other recipients and to Norway and other donor countries under the UNFCCC. As one of the first UN-REDD country programmes, the Viet Nam programme represented an important response to developed countries thirty billion dollar fast-start financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, pledged under the UNFCCC Bali Roadmap. Viet Nam was deliberately selected as an initial UN-REDD country programme, despite the country's net reforestation rates, because it was perceived by UN-REDD as a relatively low-risk opportunity to pioneer REDD+⁴ and generate lessons from a pilot experience to the global UN-REDD programme and the international climate change negotiations.

The broad contours of the REDD+ mechanism have emerged over the first phase of UN-REDD implementation in Viet Nam. Nonetheless many details of key elements of the national REDD+ architecture that the programme attempted to develop for Viet Nam (BDS, MRV, REL, etc.) remain undefined. International climate change negotiations have, and continue, to proceed at a far slower rate than anticipated during the design of UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam. The prospects and timeframe for the international community to negotiate rules of an effective REDD+ mechanism remain uncertain. This unexpected uncertainty has persisted during the programme's lifecycle and limited its relevance in the international context in particular. In terms of experiential learning on REDD+ readiness, the programme has remained highly relevant

³ Although Outcome 3 is highly relevant to the political agendas of both Viet Nam and Norway, addressing regional displacement of emissions cannot be addressed by a national REDD+ programme. (See Annex E – Theory of Change Analysis, Section 2 – Verification of Programme Logic).

⁴ Compared to other countries in the region with high rates of deforestation but with more challenging forest governance situations, most notably Indonesia

in terms of ‘*exploring a range of actions, identifying options and undertaking efforts, including demonstration activities, to address the drivers of deforestation...*’⁵.

Despite the risks associated with this persistent uncertainty (see the evaluation’s theory of change analysis, Annex E), the programme remains relevant to Viet Nam’s international policy priorities. The country achieved middle income country status in 2011 and aims to demonstrate regional leadership in a number of economic and political spheres, including forestry and climate change. In helping Viet Nam to be a pioneer in REDD+ processes, the programme makes a highly relevant contribution to this ambition.

National policy commitments

The programme, and the REDD+ mechanism in general, are also consistent with Viet Nam’s current policy direction for the forestry sector, as articulated in the national Forestry Development Strategy (FDS⁶). This strategy acknowledges the ‘*important role [of forests] in climate regulation*’ and establishes a triple bottom line for the forestry sector: economic, social and environmental outcomes to which REDD+ can make a significant contribution (GoV 2007). The relevance of the UN-REDD programme is also confirmed in the national Forest Protection and Development Master Plan (FPDP⁷), which sets targets for forest protection, rehabilitation, and reforestation to achieve the FDS’ objectives. Under the FPDP, REDD+ could contribute to a national forestry policy transition from quantitative targets for increased forest cover and towards a greater focus on protecting natural forests, improving the quality of the forest estate and supporting forest landscape restoration (FLR).

The programme also contributed to the overall Vietnamese forestry sector policy orientation of ‘socialisation’ of forest management, governance and financing. Socialisation of the forestry sector has prevailed over the past two decades of national target programmes⁸ and, most recently, the piloting⁹ and codification of nationwide policy¹⁰ on Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES), which identifies carbon sequestration as one of five such services. REDD+ in general, and the UN-REDD Viet Nam programme in particular, are consistent with MARD-VNFOREST efforts to improve socialised governance of the forestry sector through this and other international positive incentive schemes, notably the initiative on Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). Finally, under the current national Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS), forestry, agriculture, rural development - and therefore, REDD+ - are all priority sectors for development assistance (ODA) investment in Viet Nam.

⁵ UNFCCC 13th Conference of the Parties (2007). Decision 2/CP.13 Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action

⁶ Prime Minister’s Decision No. 18/2007/QĐ-TTg, dated 05.02.07, on the Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy: 2006 – 2020.

⁷ Prime Minister’s Decision 327/QĐ-TTg, dated 15.09.92, on Some Policies on the use of Forest, Bare Land, and Water Areas.

Prime Minister’s Decision No. 57/QĐ-TTg, dated 09.01.12, on approval of the Forest Protection and Development Plan for the period 2011-2020.

⁸ Prime Minister’s Decision No. 661/QĐ-TTg, dated 29.07.98, on Objectives, Tasks, Policies and Organisation for the Establishment of Five Million Hectares of New Forest.

⁹ Prime Ministerial Decision 380/QĐ-TTg, dated 10.04.08, on the Pilot Policy for Payment for Forest Environmental Services.

¹⁰ Decree No: 99/2010/ND-CP, dated 24.09.10, on the Policy for Payment for Forest Environmental Services.

Beyond the realm of forestry policy, the programme also makes a relevant contribution to achieving the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC)¹¹, and subsequent National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC)¹². Viet Nam's national climate change policy developed during UN-REDD implementation has identified '[forest] *protection, sustainable development, increasing absorption of greenhouse gases and biodiversity conservation*' as one of ten component sectoral strategies. Within the framework of the NTP-RCC, MARD has issued an Action Plan to Respond to Climate Change for the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector¹³. Under this Action Plan, MARD has established a target to reduce GHG emissions from the agricultural and rural development sectors by 20% by the year 2020¹⁴. REDD+ is identified as a priority programme for contributing to the achievement of this target in the forestry sector.

Relevance in the pilot province

Lam Dong was an appropriate province for piloting REDD+ under the programme because: a) Lam Dong still has a relatively high level of forest cover, which until recently, experienced relatively high localised rates of deforestation; b) capacity in the province's forestry sector is relatively high as a result of piloting PFES interventions for water and soil conservation services; and c) a relatively progressive and open provincial government facilitated access for an internationally financed and implemented programme.

Choosing the best possible province where pilot activities had the best chance of success made sense from the perspective of demonstrating 'proof-of-concept' models and systems, as a means to convince national policy makers and inform international knowledge on some of the practical realities of REDD+. But a 'best case' pilot, Lam Dong also has the limitation of being unrepresentative of the broader national situation and the capacity limitations of most forested provinces in Viet Nam. Adaptation of successful Lam Dong experiences to the situations of other forest provinces might be expected to be more challenging and costly.

Relevance to broader UN objectives

The programme contributes to the One Plan Outcome 3: '*Viet Nam has adequate policies and capacities for environmental protection and the rational management of natural resources and cultural heritage for poverty reduction, economic growth, and improving the quality of life*'.

¹¹ Prime Minister issued Decision No 158/2008/QD-TTg to approve the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change.

¹² Prime Minister's Decision No. 2139/QD-TTg, dated 05.12.11, on Approval of the National Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation.

¹³ MARD Decision No. 543/QD-BNN-KHCN, dated 23.03.11 on the Action Plan to Respond to Climate Change for the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and Vision to 2050.

¹⁴ MARD Decision No. 3119/QD-BNN-KHCN, dated 16.12.11, on Approving the Programme of Green House Gas Emissions Reduction in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector up to 2020.

2.2 Design

Persistent uncertainties in international climate change policy formulation

Many details of the global REDD+ mechanism were unknown at the time of programme design, and remain so today. Therefore, what it meant for a country to be ‘REDD+ ready’ (i.e., the overall goal of this programme) was undefined, unknown and open to interpretation. A number of key concepts, presented as programme outputs, have yet to be defined at the international level, e.g., benefit distribution systems (BDS) reference emission level (REL) and regional leakage. Many elements in the logical framework represented best guesses at the time of programme formulation and inception. The combined effects of a tight timeframe - even after a fourteen month extension, and persistent uncertainties emanating from slow and inconclusive international climate change negotiations - meant that the programme was largely implemented as originally designed and did not substantially revise its underlying logic¹⁵. Some changes were made at the output level in response to original programme design flaws¹⁶ in addition to changing circumstances¹⁷. These challenges of a slower-than-expected evolution of the international REDD+ mechanism undermining sounder programme logic are acknowledged by most individuals involved in programme design and implementation.

Over-ambitious design and pressures to implement

The over ambitious nature of the programme’s objective was acknowledged by implementing agencies during the programme’s inception phase. The period of operations was recognised as being insufficient, existing capacities in the forestry sector too low and international negotiations too slow and inconclusive for the programme’s goal and objective to be realistic. The scope of programme activities was also too broad. The programme could have been more effective and efficient and established a more concrete foundation for sustained impacts from future REDD+ readiness investments had it focused on fewer strategic outputs under Outcomes 1 and 2 alone. More robust initial analyses would have better informed subsequent systems design and policy formulation processes (see Annex E).

The development of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam was uncharacteristically rapid for bureaucracies of the scale and complexity of the UN system and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. This was a result of the political enthusiasm and pressure emanating from the ‘buzz’ of the UNFCCC Bali CoP13 (2007), where commitments were made to demonstrate REDD+ readiness and report back to CoP 15 in Copenhagen (2009) within two years. This enthusiasm on the part of all programme proponents, but particularly the Norwegian donor, was the reason behind the original 20-month duration. Yet, the changes the programme aspired to achieve were not possible, even in the eventual three-year time frame of the extended period of operations. The unrealistically short duration of the programme necessitated rapid rates of budget depletion and activity implementation. This limited opportunities to reflect on progress, explore the context-specific details of how the complex REDD+ mechanism could and should be applied in Viet

15 At the higher orders of intervention logic: goal, objective and outcomes.

16 Outputs under Outcome 3 were revised on an *ad hoc* basis but failed to satisfactorily identify feasible and relevant activities to achieve this illogical (see Annex E) Outcome.

17 Output 1.2 - National reference scenario for REDD - discontinued in response to JICA and Finish projects covering this territory; and Output 1.6 - National MRV system designed - added to compensate for a delayed start to the FAO-Finish National Forest Assessment (NFA) project, which was designed to support development of a national forest monitoring system.

Nam, or identify risks and the sorts of measures that could reduce risks or mitigate unintended negative impacts.

Insufficient analytical foundation

Due to intense pressures to deliver results in terms of Viet Nam's REDD+ readiness within an initial 20-month timeframe, in time for CoP15, the quality of analytical foundation informing the programme design and implementation was insufficient (albeit better than some other quick-start UN-REDD country programmes). As discussed in the 'theory of change analysis' (Annex E), the programme would have benefited from greater attention to analytical work (particularly related to required policies and measures) to strengthen the results chain needed to deliver Outcome 1, and to inform GoV-led processes to develop a national REDD+ programme/strategy.

However, pressure to deliver, coupled with a supply-driven import of REDD+ architecture, denied the programme the opportunity to invest in a sound and comprehensive analytical foundation that would have been invaluable in informing wider REDD+ readiness efforts, not just the implementation of this programme's activities. Indeed, the National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) now identifies analysis of PaMs¹⁸ and cost-benefits of emissions reduction potential¹⁹ as key outstanding tasks for the period 2011-2015.

In defence of the programme's design deficiencies, these kind of preliminary analytical pieces of work were identified as a focus of Viet Nam's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) readiness grant, which was originally envisaged to be implemented at the same time as the UN-REDD programme. A number of key readiness elements were purposefully omitted from the UN-REDD programme's intervention logic as they were expected to be incorporated into a simultaneously implemented FCPF readiness project (See Box 1). In the event, co-ordination with FCPF proved fruitless, as far as UN-REDD Phase 1 was concerned, because the FCPF project has yet to be operationalized²⁰. The FCPF project will benefit from *sequential* implementation after UN-REDD Phase I, but the mutually supportive *parallel* implementation of the two interventions has not transpired.

Delays in operationalizing the FCPF project were beyond the control or influence of the implementing UN agencies and left the programme with an incomplete framework of REDD+ readiness interventions. Relying on the FCPF project as the source of essential analytical inputs to Viet Nam's readiness process was a reasonable supposition during initial stages of the UN-REDD programme's implementation. But as time passed and delays in the FCPF project

¹⁸ Section 2, Article 1b - *Assessment and prediction of the present and future forest estate change, proposing measures to mitigate and eventually stop deforestation and forest degradation, and increasing forest carbon stocks.*

¹⁹ Section 2, Article 1b - *Investigation, evaluation and verification of the potential reduction of emission, projection of the investment needs and benefits of REDD+ for each province and for the entire country...*

Box 1 - Further studies needed to prepare Viet Nam's national REDD+ strategy

- Exploring forest degradation and opportunities from REDD+
- Assess the impacts of rubber on the natural forests of the Central Highlands and Southeast Agro-ecological zones
- An examination of the forest classification and approval processes to determine impacts on forest loss and recommendations
- Assess the current land allocation process and recommendations to improve the current system to benefit local communities
- Understand the impacts of shifting cultivation on forest cover in North West, North Central and Central Highlands
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the current plans for medium/small scale hydropower dams with recommendation to reduce impact on forests (focus North Central, North West, Central Highlands)
- Assess the feasibility of these options a more detailed study is recommended
- Exploring alternatives to forest conversion and forest degradation as well as capacity needs
- Conducting a domestic leakage analysis
- Assess, recommend and trial for land use planning and zoning (and monitoring)
- Examine Forest Policy, Legislative and Administrative Reform
- Examining carbon ownership in the context of REDD+ in Viet Nam
- Assessment of financial instruments in Viet Nam to create a Viet Nam REDD+ Fund
- Review of current monitoring process
- Assessment of monitoring needs and costs
- Defining and costing low emission development strategies in the context of REDD+
- Assessment of costs and benefits of alternative National REDD+ Programme options
- Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

Source: MARD, 2011

persisted while the UN-REDD programme extended its schedule and modified its work plan, adaptive action could and should have been taken by programme implementers to invest more resources on consultative analytical processes. The key opportunity for the programme to have revisited the analytical foundation for the readiness process, in the absence of an FCPF readiness project, was during development of the National REDD+ Program Background Document (Output 1.3).

At the time of project design and inception, REDD+ was a novel concept for Viet Nam. No REDD+-specific experiences could be drawn upon from within Viet Nam to inform project design. The JPD does include a situation analysis, comprising brief discussions on, *inter alia*, land use, forest policy, governance, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, poverty and forest linkages, but Vietnamese context specific elements are not reflected in the programme's logical framework. Although some of the activities of the programme, notably the BDS and MRV design research, did attempt to build on existing programmes and experiences in the forestry sector, exploring the broader scope of REDD+ in Viet Nam could, and should, have been achieved through engaging other on-going field-based initiatives working towards sustainable forest management (SFM)²¹. The realities and experiences of on-the-ground implementation could and should have served as practical entry points to explore the scope of REDD+. These would have complemented the top-down national institutional structures and systems development promoted by the programme, and permitted more inclusive stakeholder engagement in the readiness process. Failure to achieve synergies with other concurrent processes, which conducted national stakeholder analyses such as the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations, were also missed opportunities for the programme to improve upon design flaws during implementation.

Inattention to policies and measures

A delayed FCPF project, coupled with inflexible logical framework of the UN-REDD programme has left Viet Nam with incomplete understanding of the scope and potential of (or the 'business case' for) REDD+. After three years of well-intentioned and intensive readiness efforts, a substantive dialogue on the possible PaMs that could comprise a national REDD+ strategy has yet to be initiated. What Viet Nam would do to reduce GHG emissions and/or enhance removals from forestry and other related land uses and how much this would cost in relation to the projected revenue from REDD+ vis-à-vis cost of foregone opportunities remain only tentatively outlined, as captured in the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) and, most recently, the approved NRAP.

The programme's inattention to exploring the PaM options that might constitute a national REDD+ strategy is particularly unfortunate considering that Viet Nam has already demonstrated relatively effective forest protection and development policies and programmes, which have resulted in the country's unique position in Southeast Asia of demonstrating net afforestation over the past two decades. Existing forestry sector PaMs should have formed the basis for REDD+ introduction to Viet Nam, and the programme could have been oriented more towards exploring how REDD+ could be applied to improving on the performance of forestry sector interventions achieved in the past 20 years: forest land allocation (FLA), community forestry management (CFM) piloting, collaborative protected area piloting, forest protection contracts, SFC reform, sustainable production forest certification, payment for forest environmental services (PFES), and so on. The performance-based nature of REDD+ could be significant in improving the effectiveness of *existing* PaMs applied in the forestry sector, particularly in addressing the persistent challenge to arrest degradation of natural forests.

²¹As acknowledged by the programme's Lessons Leant document: '*REDD+ must also incorporate lessons from, and improve on, the 661 Plantation Programme, the Community Forestry Pilot Programme and the projects of KfW*' (UN-REDD 2012b).

Incomplete stakeholder identification

Intense pressure from donor and UN-REDD Secretariat to achieve rapid REDD readiness did not permit time to establish a step-by-step roadmap (as originally indicated under Output 1.1) for REDD+ development in Viet Nam. The logical framework was produced in haste and time was insufficient to effectively engage all key stakeholders. Lam Dong stakeholders were not involved in programme design. In this sense, the programme can be considered to be largely supply-driven, and less needs-based, in its design.

At the national level, programme design identified the most immediately relevant counterparts in the GoV: MARD-VNFOREST, specifically the Department of Science, Technology and International Co-operation (DoSTIC). Relevant technical subcontractors, notably academia and GoV research agencies operating in the forestry sector, were also identified and engaged. Inherently compartmentalised government structures limited VNFOREST's ability to engage other GoV agencies, particularly the ministries of Natural Resources & Environment (MoNRE) MoNRE and Planning & Investment (MPI). The programme was constrained by being basically designed, and then implemented, as a forestry sector project. Programme proponents are fully aware of this short-coming, and to facilitate an essential multi-lateral REDD+ readiness process, MARD responded by establishing an inter-ministerial REDD+ Steering Committee (RSC) in early 2011.

Programme design was informed by an institutional mapping exercise, conducted by the scoping team, to identify potential implementing partners, including NGOs and other development partners with an interest in supporting REDD+ readiness efforts. This rapid assessment identified NGOs as playing key ongoing roles in the forestry sector. These included mobilizing resources to promote community-level sustainable development, efforts to control cross-border movements of illegal timber and wood products, and leadership in incipient REDD+ readiness efforts. Despite this, the role of civil society defined in the programme's design was vague and minimal. Civil society is explicitly mentioned in the Joint Programme Document only once, in the logical framework where civil society is described an implementing partner contributing to the programme's overall objective. The role assigned to NGO's during the programme's implementation was largely confined to: a) participation in the NRN and sub-technical working groups (STWGs) supported by the programme; and/or b) as subcontracted service providers to the programme.

Under the programme's fund management arrangements, both national government agencies and NGOs are eligible to receive funding through a participating UN organization and act as national co-implementing partners. The UN agencies elected to apply a subcontracting modality to engage NGOs, which has the advantage of lower transaction costs (it is more efficient) and a higher degree of quality control over outputs, compared to national implementing partner modalities. The disadvantage of subcontracting NGOs as service providers is their reduced ownership of resulting processes and products. The programme's design could have incorporated a more strategic role for NGOs by building their capacity through a 'training of trainers' type approach. Capacitated NGOs could then transfer knowledge and skills to (subnational) GoV and other stakeholders, increasing the reach and sustainability of the programme.

The hitherto untapped value and strategic role of civil society has been identified in the programme's Lessons Learned report, which recommends that '*more work in phase 2 could be contracted out to NGOs and research or training institutes*' and '*the UN-REDD Programme should also consider these bodies and CSOs as full partners in the Programme, rather than simply contractors*' (UN-REDD 2012b). The most recent iteration of the Phase 2 programme document, which itself benefitted from voluntary national and international NGO inputs, identifies a greater appreciation of civil society's potential role in the programme (UN-REDD 2012c)²². :

Limited flexibility in programme conceptualisation and design

The programme's proponents acknowledge the inherent design limitations of being a 'quick-start' pioneer programme mentioned above. Yet attempts to modify the intervention logic were limited to the addition of one output²³ and modification of another²⁴ under Outcome 1, together with ad hoc revisions to outputs under Outcome 3. Strong procedural and (possibly financial) disincentives discouraged implementing agencies from formally requesting significant modifications to the logical framework. Modifications of goal, objective or outcomes would have required approval of the global UN-REDD Policy Board, in addition to the possibility of changes in budget allocations to the three implementing UN agencies. The prospect of a reduced budget allocation for any one UN agency was could have served as a disincentive to considering major changes to the logical framework. In addition to the noted adjustments to outputs under Outcome 1 and 3, modifications to specific programme activities, were feasible, and were made during regular work planning.

On a more fundamental level, design inflexibilities could be a product of UN-REDD's very *raison d'être*. By definition, the UN-REDD programme promotes and develops REDD+ readiness as its central purpose. This is reflected in the Viet Nam programme's logical framework, which elevates REDD+ to the level of goal and objective. Yet, REDD+ is proposed as a *mechanism*, a method, a means to an end, not an end in itself. By setting an explicit goal of 'REDD readiness' the programme design was doubly flawed in its logic. Firstly, it attempted to deliver something which does not yet exist. Secondly, the concept of REDD+ came to be seen as something in its own right and with its own purpose alongside existing forestry and land use PaMs.

UN-REDD would seem to have limited ability in manoeuvre when trying to adopt a broader 'no regrets' approach: UN-REDD is designed to promote REDD as delineated in the UN climate change convention. A 'no regrets' approach would seek to apply REDD+ as a mechanism to strengthen *existing* PaMs, such as PFES in the case of Viet Nam, irrespective of REDD+ developments in the international climate change negotiations, and would employ REDD+ as a means to explore improved environmental, social and governance performance in the forestry sector and, on a broader scale, sustainably productive landscapes. UN-REDD, in contrast, is

²² '*The task of establishing all required capacities cannot be handled by UN-REDD alone; contributions from many other Development Partners, including NGOs, are required*'. A more pluralistic governance structure is proposed for Phase 2, with civil society representation indicated in the Executive Group, Programme Executive Board, Independent Monitoring Board and subnational REDD+ Task Forces. CSOs are also acknowledged as having key operational and technical functions as co-implementing partners in (UN-REDD 2012c).

²³ Output 1.6 - National MRV system designed

²⁴ Output 1.2. Data and information for national REL/RL for REDD+ available

bound to the fate of the UNFCCC, serving as a vehicle to promote REDD+ within this political framework.

Political imperatives

Political imperatives on the part of all programme proponents - Norway, Viet Nam and implementing UN agencies - drove a hasty implementation over an unfeasibly tight timeframe.

Outcome 3 in particular, although a critical issue worthy of significant ODA investment, is an example of political imperatives (on the part of both donor and recipient governments²⁵) driving programme design. Reduction of regional displacement of emissions does not contribute to the programme's objective of an assisting development of an 'effective REDD regime' in Viet Nam (again, see Annex E, Section 2 on the verification of programme logic). The only way to address trans-boundary leakage under the UNFCCC is through the comprehensive participation of Parties to the convention.

As well as the regional (Outcome 3) component of the programme, an additional political objective on the part of the donor was, and remains, stimulation of UN reform and improved delivery as 'One UN' through the programme's implementation. The higher transaction costs faced by VNFOREST programme owners in collaborating with three UN agencies through a joint programme were an implicit conditionality of the Norwegian investment.

²⁵ *'Viet Nam sits at the centre of one of the most challenging regional leakage situations in the world'* acknowledges the draft UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase 2 Programme document, indicating Norway's sustained political interest in a regional component, and Viet Nam's political aspiration to demonstrate responsible regional leadership in tackling illegal logging leakage issues.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

Table 3 - Ratings for implementation

<i>Overall Quality of Project Implementation</i>	MS
<i>Agency coordination</i>	MU
<i>Project Supervision</i>	MS

3.1 Budget and Expenditure

Quality of financial resources management of the National Programme?

How well the programme manage the financial resources at its disposal depends on one’s perspective. The three UN agencies and the PMU are generally satisfied with their financial management. They share a perception that that programme had a “good delivery rate” –largely because the Phase 1 budget was almost completely disbursed by late 2012 – with around 98.5 % of programme funds disbursed or committed by September 2012 (see Annex F - Financial information as of September 2012).

On the other hand, the evaluation did not review detailed financial reporting on those activities actually financed by the programme compared with originally planned activities outlined in the programme’s logical framework. For example, we saw no clear indication of how much of the programme budget was devoted to activities falling outside the ambit of this logical framework, such as the preparation of a second phase of the programme. One dimension of programme disbursement that does emerge was the very different rates at which the three UN organisations depleted their respective budgets, which had a negative effect on their ability to achieve synergies among their respective activities.

A general consensus emerged very early during programme implementation that the original programme design was overly ambitious both in terms of what the programme could accomplish –and how long it would take. Some things planned for Phase 1 were deferred to Phase 2. Phase 2 preparation activities have apparently been classified as contributing to one or more of the three programme outcomes, but were not clearly attributed to one or more individual outputs

So, while we concur with the view that the programme’s financial management was efficient in disbursing almost all available financial resources, we could not make well informed judgements about how well these resources were used in relation to projected outputs. A final set of Certified Financial Statements to be released by June 2013 will report on the programme’s final expenditures.

3.2 Programme Management

The Three UN partners

Challenges of inter-organisational coordination and collaboration are inherent to any complex administrative system, including the UN system and the GoV in the UN-REDD programme is sometimes described as being ‘delivered as one’, but it wasn’t. The three UN organisations involved are generally more sanguine about their performance than are their GoV partners. In this inherently complex and demanding programme, the complications of working with three more of less independent UN agencies – instead of the desired “One UN” – contributed significantly to the challenges of programme delivery. As one senior GoV official close to the programme, commented on these complications, noting perhaps with some hyperbole, that: “When we have three UN organisations what should be done in one week takes two months.”

Representatives of the three organisations felt that the challenges of working together have been mostly addressed over the life of Phase 1 and that their GoV partners may sometimes exaggerate the ongoing challenges. Senior GoV partners, for their part, expressed a combination of concern that these problems have not been adequately dealt with, and a determination to avoid similar challenges in working with the “Three UNs” in the future. There is a feeling, among other things, that working with the three independent agencies imposes unacceptable transaction costs, such as the need for multiple administrators – one in each of the three agencies – and imposes higher demands on the time of already overcommitted GoV managers, who are obliged to manage relationships with three partners instead of a single one.

The “Three UNs” have significantly different *modus operandi* and organisational cultures. The negative impacts of this heterogeneity on UN-REDD’s Phase 1 programme in Viet Nam was mitigated largely through remarkable personal efforts on the part of individuals involved, rather than being resolved at the institutional level. The evaluation did not see evidence of the UN Resident Coordinator’s office having played a major role in ensuring coordination during Phase I. On the other hand, the UN-REDD programme is consistently described as contributing to the projected outcomes and outputs of the “One UN” in Viet Nam.²⁶

Among the complaints related to working with the “three UNs” was the fact that they delivered quite different messages; especially early in the programme when they sometimes seemed to have quite distinct visions of the programme. Differences appeared not only among the three UNs, but also within them and between them and the PMU, for example. This situation improved noticeably over the life of the project.

²⁶ Specifically, the One UN Plan’s “Outcome 3: Economic growth takes into account environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for poverty reduction under the following specific outputs:

Output 3.1: Capacities and systems for enhanced oversight by national and local legislative bodies on the implementation of the Strategic Orientation on Sustainable Development (SD), National Strategy on Environmental Protection and various other national environmental laws and policies

Output 3.2: Sustainable development and environmental legal frameworks, strategies, policies and long-term plans developed with broad participation of local people and stakeholders and in line with international environmental conventions

Output 3.3: Improved institutional mechanisms and capacities for action planning and implementation to ensure that environmental concerns are integrated with poverty reduction and economic growth.”

Their representatives sometimes squabbled openly in front of GoV partners, an approach that was decidedly at odds with GoV cultural norms. The effects of this fissiparous approach were exacerbated by the isolated and sporadic nature of many project interventions and a general lack of cohesion among the programme's different planned activities that is discussed in Section 4.

The three UN organisations – after considerable transaction time - worked out more effective approaches to 'joint programming' – with individuals apparently learning to work out effective *modus operandi* - though they never achieved what one could describe as a well coordinated, smoothly functioning 'joint programme'. It is not clear that collaboration among the three UN organisations ever worked particularly well and from the GoV perspective it did not. Though collaboration has clearly improved there is still a recognised need for improvement, according to the national partner. Problems that appear to have eased gradually over the life of Phase 1 may have been overcome mostly by the winding up of programme activities.

The relative lack of cohesion among the activities financed by the programme allowed the UN partners to work more or less independently, rather than obliging them to work more jointly. Desired synergies among the three UNs were not often realised. UNEP, which does not have an office in Ha Noi had a diminished role during the latter half of the project, when the programme was mostly delivered by the other two UN agencies acting largely independently of one another. Within UN-REDD's 'joint programming' framework, the respective bureaucracies of each UN organisation carefully guarded their respective shares of the overall budget, limiting the programme's flexibility to re-design in response to the evolving situation.

As the programme developed, the newly formed UN-REDD Secretariat in Geneva, an interagency co-ordination unit, also began providing increasing support to the national programme for Phase 2 formulation. Inevitably, this also imposed transaction costs on limited management resources.

The Government of Viet Nam

Like the UN partners, the GoV partner in the UN-REDD programme faced challenges familiar within any large and highly politicized bureaucratic system confronted with a high level of uncertainty, competing priorities and limited resources. Despite these challenges, some of the GoV successes in this respect, achieved with the support of their UN partners, included:

- involving various national and provincial level research institutions and organisations, such as Da Lat University, in the implementation of UN-REDD financed activities;
- identifying an existing initiative, FORMIS27, as the platform for REDD+ information, in order to avoid duplication of information infrastructure; [28](#)
- engaging with non-government partners at the national level, and bringing in a range of non-government and academic service providers at the national and sub-national levels.

27 Viet Nam Forestry Information Portal

[28](#)To date, however, the Programme has not gone beyond identifying the FORMIS option. The Programme has expressed intent to pursue this approach but has not yet done so.

The Programme adopted a governance structure that involved VNFOREST playing the central role within the GoV. This was almost certainly the most efficient option – the one with the lowest transaction costs. Given the relatively high transaction costs already associated with working with the three UNs, discussed above, it probably would not have been feasible to work with a more decentralised management structure within the GoV. But this more focused approach was not necessarily the one that would have had maximum impacts in the future. Ensuring Viet Nam is “REDD+ ready” will eventually require commitment and active participation from a far larger community of national government partners.

The challenges that are inevitable in managing a programme as complex and ambitious (and ambiguous) as REDD+ have been exacerbated by the very limited supply of those human resources needed to make the programme effective. Some interlocutors confirmed that there *are* the necessary human resources within the GoV, but are not within VNFOREST. In any case, the GoV was understandably reluctant to commit more precious human resources to the programme until such time as there is more clarity from the international community about the future of REDD+ financing.

The many challenges inherent to trying to achieve inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial, and intra-ministerial coordination and collaboration do not appear to have been carefully considered in the original project design and this has been reflected, for example in ongoing challenges with:

- identifying sufficient incentives to encourage the engagement and participation of other potential partners within the GoV;
- ensuring good and effective communications between the project’s central and provincial level activities; collaborating with key partners such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in activities like the GHG inventory and land use monitoring system, where their collaboration is critical; and
- getting other central ministries, especially MoNRE more vigorously involved in the STWGs.

Coordination mechanisms adopted by the National Programme

There is a broad consensus among stakeholders – and the evaluation team concurs - that UN-REDD in Viet Nam made valuable contributions to the GoV’s adoption of robust coordination mechanisms: a national REDD+ Network, a half dozen sub-technical working groups and, especially, the Viet Nam REDD+Office. These outputs are discussed in greater detail in section 5. The positive effects of these outputs have been limited to some extent by the widespread over-commitment of many of the people involved. This is a problem both within national government and international partner organisations, from whom our feedback included statements like:

- “I work on other big programmes... I feel ashamed that I can’t network with REDD programme as I would like to... we need to find mechanism to dialogue.”
- “Where to find the time to work together outside the workshops?”

This problem of ‘finding time’ to pursue REDD+ issues appears to be shared by all except those national and international organisations that have a dedicated budget to work on these issues. One consequence of this appears to be STWG’s that are mostly attended by well-meaning but often under capacitated NGOs.²⁹

²⁹ Unfortunately neither UN-REDD Phase 1, nor any other REDD readiness project in Vietnam, dedicated resources to developing the capacities of these civil society partners, though the FLEGT programme has.

FINAL EVALUATION of UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme

Unlike the VRO, the UN-REDD programme itself had limited coordination / collaboration capacity after the departure of its Senior Technical Advisor (STA) in late 2011. Earlier, more visible (though not always uncontroversial) effort had been devoted to working with other partners. Many of the forestry institutions in the country³⁰ were engaged in the National REDD+ Network and STWGs, in addition to implementation of programme activities through subcontracts contracts. Through the efforts of the in-country programme officers, UN-REDD interacted, if not actively collaborated, with other bilaterally financed initiatives in forestry sector, particularly those of Finland (FORMIS³¹ and NFA³² projects) and Germany (GIZ Natural Resources Management Programme), together with REDD+-relevant NGO³³ and international research organisation's³⁴ projects.

After the STA left, the diminished presence or visibility of UN-REDD has at least partly been the result of a deliberate effort to minimise confusion between the roles of the UN-REDD programme and the emerging Viet Nam REDD+ Office (or VRO, discussed in section 4), as well as a growing focus on detailed planning of Phase 2.

The UN-REDD programme's very active communication and awareness building campaign, especially in the first half of the programme, may well have inadvertently reduced the effectiveness of their coordination with certain partners. There was clearly some initial conflation of the UN-REDD programme with Viet Nam's national REDD+ Office. This confusion may have at partially obscured the contributions of a growing community of other international partners to Viet Nam's national REDD+ activities – there were some fourteen separate REDD+ projects being financed by late 2012. This in turn appears to have engendered a certain amount of resentment among these partners, although this now seems to have dissipated. The VRO has now developed a higher independent profile, the VRO's support from REDD+ programmes such as JICA and SNV and others have become more visible, and the UN-REDD programme now has a more understated national image.

Concern was also expressed among other development partners about an ongoing lack of effective coordination and interaction between UN-REDD activities and those supported by with other internationally financed initiatives in Viet Nam that also focus on improving forestry management practices, particularly FLEGT and those related to the U.S. Lacey Act. The programme made periodic contact with the FLEGT office in VNFOREST and with European Forest Institute's FLEGT Facility (who facilitate VPA negotiations on behalf of the EU), which resulted in some initial agreement on principles of jointly implemented activities under Outcome 3. This collaboration, however, failed to materialise due partly to delays in instigating the FLEGT VPA process (*cf.* delayed inception of the FCPF readiness grant – see Section 2.2 Design). Nevertheless, the first Joint Technical Working Group meeting for the VPA negotiations was held November 2010, presenting both REDD+ and FLEGT processes with nearly two full years of concurrent implementation where synergies could have been explored

30 Including: the Forest Inventory & Planning Institute (FIPI), Forest Science Institute of Viet Nam, Tay Nguyen University, and Viet Nam Forestry University.

31 Development of management Information System For Forestry Sector

32 Support to National Assessment of Forest resources in Vietnam

33 e.g. Fauna & Flora International. SNV – The Netherlands Development Organisation, and Winrock International, among others.

34 The Center for International Forestry Research and The World Agroforestry Centre, for example.

more proactively by the UN-REDD programme under Outcome 3. Delivery of Output 3.3 from the original logical framework – “Analysis of opportunities for linkage with non-REDD initiatives to reduce cross-border flow of illegal timber” - would have informed the potential and options for substantive collaboration between these two processes.

Box 2 – Evaluating UN-REDD in Viet Nam

The problems that UN-REDD in Viet Nam experienced in ensuring timely external evaluations offers an informal case study of the ongoing challenges of programme delivery. The Joint Programme Document is contradictory about evaluation, apparently reflecting the haste with which this document was prepared and approved. It states first that: “The Viet Nam UN-REDD programme is only expected to last 20 months,... an initial phase in the process of assisting Viet Nam to become REDD-ready by 2012. As such, no evaluation will be undertaken,...”. Shortly after that, the Joint Programme Document indicates that “The UN-REDD Secretariat will establish an Evaluation Plan which ensures that all programmes supported by the UN-REDD Programme will undertake a final evaluation, which will assess the relevance and effectiveness of the intervention, and measure the development impact of the results achieved... Furthermore, the UN-REDD Secretariat will lead Mid-Term Reviews and thematic reviews for all programmes.”

In the event, the programme continued almost twice as long as anticipated. No mid-term review appears to have been carried out, despite the commitment suggested in the Joint Programme Document. With the wisdom of hindsight, it is clear that such a review could have been a valuable opportunity - to identify the unmet need to launch work on REDD+ related policies and measures, for example. An extensive internal “lessons learned” exercise was prepared at the close of most programme activity in mid-2012, but was not a substitute for external review.

The programme’s final evaluation (as various interlocutors noted), started five months after the official close of the programme and shortly before the start of a second phase, which has been the focus of planning for the past two years, despite the absence of any external review. After some initial confusion about what the Secretariat expected from UN offices in Hanoi, they provided support to the evaluation mission, mostly through the support of the PMU. For the latter half of the mission, support was provided by the VRO.

The programme’s evaluation function seems to have suffered, as did a number of its originally planned activities, from an absence of central leadership and increased concentration of efforts on the planning of the second phase.

Management and implementation at the national level

The UN-REDD programme’s Project Management Unit (PMU) appears to have assured the day to day management of a complex programme reasonably well. The most serious abiding concerns about management and implementation encountered by the evaluation team had to do mostly with the challenges of coordinating the diverse inputs of the three UN organisations - and the substantial, as yet unmet, expectations generated by the programme’s vigorous local awareness building and related activities such as that on benefit distribution systems and training in Participatory Carbon Monitoring (PCM).

FINAL EVALUATION of UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme

The national UN-REDD programme suffered from the lack of well-defined central leadership among the programme's international partners, as discussed above. None, among the PMU, the three participating UN organisations, the UN Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, and the UN-REDD secretariat, was able to provide this leadership. The three UN organisations did however provide generally effective – if not always timely - support as individual institutions and, especially, as individuals.

Although there were some notable delays, programme implementation was also characterised by a sense of urgency. This exacerbated the effects of a lack of a clear 'road map' outlining the programme's strategy for helping Viet Nam develop its 'REDD readiness'. Such a road map was originally meant to have been an early output but this was dropped from the programme. The combined effect of diffuse leadership, a sense of urgent need to 'produce output's' and the absence of a coherent, shared road map all contributed to a general approach that could be described as "Ready – Fire – Aim".

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this "Ready – Fire – Aim" approach was the absence of attention to national REDD+ related policies and measures among UN-REDD activities. Initially this gap was apparently the result of an assumption that a World Bank financed initiative (FCPF) would address these issues³⁵; this explanation lost its validity over time however as this other programme failed to materialise. Similarly, the programme does not appear to have paid sufficient attention to building on existing strengths in Viet Nam and a rich array of field level implementation experience within the forestry sector in the country.

The effectiveness of programme management and implementation at the *national level* in particular appears to have been highly dependent on the performance of individuals within the local or regional offices of the three UNs, more so than would have been the case had the programme had a well-defined and functional system for coordinating the collaborative effort of these three organisations. Individuals' hard work and enthusiasm, including the STAs, compensated for systemic deficiencies to a considerable degree.

A related concern at the national level was the nature of leadership exercised, outside the direct ambit of the three UN organisations. The PMU did not have the kind of leadership it needed to ensure wide engagement and coordination of a wide community of participants in a wide range of REDD+ related activities. The STA engaged by the programme, for example, was a specialised technical expert, not a specialist in mobilising broad cooperation and collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

As the programme developed, the GoV exercised more effective leadership through the VRO, with UN-REDD support. This leadership however was also stronger in certain specific areas of

³⁵ This much delayed FCPF *did* define a (relatively) well-articulated and comprehensive 'roadmap' for REDD+ readiness in Viet Nam, known as the Readiness Preparation Proposal (or R-PP). This was developed with considerably greater levels stakeholder consultation and GoV ownership than the original UN-REDD joint programme document. The R-PP defined an overall readiness process and indicated which initiative could pay for what: e.g., FCPF's contribution, SNV's contribution, UN-REDD's contribution, etc. UN-REDD Phase 1 did not subscribe to the R-PP however. The FCPF grant, has now been approved by the World Bank and the GoV but is still not operational, awaiting agreement on its institutional home within MARD.

technical expertise than in overall coordination and strategic vision, as well as being chronically overstretched.

The most positive light in which to view the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam, from 2009 to 2012, is an extended inception phase for a much anticipated, much larger operational phase (aka Phase 2). Seen in this light, its contributions to Phase 2 development weren't as efficient as they might have been because they were distracted by Phase 1 commitments. But these contributions should help to ensure the efficiency of this second Phase, (hopefully) having learned and passed on lessons of practical value for the next phase and laid the foundations for future work in a range of areas. Looking at the Phase 1 from this perspective does beg the question, however, of why the programme's final evaluation team was tasked with evaluating this programme rigorously against the ambitions registered in the original logical framework, but not considering its contributions to Phase 2.

From another perspective, Phase 1 could be summarised as a costly, hastily assembled and largely 'supply driven' pilot programme, chaotically administered though reasonably well managed at the national and local levels (see the example of the programme's evaluation function in Box 2). It achieved some impressive results (discussed below) though its overall performance was limited by the imperative to participate in putting together a much larger phase 2 programme. Presumably this Phase 2 will learn from Phase 1 mistakes, though the draft Phase 2 Programme Document available to the evaluation team raises some questions in this regard (see Box 3).

Box 3 - Lessons from Phase 1 reflected in Phase 2?

Annex C in the draft Phase 2 programme document reviewed by the evaluation - entitled "Overview of lessons learned, VN Ph 1 strengths and weaknesses" - is supposed to include a "detailed list of achievements and challenges under the Ph1 programme" but doesn't address the challenge side of the equation in any useful detail. It does not contain serious discussion of weaknesses. For example, there is little clear indication of GoV sensitivity to the high transaction costs associated with working with three UNs instead of one UN or the expectations generated by Phase 1 activities such as those on FPIC and BDS.

Elsewhere in the same draft Phase 2 document, there is a description of annual "assessment and evaluation" of the three UN organisations' "capacity to deliver on administrative and technical aspects of the Programme", to be carried out by "third party independent organisations" (p 93). In light of the experience in Phase 1, it will be important to ensure this commitment does not meet the fate of the Phase 1 programme document's commitment to carry out a "mid-term review". Unfortunately, there is no analogous commitment in the Phase 2 document to address the issue of expectations raised, particularly at local levels, by Phase 1 activities.

Apart from the obvious challenges posed by involvement of the three UNs, the future programme will be especially challenged by the needs to both 1) effectively control a substantially larger initiative with the limited GoV human resources available and 2) ensure the effective coordination of the much larger participation of essential Vietnamese partners both within and outside the forestry sector.

Management and implementation at sub-national levels

Most of the programme's partners at sub-national levels (i.e., in Lam Dong province, from village to provincial government levels) expressed appreciation for the quality of delivery of those UN-REDD Phase 1 activities they were engaged in, with a few caveats. Particular strengths in implementation noted were:

- a vigorously delivered, multi-faceted awareness campaign;
- the very positive approach taken towards working with those ethnic minority communities that were assumed to be, at least to some degree, "forest dependent"; and
- the extensive involvement of local partners in programme delivery, including human resources from Da Lat University and mass organisations operating at the provincial and lower levels (e.g., Women's Unions).

There was less evidence of efficient use of scarce resources at the provincial level. Many complained about the essentially 'supply driven' nature of the programme - doing things because they were in the programme's plan not because they responded to a clearly defined and locally felt need. For example at the provincial level:

- It was not clear that UN-REDD financed training and awareness building workshops always targeted the right people – more than one person commented on this, e.g., "*I have seen that many people attended the same event repeatedly...*"
- Some felt the same, increasingly redundant messages were transmitted again and again (perhaps they were among those mentioned above who "*attended the same event repeatedly*");
- Workshops at the provincial level may have been attended more by lower level government officials who were available than by the higher level decision makers whose attendance would have had greater impact; and
- The cost of these local level training and awareness activities were prohibitively high by local standards, rendering them impossible for local authorities to do on their own, outside the ambit of an externally financed programme³⁶.

Other concerns about management, emerging at sub-national levels, have to do mostly with deficiencies in communication from central level to provincial and district levels. Some attributed this to the lack of financial resources available to engage full-time human resources for the programme at the provincial level, as was done at the central level in VNFOREST, an odd oversight in light of the importance of this work in Lam Dong.

Inevitably - in a multi-level and very hierarchical administrative system such as Viet Nam's - there were also issues such as commune level (i.e., between the district and village levels) leaders expressing their frustration at sometimes being bypassed. More significantly perhaps, they also worried about the programme making their life more complicated because they would have to live with the potential after effects of UN-REDD activities and the expectations these might have generated.

³⁶It may be considered too soon for UN-REDD to address this cost issue but it will need to be addressed in Phase 2 if it is envisioned that such activities will eventually be adapted by sub-national levels acting without the advantage of international funding.

These expectations were the biggest issue to emerge at the local levels³⁷: The failure of the various UN-REDD Phase 1 ‘preparatory activities’(as they were perceived) to be promptly followed by ‘concrete action’ (i.e., a functioning REDD+ system of payment for forest protection). As discussed already, the performance of UN-REDD in Lam Dong is inevitably compared to that of the province’s PFES system, which went quickly from awareness building to payments for services.

3.3 Use of UN-REDD Programme’s normative products, guidelines and safeguards

Due to the pioneering nature of the programme in Viet Nam, as one of the first country-level interventions of UN-REDD, much of the normative products, guidelines and safeguards were not available during implementation. Indeed, development of global UN-REDD guidelines was informed by these pioneering experiences under the Viet Nam programme. Although various guidelines became available at different points in programme implementation, better use of these products could still have been made in the first phase of operations.

3.4 Risk Management

Significant risk is inherent with pioneering, as the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam courageously did. It explored approaches prior to the achievement of international consensus on key elements of the REDD+ mechanism that have yet to be negotiated. In piloting innovative approaches, the potential to make mistakes should be acknowledged as a healthy and expected part of the learning experience. But, as is so often the case in international cooperation, the programme did not sufficiently acknowledge the potential to make and learn from mistakes. The possibility of unintended negative impacts was not identified by programme proponents during programme design. Risk management measures incorporated in the JPD were too generic to be effective during programme implementation. No risk management strategy at the activity level was devised and strong GoV ownership of the readiness process, together with relatively (compared to other REDD+ countries) well-informed civil servants leading the process, were assumed to be sufficient to mitigate risks of unintended negative impacts. The most important of these impacts are discussed in latter part of Section 6 as a synthesis of lessons learned.

³⁷Although the expectations expressed at the local level were *not* as intense as the evaluation team had been led to expect from earlier discussions with the GoV in Ha Noi.

4. RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO STATED OBJECTIVES

For each of the three outcomes and twelve contributing outputs projected for Viet Nam’s UN-REDD programme, the programme’s reported “overall progress” or “cumulative progress” towards these targets is summarised in Annex G. The evaluators’ subsequent ratings of these outcomes and outputs are based on a combination of the programme’s own reporting, document review and extensive evaluation interviews at national and sub-national levels. These ratings are indicated in Table 4 below, followed by a discussion of these results.

Table 4 - Rating of outcomes & outputs

Result	Description of target	Evaluators’ rating
Outcome 1	Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in VN	S
Output 1.1	- National coordination mechanism established	HS
Output 1.2	- Data and information for national REL / RL for REDD available	MS
Output 1.3	- Framework National REDD+ Action Programme Strategy	MS
Output 1.4	- Performance based, transparent benefit sharing payment system from national to local levels	MU
Output 1.5	- Communications material produced for sharing lessons nationally and internationally	MS
Output 1.6	- National MRV system designed	S
Outcome 2	Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other payment for Ecological Services at provincial and district levels through sustainable development planning and implementation	MS
Output 2.1	- <i>District level</i> forest land use plan mainstreaming REDD potential	MS
Output 2.2	- Participatory C-stock monitoring (PCM) system <i>operational</i>	MU
Output 2.3	- Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems <i>defined</i>	MS
Output 2.4	- Awareness on REDD+ <i>created at district and local levels</i>	S
Outcome 3	Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions	U
Output 3.1	- <i>Drivers</i> of regional emissions displacement and inter-sectoral leakage <i>assessed</i>	U
Output 3.2	- Regional <i>synergies and collaboration</i> on REDD+ <i>enhanced</i>	U

While the reporting of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam sometimes seems to suggest various outputs and outcomes can be *attributed* to their programme alone, the evaluation team’s analysis of these outputs and outcomes looked instead at UN-REDD’s *contributions* towards these results, recognising that an increasing number of partners were working on various REDD+

initiatives with an increasingly capable national Viet Nam REDD+ Office over the life of the UN-REDD programme.

4.1 Outputs

A widely noted strength of the UN-REDD programme was its contribution to the development of the national system of measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) REDD+ actions' contributions to climate change mitigation. Although a little behind schedule, this work has contributed significantly to the development of a framework document, a valuable first attempt at defining what Viet Nam's MRV system should look like. This MRV work has benefited considerably from the active contributions of both a locally based FAO officer working with the programme and the head of the VRO, both of whom have strong capacities in this area. Like most other work done on specific instruments during Phase I, work done on the MRV system doesn't include prescriptive detail on how to MRV GHG emission reductions and enhanced removals from REDD+, nor has the Programme developed the required national capacity to operate a practical system.

Another strength of the programme appears to its support to the sub-technical working groups that have brought together a range of stakeholders to focus on a half dozen different dimensions of REDD+ activities in Viet Nam.

What were UN partners' perceptions?

International agency and (former) PMU staff in Ha Noi and Bangkok are, not surprisingly perhaps, among the mostly satisfied with what has been accomplished during Phase I. Some of these participants suggest that a relatively heavy cost was paid for devoting much time and energy to Phase 2 preparation. Attitudes on the issue of Phase 2 development's impact on Phase 1 range from denial to recognition. However, the closer people were to the actual day to day activities of the programme, the more inclined they are to see this as an impediment to delivering Phase 1's projected results. While – inevitably – there is no consensus about how much Phase 2 planning activities actually detracted from Phase 1 activity implementation, and vice versa, it is clear that this was significant. This needs to be weighed against the fact that the looming Phase 2 stimulated considerably more enthusiasm for UN-REDD activities in general than would likely have been the case in the absence of a follow-up phase.

What were other stakeholders' perceptions?

For most stakeholders outside the three UN organisations, the programme's most outstanding contributions at the national level were development of the national coordination mechanism – including the VRO, National REDD+ network, website and support to STWGs. The NRAP was seen as another key result of UN-REDD support, though the generic framework that has emerged in the NRAP is quite different from the far longer and quite different one proposed by UN-REDD consultants. In fact the NRAP that has emerged is more a result of the wider array of activities supported by UN-REDD and others, rather than the specific UN-REDD sponsored report on this issue.

Weaknesses?

A notable weakness at the output level of UN-REDD's performance in Viet Nam is that some fundamental lessons seem to have been 're-learned', though these were far from being things that were 'unknown' in Viet Nam or the broader international community at the time the programme was designed. Some of the 'lessons' described by the "Lessons Learned" study prepared for the programme in June 2012 (reference) are disconcerting in this respect. It should not have been necessary for this programme and its beneficiaries to learn the hard way, for example, that:

- One should avoid using obscure legal or academic jargon when trying to reach out to diverse stakeholders at multiple levels.
- An elaborate FPIC process is of limited value when there is not yet anything to negotiate and nothing to actually consent to.
- Appropriate BDS cannot be established until decisions have been made about a range of required national and sub-national policies and measures related to payment modalities, land rights and so on.
- Premature discussions of prospective financial benefits to poor villagers risks creating high expectations and possibly longer-term disillusionment among local stakeholders waiting to see concrete benefits.

While the "Lessons Learned" exercise may have been a valuable opportunity to share these messages with UN-REDD's broader international audience, these were NOT things that should have had to be re-learned. The fact that they apparently were is another reconfirmation of the "Ready – Fire – Aim" syndrome characteristic of an intervention that was hastily planned and implemented, in relative isolation from a number of key partners working on related programmes in Viet Nam.

The "Lessons learned" study helped fulfil the programme's commitment to develop communications material for sharing lessons internationally. This document's contribution to international (and especially national) understanding would have been much enhanced through more careful editing. The document is too long for most readers; it often wanders away from 'lessons' and into other issues. It is in fact a fulsome compendium of diverse lessons, observations, conclusions, hypotheses, recommendations and admonishments about UN-REDD in Viet Nam. This discussion of many issues helped to orient the evaluation team's subsequent work. Its value to a broader audience however would have been greatly enhanced by a concise and carefully crafted executive summary focused on the most important *lessons*. Instead the 'executive summary' of this "Lessons Learned" document – the part that the greatest number of people are likely to read with care – offers little or no substance about lessons learned but instead summarises the development of Viet Nam's UN-REDD programme and some of its results.

There is a general perception among the involved staff of the three UN agencies that the original Joint Programme Document was a not very well done. In its defense, it is important to recognise that it was hastily prepared in the enthusiastic aftermath of the Bali CoP in a context where nobody knew with much certainty what REDD+ would be. The original joint programme document got the programme moving, remarkably quickly. But it didn't – couldn't possibly - know what was really going to be needed or possible. In light of this history then, it is not surprising that - as a number of participants have observed - the programme's various outputs seem disjointed. They are more a collection of (often experimental) activities than a coherent

programme. This often quite loosely co-ordinated assemblage of activities, combined with a pervasive pressure to do things, to carry out those planned activities that could be carried out and disburse the programme budget, meant that little concern was given to the relative order in which things ought to be done (again, the “Ready-Fire-Aim”).

Clearly part of the reason for the order in which things were done in the first Phase was a function of what *could* be done at any stage; UNDP delivered activities early in the programme because it was ready and able to do so. FAO specialists did not come on line soon enough. Then, sometimes the necessary expertise could be promptly mobilised and sometimes it couldn't. The material produced by the programme's consultant experts was of uneven quality and relevance: senior GoV officials were sometimes prepared to accept and use it, and sometimes not.

The programme's communication and awareness activities seemed to have sometimes found the right content, and sometimes the right audiences, though not always. Some UN-REDD communication materials used at sub-national levels were criticised by, for example, as self-promoting propaganda (RECOFTC & UN-REDD 2011). At the national level the programme has been criticised for not reaching out enough beyond the forestry establishment with their communication strategy. The programme's vigorous communications work, at least initially, appears to have succeeded too well in selling the ‘UN-REDD brand’ to the target audience, leading to the initial conflation of REDD+ with UN-REDD in Viet Nam, discussed earlier.

4.2 Outcomes

The UN-REDD programme's three projected outcomes are remarkably general and generic. Again, this is not surprising in light of the context in which the programme was designed, discussed above. But it would have been virtually impossible *not* to achieve these outcomes to some degree.³⁸

The evaluation focused on the question of whether these outcomes were achieved as well as they could or should have been. In the case of the first two outcomes, related to national and sub-national level capacity development, the answer was at least a qualified ‘yes’ (see Table 4 - **Rating of outcomes & outputs** above). In the case of the third outcome, related to ‘improved knowledge’ about ways to -reduce regional displacement emissions, the answer was ‘no’.

Outcomes 1 & 2 - National and sub-national capacity development results?

The programme's original design reflected a systematic under estimate of how much time would actually be required to move the country towards “REDD readiness”. For example, the Phase 2 programme estimates it will probably require twice the amount of time and seven times more funds than originally planned for Phase 1, to achieve a more modest goal. The Viet Nam UN-REDD programme was hardly alone in underestimating the challenges of making a country

³⁸Most of the projected outcomes for Phase 2 are far more precise and measurable: e.g., “Capacities for an operational National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) are in place”, “The six pilot provinces enabled to plan and implement REDD+ actions” and so on.

‘REDD ready’. While the programme’s partially achieved outcomes were insufficient for ensuring the overall objective of national ‘REDD readiness’, they *did* enhance Viet Nam’s capacities as a prospective ‘seller’ on global carbon markets or to multi-/bilateral funds. More importantly perhaps, at least from the point of view of many involved in REDD+ activities in the country, they facilitated the development of the much larger Phase 2 programme.

Outcomes 1 and 2 focused on capacity development at national and sub-national levels and various strengths and weaknesses of the different outputs contributing to these outcomes are discussed above. Much of what follows are caveats, discussions of the various limitations to the capacity development outcomes to which these various outputs have contributed.

Capacities have undoubtedly been developed at national, provincial, district and village levels - from enhanced national capacity to define and guide REDD+ policy and coordinate national REDD+ programmes to greater local capacity to participate in the measurement of forest above ground biomass. Among the greatest capacity development undertakings of the REDD+ programme were efforts aimed at enhanced awareness and understanding of REDD issues at different levels. The results of these activities have been mixed. The clarity of understanding of REDD+ conceptually, and in terms of its scope and potential compared to other forestry and land use policy options, seems to diminish as you move away from the VRO, either up or down the government hierarchy. Another peak of *awareness* about REDD+ at sub-national levels can be seen among pilot villagers who hope to benefit from REDD+. Their actual understanding of various concepts however is sometimes distorted.³⁹

At sub-national and, especially, national levels, there is a widespread perception that while Vietnamese capacities were clearly developed with UN-REDD support, this capacity is remarkably thin in most cases (outside of the raised awareness, which has involved larger numbers in a few local areas of Lam Dong province). Most of the programme’s development of individuals’ more technical capacities has been vested in a relatively few people. There is a clear understanding, especially at sub-national levels, that this was just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ and much more needs to be done before they are “REDD ready”.

Nationally, the human resource capacities developed with UN-REDD support are mostly within a very limited group within VNFOREST. Enhancement of institutional capacities – such as capacity to define and operate a national networking and policy matrix (VRO, STWG, NRAP) - was more promising, but again significantly affected only a quite limited number of individuals.

One clear result has been to strengthen commitment and capacities for consultative dialogues on forest management and governance issues in Viet Nam. Driven by the programme, the initial focus of such dialogues has been on novel REDD+-specific (BDS, MRV) systems, yet the readiness process in general has witnessed unprecedented levels of involvement from civil society players in the policy dialogue at the national level. Much of this has been more consultation rather than direct participation in defining priorities. Yet VNFOREST, subject to its

³⁹The evaluation’s two meetings with villagers suggested they may have come to see themselves and their forest protection activities – financed by REDD+ - as bulwarks against local disaster. As one local leader explained “People now understand the potential impacts of climate change: drought, disease, even earthquakes in some places in VN... so we still have hope for REDD...”

own human resource limitations, has also involved civil society actors in carrying out some of their work. This relative openness has not been translated into changes in actual forest management practices at local levels. Genuine dialogues have taken place mostly in Ha Noi. At the local level, there has been much talking to villagers but this has not extended to any local involvement in real decision making processes related to forest management practices.

Much of the capacity built to date, at all levels, has been capacity to understand rather than capacity to actually implement REDD+ activities. Attempts were made by the programme's Senior Technical Advisor to draft discussion papers on the institutional competencies required to implement the NRAP (UN-REDD 2011b), together with a process manual on implementing REDD+ in the field (UN-REDD 2011g), but neither were taken beyond a first draft stage due to institutional priorities on the part of programme implementers to focus resources on Phase 2 development.

An inclusive process of developing an MRV framework document contributed significantly to national stakeholder understanding of what might be required of a GHG carbon accounting system for forestry and land use change. Yet Viet Nam remains a long way from being able to install and operate an MRV system as part of a robust national forest monitoring system (NFMS) able to generate the sorts of reliable data required to meet international requirements anticipated for REDD+.

This situation – hypothetical models rather than concrete and implementable systems – was explained to the evaluators as being, at least in part, a result of lack of international direction. The UNFCCC remains, for example, 'silent about how to do BDS'. This view may be based on the assumption that it is up to the international community to tell a country how to do things like utilise revenues earned from enhanced forest management and protection. But clearly these are things that need to be defined at the national and sub-national scales, with external advice as required. UN-REDD Phase 1 has doubtless helped Viet Nam develop the capacity to define such approaches, but most of the actual definition has not yet been done.

The depth and breadth of national ownership or commitment to REDD+ approaches – another key dimension of national capacity - was difficult to gauge with much confidence. These ought to be questions pursued early in Phase 2: How extensive is the 'buy-in' from senior political levels? From the broader forestry sector? From other sectors? What are the indicators of this? The evaluation team did not observe them. We *did* have confirmation that a group of stakeholders at national and sub-national levels at least partially *understand* REDD+, thanks in large part to the UN-REDD Phase 1 programme; but not that they necessarily support it. The generalities of the 'NRAP' document, for example, do not comprise a strong national commitment to REDD+ implementation; mostly it legitimises a cautious government commitment to do more piloting of REDD+. Why would there be more commitment from the GoV at this stage, when the commitment of the international community - that has conceived REDD+ - remains restricted largely to technical assistance projects implemented by international agencies?

A fairly narrow band of NGOs and national service providers, participants in the different STWG and the REDD+ Network, seems highly committed to REDD+ approaches. Outside of

this group and a small office within VNFOREST, it's not clear that UN-REDD outputs have much national ownership.

What is needed, to help the GoV to more fully 'mainstream REDD+' approaches, is their integration into a wide range of national and sub-national policies, plans, programmes, practices and processes. This has not yet been achieved, though there are a few promising signs. REDD+ has been integrated into the Forest Development and Protection Master Plan now approved by the province of Lam Dong. Though not as a direct result of UN-REDD support, REDD+ has also achieved recognition in Vietnam's new national strategies for both 'Green Growth and Development' and Climate Change. These are impressive first steps; it remains to integrate REDD+ approaches into many other existing policies, plans, programmes, practices and processes.

An important barrier to broader national commitment to REDD+ approaches has been alluded to already in the programme's "Lessons Learned" study. The arcane language of REDD+ practitioners is a barrier to effective communication and understanding, even within the national forestry and resource management community. If encouragement of "learning" and particularly "learning by doing" among a broader national and international community is an important target, then REDD+ advocates need to make a concerted effort to communicate to prospective learners in accessible language, not an exclusive and jargon-ridden language of insiders.

Concerns about capacity development at sub-national levels

At the national level in particular there is considerable repetition of the mantra that UN-REDD Phase 1 was "learning by doing" – a pilot that inevitably entailed learning many hard lessons. Yet from a local perspective in Lam Dong province the problem is that there was far too little real "doing". There was little or no opportunity to learn the most important lessons – from a local perspective - because the critical payment for services was never initiated (nor was it planned to be initiated during Phase 1). Most of the practical learning at the local level – as opposed to awareness building - was done first by the international community and secondarily by VNFOREST but *not* by local stakeholders.

The programme has developed interesting and *potentially* valuable approaches to working at sub-national levels, such as the provincial REDD+ working group⁴⁰ and intensive consultation with local communities that are assumed to be forest dependent. Their value was diminished to some extent by ongoing uncertainty about how the national and provincial governments would actually proceed once REDD+ activities begin to generate payment for forest carbon stock protection. The "Ready – Fire – Aim" approach that characterised the programme was reflected in Lam Dong by the programme proceeding with much local level work related to FPIC and BDS, for example, before any clear direction had been determined at provincial or national levels about what exactly people might be asked to consent to or what benefits they might be able to share. As a consequence, much of the local level capacity developed may or may not be of much value for country's future REDD+ or other PFES activities.

⁴⁰Such a REDD+ working group was also established with SNV support – another example where UN-REDD might have worked more effectively with other international partners.

At sub-national levels there is much awareness of ongoing uncertainty and unresolved questions about an eventual BDS. For example, will there be an independent and separate REDD+ fund or will REDD+ revenues be included in general forest protection and development funds or general revenues? Will communities or community members receive benefits in cash or in kind? And so on. Resolution of these questions is very important for impoverished villagers who have participated in awareness building activities with an expectation that they would see benefits from REDD+.

Local people in pilot communities have developed an understanding of REDD+ and its underlying *quid pro quo* at the local level – enhanced forest protection in exchange for enhanced forest protection money. This general approach is familiar to them from prior experience with PFES. But it is still unclear whether local involvement in enhanced forest carbon protection will be considered worth the trouble, whether the inherent opportunity costs of, for example, foregone wood harvesting or cash crop production, will actually be acceptable. Training was delivered in opportunity cost assessment, as a UN-REDD contribution to local planning processes though this activity did not lead to anything else. Another local level output, training in participatory Carbon monitoring, resulted in the decision not to carry such monitoring. Again, understanding has been enhanced of what *ought* (or *ought not*) to be done, but not *how it will be* done. What was imparted to local stakeholders was generally a somewhat skewed vision whereby REDD+ would involve significant benefits without significant costs (in foregone opportunities for alternative economic activities). This is a perspective that may be increasingly contested over time in impoverished communities within or near protected forests.

Much of what has been done to develop awareness at local levels was apparently based on the premise that ‘People have to understand what REDD is before they can do it’. The evaluation’s limited interviews at the village level confirmed that people at this level - those who have been involved in the programme’s awareness building activities - are now conversant with concepts like the potential local and national impacts of climate change, the cycling of carbon and oxygen through forest ecosystems and the role of trees in carbon sequestration. They may have been left with a somewhat overwrought perception of the role their prospective forest protection activities will play in protecting their communities and country from natural disasters. But whether such awareness building was actually *necessary* is far from clear.

The elaborate awareness and information activities carried out in Lam Dong might be construed as the international community prematurely imposing experimental approaches and activities with more value and meaning for outsiders than they had for locals, for whom the key issue was and remains communities contributing to enhanced effectiveness and accountability in forest protection in exchange for enhanced payments to the communities for the same. A more nuanced local meaning for REDD+ arguably should not be defined until the necessary policies and measures are in place to define the relationship between local communities, districts, provinces and their national government, and any enhanced revenue stream⁴¹ related to REDD+ activities.

⁴¹ And how that revenue is used; UN-REDD did not explore other options, it simply reinforced existing notions that the only way to engage locals in enhanced forest protection is to pay them the ‘protection money’.

There is a widespread feeling in Lam Dong province (and to a certain degree at least at the national level and among some UN staff) that ‘we are already doing most of this... all that is being added is the carbon part’. Perhaps the level of awareness and communication activities seen in UN-REDD’s first phase was not needed to just add a ‘carbon part’ to a forest financing approach, PFES, already being practiced in the province (particularly in light of the ongoing uncertainty about funding for carbon results). On the other hand, UN-REDD financed activities such as the mapping of twenty years of change in forest cover in the two pilot districts was very much appreciated and viewed as a concrete and valuable contribution to improved forest management planning.

And not everyone shared the view that other kinds of sub-national capacity development may have been premature. The programme collaborated with the Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC) office in Viet Nam to conduct a REDD capacity building needs assessment of for grassroots stakeholders⁴² in the forestry sector. Their study sampled three provinces, including Lam Dong (RECOFTC & UN-REDD 2011) and concluded that sub-national stakeholders did not have sufficient capacity to understand and implement a future national REDD+ programme as defined by RECOFTC’s own competency standards for REDD+ and climate change. These RECOFTC standards indicated a need for local-level understanding of climate change to implement REDD+ as a market-based financing system. These standards also reflected RECOFTC’s mission of promoting community forestry. Their conclusions were consistent with the UN-REDD programme’s approach to investing in grassroots-level capacity to understand climate change while neglecting broader national government capacities to strategically assess the scope, options, costs and benefits of an ‘effective national REDD+ regime’. This ‘capacity building needs assessment’ concluded, perhaps not surprisingly in light of RECOFTC’s own mission, with a recommendation to the UN-REDD programme to develop a capacity building programme for all grassroots forestry stakeholders for REDD+. This recommendation was not taken further during Phase I.

Subsequent to this capacity building needs assessment, UN-REDD commissioned an assessment of the effectiveness of their training and awareness-raising activities over the period 2009-2011. It concluded that ‘*the capacity building needs assessment (i.e., the one done with RECOFTC, described above) was done in the second part of the programme, and did not contribute to the preparation of the (UN-REDD sponsored communications and awareness-raising) strategy*’, and that ‘*both the strategy and needs assessment should have been done earlier, and should have been integrated better*’. The quality of the mid-term capacity needs assessment was also questioned by this later report (UN-REDD 2012a). Once again, this belated dialogue reflects the “Ready – Aim – Fire” nature of many Phase I activities and underlines the importance of prompt Phase 2 resumption of better targeted capacity development activities able to learn from the experiences of the Phase I pilot.

In any case, capacities to understand and implement REDD+ activities, among sub-national government cadres and villagers alike, remains insufficient in scope and scale to effectively operate a future provincial REDD+ programme. As long as the necessary policies and measures have not been systematically and comprehensively analysed (see Section 2) the actual capacities

⁴² Provincial, district and commune government agencies (Forestry, Forest Protection, Agricultural Extension, Natural Resources & Environment), State management boards, mass organizations, and local communities

required to implement REDD+ on the ground in Viet Nam remain unknown. Once acceptable, cost-effective policies and measures have been identified at national and sub-national levels, the scope and magnitude of action required to implement REDD+ will be known and the requisite local stakeholder capacities can be developed.

In the absence of further REDD+ readiness investments, some of the capacities that have been developed by the UN-REDD programme in Lam Dong province may be at higher risk of rapid erosion than are national capacities. The provincial level technical working group (TWG), for example, would be unlikely to be sustained in the absence of a second phase or other ODA intervention⁴³.

Facilitators trained by the programme to work at the village level, on the other hand, are considered by many sub-national stakeholders to be one of the most robust and sustainable capacity development results of the programme. These facilitators are now trained and experienced in community-level communications skills and have the potential to be a lasting asset among pilot villages for REDD+ and other forestry (e.g. PFES) and rural development initiatives.

Other significant, unresolved capacity issues raised at sub-national levels include:

- The need to systematically analyse socio-economic risks - among ethnic minorities whose livelihoods are at least to some degree dependent on forest land - that may be exacerbated by REDD+ implementation, and options for their solutions;
- The feasibility of utilising the “R-Coefficient” for any local BDS; this has been suggested in a discussion paper but not adopted; experience with the considerably simpler “K-Coefficient” for PFES suggests it was too complicated.

Improving regional knowledge?

The wording of Outcome 3, “Improved *knowledge* of approaches...” is vaguer even than the first two outcomes. This reflected the lack of substantial planning at the time about what would or could be done, or with whom, to ‘improve knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions’. Apparently this outcome was included in the programme at the insistence of international investors, though it was not clearly needed to achieve the programme’s overall objective in Viet Nam. It is generally acknowledged that only very modest results have been achieved to date in this area. If progress is to be more significant in Phase 2, then it will be critical for the programme to address fundamental issues not addressed in Phase I, including a careful analysis of regional stakeholders, their interests and incentives.

The issue of regional collaboration to reduce “leakage” across borders is important. However, the logical rationale – as opposed to the political imperative - for including activities to address this issue as addendums to a national UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam was not clear⁴⁴ during Phase 1 and is still not clear in Phase 2. The new outcome targeted for Phase 2 or “*Regional*

⁴³VNFOREST administers two other bilateral ODA-financed REDD+ readiness projects, in partnership with SNV, with pilot activities in Lam Dong: the German-funded ‘Exploring mechanisms to promote High-Biodiversity REDD+: Piloting in Vietnam’ and USA-funded ‘Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forest’ projects.

⁴⁴Not logically clear, but abundantly clear from a political perspective. The principal donor, Norway, wanted to see illegal logging addressed in the region.

cooperation progress on REDD+ implementation in the Lower Mekong Sub-Region” – is less amorphous than the outcome targeted in Phase I, but not by much. This area of activity could well continue to be a weakness in Phase 2 as well.

4.3 Other factors and processes affecting project results?

Chicken or the egg? While Viet Nam was not yet fully ‘REDD ready’ by the end of this programme, neither of course was the international community. As one interlocutor explained it: “Each CoP moves us two centimeters... The Minister of MARD (wants to) to prepare (for) REDD+ implementation but I have to tell him it’s impossible due to lack of international commitment...” Ongoing uncertainties surrounding the global status of REDD+ and international commitments on REDD+ financing, especially within the structure of the UNFCCC, have circumscribed Vietnamese decision makers’ enthusiasm for engaging in REDD+ activities during the life of the programme; they are still inevitably in a ‘wait and see’ mode.

Promise of substantial future support for REDD+ activities from the Norwegians (and other bilateral donors like USAID) - which made this UN-REDD programme *de facto* the inception phase of a much larger programme - helped to dispel much of the reticence which might have otherwise impeded the ability of the programme to achieve results between 2010 and 2012. A similar challenge can be anticipated as the implementation of Phase 2 proceeds, unless the UNFCCC negotiations experience stronger leadership on REDD+ or the programme focuses more on other multi- and bilateral sources of REDD+ financing for results, outside the ambit of the UNFCCC (as other international partners have already done), or both.

4.4 How did the programme address gender issues?

The participation of women was visible in most parts of the programme at national and sub-national levels. There was good gender balance among participants in the STWGs and FPIC activities for example. At local levels, women’s involvement appears to have been limited to receiving awareness / FPIC messages, but did not extend as much to technical training for example. More importantly, there was no discrete gender mainstreaming strategy or policy guiding programme activities at either level. There were no programme specific guidelines to help orient the planning and implementation of technical training undertaken at different levels.

Feedback received on this issue at the national level suggested the programme, working at any level, can only go as far as Vietnamese partners are willing and able to go. Feedback (from men) at the village level, for example, explained that local women could not participate in forest patrols near their communities because these typically involved arduous climbing in the forested hills and overnight camping. The evaluation team deliberately avoided entering into more detailed discussions of these issues at sub-national levels because our work in Lam Dong coincided with that of another UN-REDD consultant team tasked with assessing the handling of gender issues during Phase 1 and devising recommendations to guide the formulation of an explicit gender strategy for Phase 2.

4.5 Distribution of benefits and costs between stakeholders?

Local versus global: It is not clear who actually benefited the most from the high profile FPIC activities carried out early in the programme. It looks quite possible however that Viet Nam's 'FPIC experience' had more currency on the global stage – as a 'bold and innovative new approach of UN-REDD in VN' than it did in Ha Noi government circles or at sub-national levels in Lam Dong. Nothing has actually been consented to in the pilot districts while the FPIC (and BDS) work may have created problems of exaggerated, unrealistic local expectations about tangible short term benefits at the community level. Activities like FPIC appear to have been done more because they met the requirements of the UN partners rather than because they constituted timely responses to clearly defined, expressed or understood local needs.

People at sub-national levels might have expected more demand-driven approaches, more carefully tailored to their particular situation. But the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam was explicitly experimental and Lam Dong an important guinea pig in that experiment. UN-REDD's implementers could have tried to seek some kind of compromise, to find ways for Lam Dong to get more out of it the exercise in the short to medium term⁴⁵. But the programme was looking principally to develop methods that would be suitable for (the dubious approach of) 'replication' (as opposed to 'adaptation') in other places. Implementers did not acknowledge the imperative to seek compromise with local needs.

National versus global: There is a perception among some GoV actors at the national level that the three UNs may see UN-REDD as a convenient way to ensure cash flow through their organisations without having to substantially alter their *modus operandi*.⁴⁶ This perception seems likely to persist in Phase 2. Few national partners understand the difficulties involved in changing the operating procedures of individual UN organisations.

Programme activities on FPIC and related BDS work may have created problems as well as prospective solutions for national government still trying to resolve question of how to manage any future financial benefits to be derived from REDD+ activities. For example, Ha Noi may opt for a less direct system of payment for local level contributions to carbon sequestration. If they do, then they will probably find it more challenging than it would have been otherwise (i.e., without the programme's FPIC and BDS activities) to engage the support of local populations with inflated expectations of direct, immediate benefits to individuals or their communities. On the other hand, FPIC activities reached out to only a few thousand villagers in two districts in Lam Dong province. Among these local stakeholders (of whom the evaluation team met only a small sample) expectations did *not* appear have been as high as concerns expressed in Ha Noi might have suggested. In any case, this is a risk that the programme ought to have recognised and managed more carefully.

⁴⁵For example, concurrent with the UN-REDD programme's pilot activities in Lam Dong, VNFOREST, explored participatory approaches to monitoring forest biomass carbon as part of a broader 'participatory forest monitoring (PFM) model under the project 'Exploring mechanisms to promote High-Biodiversity REDD+: Piloting in Viet Nam'. Over a five-month process, the project supported Lam Dong DARD to develop a proposal to pilot PFM, culminating in PPC endorsement to test the PFM model as a means to strengthen *existing* PFES monitoring approaches. The PFES-financed provincial Forest Protection & Development Fund has committed co-financing for this pilot, which will continue with project support, but provincial government ownership, into 2016.

⁴⁶One senior government official commented for example that: "(UN organisation) would have people losing jobs if they didn't keep their ponderous processes"

Local versus local: The UN-REDD programme does not appear to have promoted the interests of other PFES activities. Nor does it appear - as some interlocutors suggested - to have had the effect of eclipsing such other activities as result of depicting “REDD as a magic wand”, a panacea with the power to make deforestation and forest degradation vanish. But the programme could and should have provided more support to ongoing PFES activities and not doing this was a significant shortcoming. Had they worked less in isolation for example, UN-REDD would have had opportunities to identify ways in which Lam Dong’s PFES system could be made more performance based.⁴⁷ The separation of UN-REDD and PFES was apparently at least in part a choice by the GoV, which selected pilot districts for UN-REDD away from those where other PFES activities were operating.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

Table 5 - Ratings for sustainability

	Programme performance rating
Financial sustainability	ML - moderately likely
Institutional sustainability	ML - moderately likely
Socio-political sustainability	ML - moderately likely
Catalytic replication potential	ML - moderately likely
 OVERALL	 ML - moderately likely

None of the programme’s outputs, including contributions to crucial GoV institutional outputs (NRAP, RSC, VRO, NRN, and STWGs), are sustainable without further external investments to the REDD+ readiness phase. Such investments are in place⁴⁸ and others continue to be secured, UN-REDD Phase 2, for example. All⁴⁹ the institutional elements mentioned above have remained functional beyond the lifetime of the UN-REDD programme with the support of other initiatives. Vague formulation of programme logic has ensured programme’s success in contributing to the three outcomes: institutional and technical capacity for national coordination (Outcome 1); capacity to manage REDD at provincial and district levels (Outcome2); and knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions (Outcome 3) have all *improved* to varying degrees (see Section 4.2) – but not enough to sustain the REDD+ readiness process in Viet Nam without additional financial and technical assistance, which is now being provided by a diversifying community of (international) development partners. Significant further REDD+ readiness investment is required for nascent outcomes to achieve critical mass and the necessary ‘intermediary states’ to achieve long-term sustained impact. Additional

⁴⁷It now works essentially as a tax on ‘buyers’ of forest protection.

⁴⁸ VNFOREST reported to the evaluation team that at the close of 2012, Viet Nam had 14 REDD+ readiness projects

⁴⁹ With the possible exceptions of the NRN and STWGs on BDS, MRV, private sector engagement, which have not me since UN-REDD Phase 1 close out.

REDD+ readiness investments are identified as an essential ‘impact driver’ in our ‘review of outcomes to impacts’ (or ROtI, see Annex E, Section 3.2.1).

This situation was recognised and acknowledged by all programme proponents early on in the programme’s inception, as evidenced by programme proponents investing significant efforts in a substantive second phase from 2010 onwards. Indeed, national GoV stakeholders have perceived the programme to be a pilot initiative or prolonged inception phase, with high expectations of a second phase that would deliver sustained impact.

It is important to note that, from a (national to local) GoV perspective, Viet Nam has demonstrated, and will continue to demonstrate, strong political commitment to the forest protection and climate change mitigation objectives of REDD+, irrespective of the effectiveness of REDD+ introduction and readiness in the country. Forest protection and development efforts of the State, building on a two-decade commitment towards SFM⁵⁰ that has already reversed net deforestation, will be sustained, with or without REDD+. The national FPDP has established the 47% target for forest cover by 2020; the national Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector sets a 20% GHG emissions reduction target. Both plans identify REDD+ as one of a number of potential international collaboration programmes that could contribute to delivering these targets, but neither plan suggests that achieving these targets will be dependent upon an ‘effective REDD regime in Viet Nam’. In Lam Dong province, participatory forest protection practices and improved forest management efforts will continue under existing GoV schemes, notably PFES. From a circumspect GoV perspective, REDD+ is one potential mechanism that could attract additional investments towards the strategic goals of the forestry sector, but has yet to convince policy makers that that potential could be cost-effectively realised in the near-future.

5.1 Financial sustainability

Intensive awareness raising efforts and strong branding of the UN-REDD Viet Nam programme have imparted a notion in the minds of many national stakeholders that REDD+ could be a ‘game changer’ in the Vietnamese forestry sector – attracting sufficient financial and concomitant political capital to incentivise a departure from unsustainable business as usual. Yet there is no empirical evidence to support this. Now, with endorsement of the NRAP, there is strong domestic political pressure to contract the readiness process, hasten progress towards results-based payments and see REDD+ deliver on its hype and promise.

Until long-term financing is agreed in international negotiations, GoV cannot be expected to make the significant public sector investments in REDD+ needed to sustain the outcomes of this initial readiness programme. There is, however, sufficient donor interest to sustain further readiness efforts, including a proposed second phase of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam, which has the potential to build on the programme’s initial results and strengthen the prospects of sustained outcomes in the anticipation of near-term financing for emission reduction

⁵⁰ From ‘re-greening the bare hills (Programme 327), to the 5 million hectare reforestation target (Programme 6610, and most recently nationwide PFES policy (Decree 99).

performance⁵¹. Rapidly capacitated and motivated by the programme, the VRO is now serving as a focal point to attract additional financial and technical assistance and is already co-ordinating 14 REDD+ ODA projects that contribute to and maintaining momentum of the readiness process to at least 2016.

5.2 Institutional sustainability

The National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP), REDD+ Steering Committee (RSC), Viet Nam REDD+ Office (VRO), National REDD+ Network (NRN) and sub-technical working groups (STWGs), are crucial programme-assisted legacies that establish a sound REDD+ readiness foundation for others to build upon. Yet limitations in national-level human resources present significant risks to the institutional sustainability of Viet Nam's REDD+ readiness efforts. Capacity development efforts by the programme were invested in only an extremely limited number of VNFOREST-DoSTIC staff who are too few in number to ensure self-sustained REDD+ readiness efforts. Reappointments within national (and, for that matter, Lam Dong provincial) government could greatly jeopardise Viet Nam's REDD+ capacities and institutional sustainability. It would not be exaggerating to say that sustained readiness efforts in Viet Nam are highly dependent upon one individual –the Director of the VRO - and that the degree of political ownership upstream of the VRO remains ambivalent. Our ROTI (Annex E – Section 3.2.1) identified the need for expanded institutional capacities across relevant national GoV agencies, and down through the hierarchical administrative structure to achieve impact under an 'effective REDD regime'.

There was probably little the UN agencies could have done to influence MARD-VNFOREST allocation of human resources to REDD+ readiness, and it should be noted that the quantity and quality of civil servants assigned to the programme are not atypical for forestry sector ODA interventions in Viet Nam. The programme mitigated this risk to some degree during implementation by financing the secondment of three short-term technical officers to VRO. But these contracts have been discontinued upon programme closeout and neither VNFOREST nor other REDD+ readiness projects have been in a position to maintain these positions⁵².

The technical outputs of any ODA programme in Viet Nam that have not been formally endorsed by the GoV⁵³ have limited institutional sustainability. To date, none of the programme's technical outputs - ecological stratification (UN-REDD & RCFEE 2011); BDS research (UN-REDD 2010a); MRV framework (UN-REDD 2011c)⁵⁴; forest cover change maps; opportunity cost assessment methodology (UN-REDD 2011a); PCM manuals (UN-REDD 2011d) - have

⁵¹The draft UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase 2 Programme document '*assumes a subsequent, or partly concurrent, Results-based Component, which will be initiated based on certain [undefined] triggers to be determined by the Government of Norway and GoV*'. VRO is also currently in dialogue with the FCPF in developing an ER-PIN (Emission Reductions Program Idea Note) for a June 2013 submission, with a view to developing a subsequent Emission Reductions Program, with results-based compensation for emission reductions under the facility's Carbon Fund.

⁵² Despite the individual's concerned having stayed on in a voluntary capacity for some weeks in the hope of follow-on financing for these positions.

⁵³ As evidenced by numbered and red-stamped decision issued by a relevant government authority

⁵⁴ Programme reporting states that the MRV framework document has been 'endorsed' by the VRO; but this office does not have authority to formally endorse ('red stamp') national forestry sector ordinance.

been formally endorsed by national or provincial government (although some elements of these technical documents are reflected in the NRAP). All require further political process to see their technical contents embedded in national policy or regulatory frameworks. Although the technical details of models and systems explored by the programme have yet to be fully endorsed by government institutions, they have already - to a limited degree - influenced national programming and sub-national planning for REDD+. Both the endorsed NRAP and draft Lam Dong FPDP⁵⁵, indicate potential for sustained public sector investments in REDD+; but both indicate reliance on further ODA financing to continue developing and testing REDD+ in the coming planning period to 2015. Further financial and technical assistance is required to elaborate the operational content of the NRAP. REDD+ will need to be integrated into broader land use planning at the provincial level for it to address key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation emanating from non-forestry land uses.

One particular opportunity for greater institutional sustainability not fully explored by the programme was the concurrent MARD-led piloting of new approaches to implementing the National Forest Inventory (NFI). The expected target at programme design stage was that by June 2012, the NFI approach to forest owner-level carbon assessment would be made compatible with REDD+ assessment, and that this would be achieved in conjunction with the FAO-VNFOREST National Forest Assessment (NFA) project. The final UN-REDD Viet Nam programme report (UN-REDD 2012d) declared that GoV requests for assistance in piloting the new local-level NFI methodologies from the Government had been cancelled, as a relevant proposal could not be submitted to the UN-REDD programme in time. Nevertheless, piloting of the NFI proceeded in parallel with, and largely in isolation from, the UN-REDD programme GoV-mandated and -financed NFI reform piloting tested methodologies and explored how and to what extent local stakeholders could be involved in the forest monitoring activities to inform the fifth cycle of the inventory.

Ultimately, sustained effective REDD+ implementation will require clarification of a complex forestland tenure situation in Viet Nam, through an improved and comprehensive forestland allocation (FLA) processes, an issue which UN-REDD has not addressed, and was not designed to address, in its first phase. Distribution of REDD+ benefits will, directly or indirectly, be dependent upon forestland 'ownership' (as defined under the 2004 Forest Protection & Development Law).

Within the 20-36 month timeframe of the programme, deep-rooted and politically sensitive governance issues, such as forestland tenure, could only have been identified as a PaM in need of further attention under a national REDD+ programme supported by additional ODA technical assistance. The national REDD+ program background document (Nguyen Hang *et al.* 2011) does just this. It recalls the Cancun Agreements whereby '*Parties are requested, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, land tenure issues*' and goes on to acknowledge forestland tenure clarity as an essential enabling condition for REDD+ (or, conversely, an investment risk if tenure remains unclear). The background document also identifies, but does not elaborate on, fast-track land tenure reform and CFM as possible PaMs under Viet Nam's national REDD+ programme.

⁵⁵Both eligible for public sector budget allocation under the recently-endorsed (2012) national FPDP

The programme's BDS research (UN-REDD 2010a) and subsequent experimentation with bottom-up decision making for REDD+ BDS design (Sikor *et al.* 2012), did explore forestland tenure issues in Viet Nam in terms of forest carbon 'ownership' as a basis for distribution of REDD+ benefits. The initial output of the programme concluded in 2010, that '*Viet Nam's current distribution of forestland tenure does not currently provide the required basis for an effective, efficient and equitable distribution of REDD+ benefits*'. Indeed, the BDS research conducted by the programme could be viewed as a treatise on the forest governance issues that underpin or undermine REDD+, as the case may be, but one that was distorted by misplaced and mistimed anticipation of substantive revenues from REDD+ in the immediate future.

Fundamental tenure issues underlying the institutional sustainability of REDD+ in Viet Nam should have been a focus of the essential analytical foundation bypassed by the programme in its enthusiasm to design and install novel REDD+-specific systems for Viet Nam (see sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4). Forestland tenure assessments, anticipated under the FCPF readiness project⁵⁶, have not yet come to pass; although the FCPF project has now been approved in both Washington DC and Hanoi. Such assessments should inform the tenure reform interventions now proposed for the second phase of the UN-REDD programme in Viet Nam (*Output 2.5: Improved land tenure arrangements ensured in six pilot provinces – UN-REDD 2012c*).

5.3 Socio-political sustainability

The Prime Minister's approval of the NRAP, to which the programme together other REDD+ readiness interventions, contributed (albeit more indirectly than directly) can be cited as evidence of some degree of political commitment towards REDD+. An endorsed NRAP, together with programme-supported general raised awareness of the REDD+ concept in Viet Nam, has percolated into national government and partially informed policy making. For example, the MARD Action Plan on Climate Change, together with national Climate Change and Green Growth strategies, all acknowledge the role of forests in climate change mitigation.

Although the programme has enjoyed higher than average GoV ownership for a forestry sector ODA project, accruing significant political capital for REDD+ at the technical departmental (DoSTIC-VRO) level, the programme cannot yet claim political sustainability of REDD+ in Viet Nam. Crucial political backing from the Vice Minister level, and above, required to trigger a hierarchical cascade of action within MARD, remains elusive. It appears, that well-informed MARD leaders are yet to be wholly convinced of the 'business case' for REDD+ in Viet Nam, or even fully comprehend the REDD+ mechanism at a conceptual level. It is acknowledged, by Norwegian investors at least, that REDD+ in general, has yet to mature in domestic political importance to the extent needed to be able to compete with other priorities vying for leaders' attentions. Beyond MARD, forests' mitigation role may have been recognised in national Climate Change and Green Growth strategies, yet other, MoNRE-led, dialogues on national GHG inventory and nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) have yet to acknowledge the contributions REDD+ could make.

⁵⁶ '*Assessing the current land allocation process and recommendations to improve the current system to benefit local communities*', and '*examining carbon ownership in the context of REDD+ in Viet Nam*' (MARD, 2011).

The programme focused on pursuit of technical and hypothetical systems development, together with grassroots-level communications campaigns, at the neglect of essential national political processes needed to secure sustained change in the way the forestry, and other productive land-based sectors, do business (see Annex E – Section 3.2.1 ROTI identification of impact drivers and assumptions) .

At the sub-national level, as a consequence of an initial focus on BDS and broad engagement of communities, through awareness raising and FPIC activities, expectations of REDD+ delivering substantial long-term payments for forest protection and development activities, have been raised among local stakeholders. This has resulted in some degree of impatience to see compensation through REDD+ for forest protection results on the ground; but as Lam Dong continues to operate PFES, most local stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation expressed ambivalence towards the prospects of REDD+ implementation. From their perspective, if it happens, there will be more resources to sign more household forest protection contracts and expand the scope of current PFES operations.

The programme achieved some success in raising awareness of local villagers to Viet Nam's vulnerability to climate change and role of forests in mitigating that change. But farmers were unequivocal in their interview responses during this evaluation, that benefits, not raised awareness, determine their behaviours and commitment to sustained improvement in forest protection.

One of the factors that may influence the sustainability of initial REDD+ piloting efforts in Lam Dong province is the recent historical success of domestic PFES. Under this scheme household forest protection contracts have been signed with State forest owners (SFCs, national parks) and farmers paid cash per hectare per year. Local stakeholders understandably compare REDD+, as it has been introduced to them by the programme, with the existing PFES scheme. Sub-national stakeholders, from provincial government to local farmers, perceive and expect REDD+ to be implemented as an extension of PFES, which has been pioneered in the province over the past four years. The programme, in selecting Lam Dong as a pilot and focusing sub-national activities on awareness-raising activities, has reinforced the local-level perception that REDD+ is equivalent to 'PFES plus carbon'. Exploration of how on-the-ground REDD+ operations could be integrated into and improve the existing PFES scheme, however, was limited to discussions around BDS, and remains incoherent and unconvincing to local stakeholders experienced in implementing PFES for water regulation and soil conservation services.

Comparison by local stakeholders of REDD+ to PFES is inevitable, yet this risk appears to have been overlooked during programme design and implementation. Unlike the REDD+ mechanism, which is still evolving and dependent upon international negotiations with no long-term financing secured, PFES is mandated by GoV and PFES 'buyers' are required to pay following national policy (Decree 99). Local governments understand that REDD+ is technically and politically more challenging than PFES, with concomitant higher transaction costs and the possibility that it might not be able to offer comparable direct payments issued under existing PFES scheme. Opportunity costs (coffee, tea, timber production) are also cited by provincial government as being prohibitively high – too high for REDD+ to compete with these other land uses.

National stakeholders engaged during this evaluation expressed concerns that local stakeholders, particularly farmers, had already developed a healthy distrust of REDD+. The limited sample of evaluation interviews conducted at the local level (Annex D) did not corroborate this concern, and no signs of significant disenchantment or resentment among local stakeholders could be detected during two brief village visits. The programme's Lesson's Learned report acknowledges this risk under FPIC⁵⁷ and BDS⁵⁸ activities (UN-REDD 2012b), but its potential severity and magnitude do not emerge clearly from the 57 'lessons' documented. Although proponents anticipate imminent 'participation payments' in its second phase of operations⁵⁹, a significant risk of a backlash against REDD+ remains in Lam Dong, two years after initial FPIC piloting and bottom-up BDS design approaches raised expectations of cash payments.

5.4 Environmental sustainability

As identified during the theory of change analysis' (Annex E – Section 1), explicit impacts intended by the programme were not articulated in the original JPD. The 'co-benefits' of REDD+ - such as biodiversity conservation, maintained/enhanced ecosystem service provision, and positive climate change adaptation impacts – were not incorporated into the programme's logic as specific outputs. The JPD does discuss '*social impacts and potential additional benefits*', alluding to poverty reduction potential as well as indicating a possible role for ethnic minority communities in REDD. But the programme document does not commit to any explicit statement of how the programme will achieve environmental sustainability or impact, beyond acknowledging contribution to Outcome 3 of the One Plan for UN in the target country: '*Viet Nam has adequate policies and capacities for environmental protection and the rational management of natural resources and cultural heritage for poverty reduction, economic growth, and improving the quality of life*'.

Environmental or social co- or multiple benefits of REDD+ that have been identified in and elaborated since the UNFCCC Bali Roadmap (2007) - safeguarded in the Cancun Agreements - are not explicitly identified as programme outcomes or impacts to be delivered, nor as conditions or assumptions to be met in achieving objective and goal. During the Viet Nam programme's lifetime, the UN-REDD global programme, under UNEP's lead, has developed normative knowledge and best practice guidance products on multiple benefits of REDD+ and provided technical assistance to a number of other UN-REDD country programmes. Inflexible intervention logic (Section 2), limited UNEP budget allocation, and a lack of in-country presence of this delivery partner, are all probable reasons why the programme did not adapt and make greater use of these global UN-REDD products and services. As with other outputs, the programme could have considered, and proactively pursued, more strategic partnerships with other readiness interventions⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Lesson 1.6 - *FPIC is applicable when there is something to negotiate, and not before*

⁵⁸ Lesson 2.3 - *Discussion of financial benefits and payments may cause misconceptions at local level, and unintended negative outcomes*

⁵⁹ See footnote 27 – the promise of near-term results-based financing for REDD+ remains assumed and anticipated, but not yet secured.

⁶⁰ For example, the VNFOREST-implemented project '*Exploring mechanisms to promote High-Biodiversity REDD+: Piloting in Viet Nam*', which collaborates with the *global*, but not the national UN-REDD programme in assisting Viet Nam with exploring broader environmental and social benefits of REDD+ beyond climate change mitigation.

This inattention to environmental sustainability, like a number of shortcomings of the programme, has been addressed in the design of the second phase, rather than attempt modification to the first phase. The draft programme document for Phase 2 presents a more comprehensive and systematic (and better resourced) treatment of environmental sustainability and multiple benefits of REDD+. One of six outcomes in the second phase is dedicated to establishing ‘*mechanisms to address the social and environmental safeguards under the Cancun Agreement*’, in addition to an outcome on operationalizing ‘*National REDD+ Information System on Safeguards*’ (UN-REDD 2012c). Yet this draft proposal does not explicitly acknowledge the need for risk mitigation to ensure REDD+ will be environmentally sustainable by ensuring the functionality of forest ecosystems.

5.5 Catalytic replication potential

REDD+ requires a cross-sectoral response from national governments to address diverse, multi-sectoral drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (see Annex E – Section 3.2 on ROI identification of impact drivers and assumptions). The political dialogue on climate change in Viet Nam and in-country capacities both need to be developed further before climate change mitigation can be mainstreamed into national sectoral policies and sub-national operational plans (although the recently approved Green Growth Strategy marks a significant milestone in this direction). REDD+, as one specific mitigation mechanism, also needs to be further defined at the international level before it can be considered politically viable to be mainstreamed into sectors other than forestry. The political risks surrounding REDD+ need to be significantly reduced before any national government might consider dedicating public spending on the necessary cross-sectoral mainstreaming necessary to achieve sustained impact.

For these reasons, the GoV is not in a position to sustain or replicate initiatives instigated by the programme. Prospects for replication will be achieved if and when payments for REDD+ demonstration activities can establish success. Such demonstration pilots will require substantial additional financial and technical assistance to achieve that success, as clearly acknowledged by the programme’s two-year development of a multi-province second phase. The costs of all programme activities at the sub national level during Phase 1 were too high to be replicated directly by government agencies in other provinces, and greater attention will need to be paid in the second phase to the cost-effectiveness of pilot interventions.

The sustainability of the programme’s results is threatened as well by weak capacity for intra-governmental co-ordination within the GoV. This capacity will be needed to achieve the required cross-sectoral integration and mainstreaming of REDD+ into non-forestry sectors that act as major drivers of deforestation and degradation (e.g. commercial perennial cash crop and aquaculture expansion, and infrastructure development.). Engaging other line ministries proved to be a challenge to the Phase 1 programme, and will continue to be in any second phase. Some progress was made in increasing broader GoV participation throughout the programme’s implementation but relatively passive efforts (e.g. invitations to meetings) were employed to engage other ministries. More proactive and strategic approaches, identifying possible political incentives for non-MARD agencies to engage in what is essentially a MARD project, were not fully explored.

FINAL EVALUATION of UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme

The GoV, like many governments, is characterised by strong horizontal and vertical compartmentalisation ('siloes'), and MARD and VNFOREST are no exception. Despite UN agencies efforts to encourage MARD-VNFOREST, GoV partners were too conservative in attempts to bring the key public and private stakeholders to the 'REDD+ table'. Throughout implementation the programme has remained largely a donor- and UN-driven vehicle to introduce the REDD+ mechanism to Viet Nam. The GoV, beyond the immediate technical partner of DoSTIC-VRO, has not led the initiative.

Within the forestry sector and VNFOREST, the programme's operations remained confined largely to DoSTIC. Other departments perceive the UN-REDD programme as 'just another ODA project', for which they have limited responsibility or incentive to engage in a substantive manner. VNFOREST departments were consulted in activities, but did not engage to the full extent of their mandates, during programme implementation. The national Forest Protection Department (FPD), for example, plays two highly relevant roles in terms of REDD+: 1) co-ordinating forest land allocation as the basis for clarifying forestland tenure; and 2) monitoring of forest cover change. Yet engagement with FPD was largely limited to the Director's participation in governance initiatives instigated by the programme, such as STWG on governance and participatory governance assessment (or PGA, in UN-REDD undated b).

The parallel FLEGT VPA process managed to engage a broader range of line ministry stakeholders - Ministry of Industry & Trade; Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance – with significantly less resources than the REDD+ readiness process enjoys. The UN-REDD programme could, and should, have done more to engage other line ministries in the REDD+ readiness process, as those facilitating the FLEGT VPA process have.

It should be noted, however, that the degree of inter-sectoral collaboration required by REDD+ is not consistent with any given line ministry's capacity, institutional culture or authority. Although the programme's own steering committee permitted some limited degree of inter-ministerial dialogue, the kind of politically motivated supra-ministerial structures, such as the RSC, essential to mainstream REDD+ into other sectors, were not feasible within the three-year timeframe available to the programme. Doubt has been expressed by implementing UN agencies over the appropriateness of the participants in the programme's steering committee: the right ministries were engaged but were the right individuals assigned to represent these ministries? Expectations of substantive private, and broader public, sector engagement were largely been deferred to the programme's proposed second phase, once it was clear that this was coming.

Civil society partners initially criticised the perceived exclusive implementation of the programme by the three UN agencies. Improvement in CSO engagement and relationships was observed over the programme's implementation, and increased CSO involvement is built into the design of the programme's second phase. Yet, the programme faced significant risk in not engaging, until very late in implementation and even then, only superficially, with private sector stakeholders implicated in major drivers of deforestation and degradation (e.g. coffee, rubber and shrimp sectors).

A more diverse collection of stakeholders was engaged sub national level. Nevertheless, some key local stakeholders, notably forest owners (particularly State forest management boards)

remained relatively neglected during programme implementation, with a disproportionate emphasis on working with local farmers.

6. IMPACTS

Table 6 - Ratings of impacts

	Programme performance rating
REDD+ readiness	S - Significant
Governance systems	S – Significant
Stakeholder capacity & behaviour	M - Minimal
Social & environmental impacts	N - Negligible
UN-REDD strategic objectives	S – Significant
OVERALL	M – Minimal

6.1 Viet Nam’s REDD+ readiness

Viet Nam is not REDD+ ready. The programmes’ goal has yet to be achieved. Some systems essential to NRAP implementation, such as BDS and MRV, have been explored by the programme, and discussions on these topics have been stimulated through programme-instigated multi-stakeholder processes. But the key pieces of REDD+ architecture are not yet in place and Viet Nam is not yet in a position to demonstrate GHG emission reductions/enhanced removals from forests and land use change. Several more years of piloting and capacity building will be required to achieve REDD+ readiness. Key stakeholders, at national and sub-national level in the pilot province of Lam Dong, do not yet have the necessary capacity to implement an ‘effective REDD+ regime’. National GoV counterparts, however, are now up to speed on REDD+ concepts and issues as a consequence of the programme.

Sub-national GoV officers, familiar with the challenges of translating national policy into tangible on-the-ground practice, perceive that REDD+ alone cannot achieve significant impacts on reducing deforestation and forest degradation. REDD+ is not a ‘magic wand’, but one new approach, among others, that needs to be integrated into the existing body of forest protection and development measures implemented by the GoV.

The rapid desk-based ROtI (Annex E), conducted as a preliminary step in this evaluation, concludes that the outcomes delivered by the programme were designed to feed into a continuing process and that conditions necessary to achieve ‘intermediary states’ of REDD+-ready national and sub national capacities, are not yet met. The ROtI identifies additional readiness investments as a priority among a number of ‘impact drivers’ and assumptions necessary to achieve GHG emission reduction/enhanced removals impacts from REDD+ in Viet Nam.

What the programme *has* achieved in its first phase of operations, is the rapid introduction of the novel and complex REDD+ concept to a range of stakeholders from GoV leaders to local people in the pilot province. In doing so, the programme, has established a partial foundation of institutional structures, capacity and experience in developing *some* key elements (‘building blocks’) of national REDD+ architecture for future investments to build upon. All programme partners acknowledged during Phase I’s inception phase that the original goal and ambition of the programme greatly exceeded the relatively modest resources secured and that there was clearly a need to continue readiness efforts into a substantially larger second phase. As a quick-start intervention, the programme has been successful in rapidly instigating and progressing along a phased process of REDD+ readiness. By definition, a quick-start programme’s purpose is to start something bigger, and expectations of a second phase were present from the outset.

The key readiness outputs to which the programme contributed have confirmed MARD’s and VNFOREST’s commitment to REDD+ and *potential* for future sustained impact include the: RSC; NRAP; VRO; NRN; and STWGs. VNFOREST is committed to NRAP implementation and, to this end, is proactively pursuing additional readiness investments, above and beyond a second phase of the UN-REDD programme. VRO is also exploring possibilities for near-term options for financing for results-based action and has embarked upon initial steps to prepare an FCPF Emissions Reduction Programme Ideas Note (ER-PIN). Viet Nam has strong prospects to access FCPF Carbon Fund financing, based on its readiness track record to which the UN-REDD programme, together with other initiatives, made significant contributions.

6.2 Governance systems

The national-level institutional structures assisted by the programme comprise an adequate basis for further REDD+ readiness developments. National-level multi-stakeholder platforms - RSC, NRN, STWGs - have strong MARD-VNFOREST (but not yet wider GoV) ownership, despite chronic human resource constraints. These structures alone, however, cannot affect change without significantly greater attention to and investments in:

- systematic analytical foundation of policy and systems design options;
- operational systems linking stakeholder functions together;
- stakeholder capacities to operate installed/modified systems; and
- the political basis to ensure uptake of operational systems and institutional capacities.

Despite the programme’s support to national institutional structures, progress towards these other generic elements was inadequate to achieve lasting impact without significant further investments. A particular short-coming of the programme, across these elements, was inattention to engaging on-going interventions (e.g. CFM, SFC reform, integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP), FLEGT, etc.), and drawing on existing capacities, to inform identification and elaboration of REDD+ PaMs.

The programme has, nonetheless, achieved other important, somewhat less tangible, governance outcomes. Significant momentum was imparted to Viet Nam’s REDD+ readiness processes through the establishment of multi-stakeholder consultation forums to guide readiness efforts. As such, the programme contributed to a general shift from paternalistic donor-beneficiary relationship towards one of more equal implementation partners committed to addressing the global challenge of anthropogenic climate change. Together with other international forestry

sector initiatives (other REDD+ readiness interventions and the FLEGT VPA process), the programme contributed significantly (although it could have contributed more, given the resources at hand⁶¹) to facilitating unprecedented levels of civil society engagement in national forestry policy dialogue. The programme-assisted REDD+ readiness process has, to some degree, changed GoV mindsets about how to engage non-state actors (NSA), particularly CSOs, and to a lesser degree, local people. In a complex, multi-faceted and evolving (and, therefore, relatively high-risk) arena such as REDD+, international and national CSOs have proved to be invaluable partners to national GoV, at least at the technical, if not yet the policy making level.

In addition to the way in which the REDD+ readiness process has, through the programme's support, engendered more pluralistic policy dialogues in the forestry sector, REDD+ in Viet Nam has also served as a platform for discussing and raising awareness on a number of important forestry policy issues, such as corruption, illegal logging, and sustainable financing of the sector. The programme has, indirectly and relatively cost-effectively (compared to annual public expenditure), contributed to greater momentum in the forest governance reform agenda in Viet Nam. Through the REDD+ readiness process, the profile of the forestry sector in general has been raised on the domestic political agenda at higher levels of government, and the role of forests in climate change mitigation is recognised by GoV, as reflected in recently adopted national Climate Change and Green Growth strategies. The programme has also opened minds within and outside government about the additional potential benefits of REDD+, beyond climate change mitigation.

6.3 Stakeholder behaviour and capacity

At the international level, the programme has conferred a high profile to programme proponents in pioneering various elements of REDD+ readiness (e.g. BDS, FPIC and MRV piloting). Through the programme's implementation, Viet Nam has provided significant experiences to the international dialogue on REDD+ and, in return, has been rewarded with an elevated sense of achievement and pride, which has served to reinforce GoV (at least MARD-VNFOREST-DoSTIC) ownership and commitment to REDD+. Viet Nam's pioneering working on aspects such as FPIC has put these politically sensitive governance issues 'on the map', opened up the international dialogue and inspired other countries to follow Viet Nam's lead. The programme has also put Lam Dong on the national and international climate change and forestry map; for example, a Kirgizstani delegation has visited Lam Dong to learn of REDD+ piloting experience in the province, and the 2011 meetings of global UN-REDD and FCPF governing bodies were convened in Da Lat.

Despite successful profiling on the international climate change stage, understanding of the REDD+ concept at the national level was only developed among a very limited number of individuals within one technical department (DoSTIC) of MARD-VNFOREST (and, to a lesser

⁶¹GoV cost norms for policy reform processes (c. USD 2,500 per national ordinance) are insufficient to cover substantive NSA consultations; additional resources from interested development partners are essential for NSA engagement. The parallel FLEGT VPA negotiations have also achieved significant NSA engagement in the absence of a technical assistance programme, such as UN-REDD, devoted to facilitating collaboration between GoV and other stakeholders.

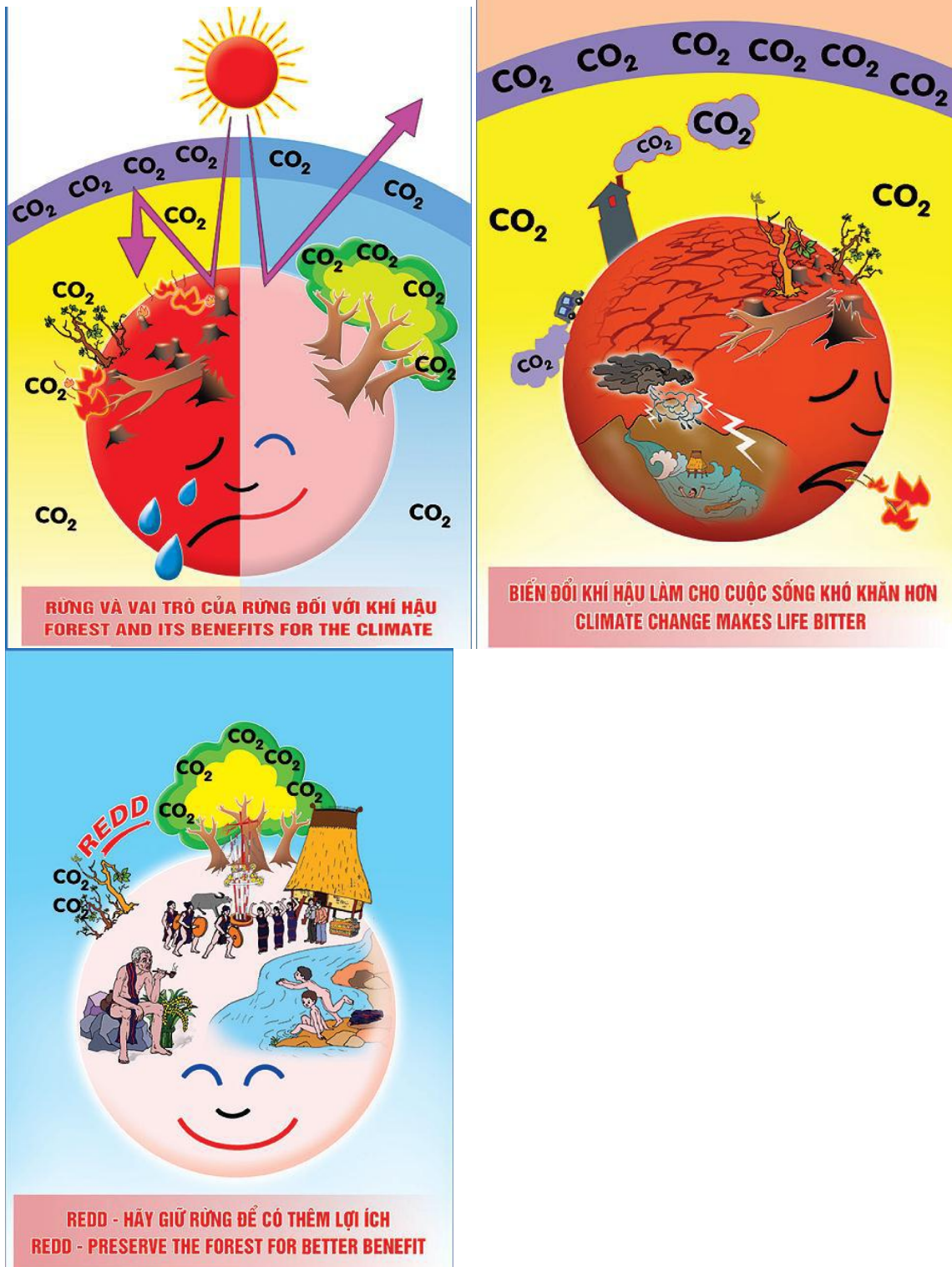
extent, the Lam Dong provincial DARD). MARD leaders are aware of, and anticipate, the prospect of future REDD+ financing as a serious possibility, but the programme failed to fully convince policy makers of the necessity of REDD+. One factor, ironically undermining the political viability of REDD+ is the relatively successful and lucrative⁶² PFES mechanism. The fundamental difference, noted by MARD leaders, between the proposed REDD+ mechanism and the existing PFES one, is that PFES has identified ‘buyers’, which are, to some degree, under the control and influence of GoV. Can REDD+ offer greater benefits than PFES, for the significantly higher costs (including the substantial transaction costs of the ‘readiness’ phase)?

As discussed earlier, the programme’s achievements have been more in the realm of technical capacities to *understand*, and less so in terms of capacity to *do*, REDD+. One crucial area where this understanding has been developed is among national forestry research institutions. As a consequence of engaging in project MRV-related activities, these organisations are more aware of the growing need for significantly improved quality of data on forest resources and trends in order to meet demands of international financing mechanisms such as REDD+ and FLEGT. Despite this, collaboration on data sharing among GoV agencies in the forestry sector remains a political impediment for such performance-related initiatives. Through PCM piloting in one commune, the programme did transfer some technical knowledge to district-level officers (FPD rangers; SFC staff) on forest mensuration and basic spatial data applications (using GPS receivers, GIS software and maps), but the durability of this capacity could not be ascertained by this evaluation.

At the sub-national level, the programme’s FPIC and other communications activities appear to have changed local people’s attitudes and priorities: the prospect of REDD+ suggests conversion of forests might not be the best livelihood option for this and future generations. Previously, farmers perceived forest conversion to cash-generating agriculture as the best land use option. Local villagers’ awareness has been raised by the programme about Viet Nam’s vulnerability to climate change, its potential negative impacts and the need to reduce global GHG. The programme’s awareness-raising activities imparted an understanding among communities in pilot districts that their improved forest protection and development activities could have both local and global benefits (see Figure 2). Although, farmers exposed to the programme’s communications campaign now have a rudimentary understanding of how forests regulate atmospheric composition (CO₂ absorbed; O₂ released), local stakeholders consulted by this evaluation were unanimous in identifying the need for farmers to accrue (in-coin and in-kind) benefits from REDD+ before they will consider a change in behaviours. It was also noted by stakeholders in Lam Dong, that with or without REDD+, locals will continue existing forest protection efforts, incentivised by PFES payments and disincentivised to log by concomitant stricter law enforcement.

⁶²c. USD > 38 million generated in 2012 (Nguyen Huu Dung, pers. comm., 2012)

Figure 1 - Awareness raising materials employed by the programme to communicate climate change, forest and REDD linkages



Source: UN-REDD (undated a)

6.4 Social and environmental improvements

The potential for both positive social impacts inherent in the governance-orientated work on BDS and FPIC could be realised with further readiness investments through, for example, a second phase of the programme. As highlighted by the theory of change analysis (Annex E – Section 1) and discussion on environmental sustainability, the programme was designed with no explicit statements of positive social and environmental impacts. The original programme document implies, however, that there is potential for poverty reduction and positive outcomes for ethnic minority livelihoods from REDD+ implementation.

6.5 Contribution of the programme to UN-REDD strategic objectives

Rich lessons on the challenges of integrating the three UN agency's operational procedures and systems were generated during implementation of this joint programme in collaboration with GoV. Significantly different corporate cultures, operational procedures and administrative systems of the three implementing agencies were adjusted somewhat, with a view towards integration. But gains were made more in terms of learning to work together rather than significant changes to the way the three UN agencies operated collectively. Substantial progress was made, but ample room for further improvements still remains. Lessons from implementing this programme are cited by implementing UN organisations as having informed design of the second phase to some degree, particularly in terms of division of responsibilities and budget among participating UN agencies.

6.6 Unintended outcomes

As discussed earlier, REDD+ is an evolving concept of unknown potential and risk. Much of that risk is inherent in pioneering REDD+ readiness, not just in Viet Nam, but globally. Although the programme could have identified and managed these risks more effectively, it has made a significant, laudable effort to assess performance and document emerging lessons during inception and in advance of this evaluation. Most notable among these efforts is the end-of-phase Lessons Learned report (UN-REDD 2012b), which is very comprehensive in scope, covering many aspect of the programme's experiences where stakeholders have identified lessons. In addition to this document, the programme also commissioned an evaluation and verification of the global first application of FPIC to national REDD+ programme development (RECOFTC 2010), as well as the effectiveness of the programme's TAR activities (UN-REDD 2012a).

The purpose of this section is not to duplicate these detailed assessments, but to synthesise their findings and summarise the most important programme-wide (rather than activity-specific) unintended outcomes, as perceived by stakeholders. In an attempt to provide reflection and guidance, to the proposed second phase of the programme, to wider REDD+ readiness efforts in Viet Nam, and to other UN-REDD country programmes, the perceptions summarised here focus on unintended outcomes rather than reaffirming areas of more or less effective and efficient programme implementation (Sections 3 and 4).

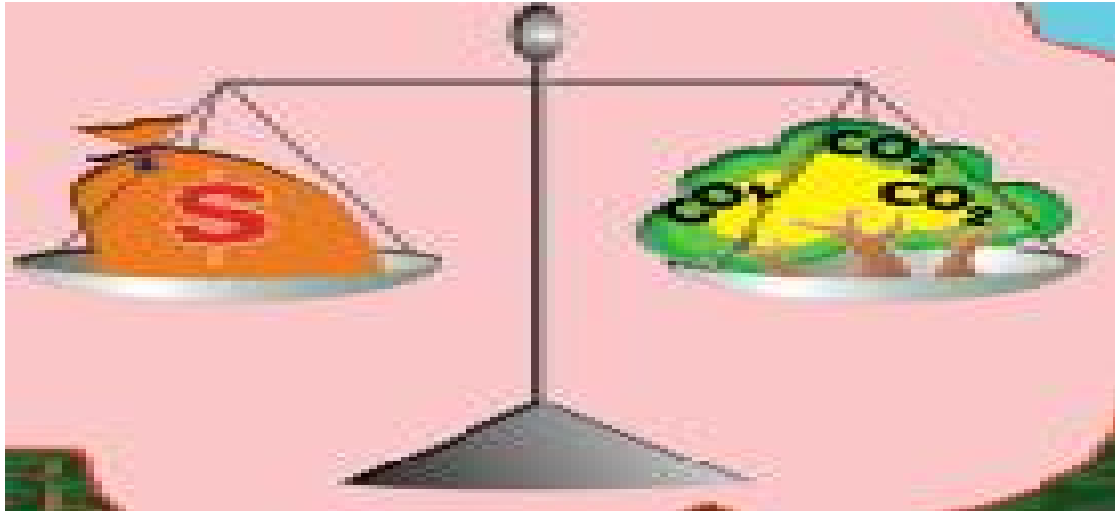
Risk of raised expectations

Perhaps the most significant *risk* exacerbated by the programme's choice and scheduling of (BDS and FPIC) activities is the one of raised expectations among stakeholders. The REDD+ readiness process in Viet Nam in general, and the UN-REDD programme in particular, have increased expectations among a number of stakeholders, from national government leaders to local farmers. As the programme's Lessons Learned document acknowledges: '*stakeholders demonstrate a widespread appreciation of the inclusive nature of REDD+ discussions [facilitated by the programme], but also persistent misunderstandings about the nature of REDD+, its likely benefits, and its limitations*'; the report goes on to note that '*discussion of financial benefits and payments may cause misconceptions at local level, and unintended negative outcomes*' (UN-REDD 2012b).

Expectations in Lam Dong are relatively high, based on comparisons with recent PFES experiences. Previous State forest protection and development programmes/policies (327, 661, 380, 99), delivered payments soon after initial, and superficial, awareness-raising campaigns with local communities. The UN-REDD programme, in contrast, achieved high levels of local awareness raised through intensive communications campaigns, but has yet to deliver on the promise of payments. Persistent delays *may* cause disappointment among local communities, which *could* jeopardise the future credibility of REDD+. There is concern among national and sub-national government agencies involved in the programme that these expectations, if not met soon, could lead to a backlash against REDD+ and resentment that could ripple through broader efforts to improve forest governance and SFM; a '*risk of undermining trust between local people and authorities, by raising new issues and expectations before they can be properly addressed and negotiated*' (UN-REDD 2012b). Although there is a general understanding among local stakeholders that the process of REDD+ readiness takes time, interest at the grassroots level in the pilot districts has waned somewhat with, what they perceive as, significantly delayed payments.

Inflated expectations among a wide range of stakeholders – from national government to local farmer – has largely been a product of the programme's biased promotion of the putative *benefits* of REDD+ (Figure 3) combined with its neglect to analyse and communicate the associated potential *costs* and *risks*. '*REDD+ has been mainly portrayed as a source of income or benefits. Potential risks and costs associated with implementation of REDD+ have rarely been discussed, nor have they been properly communicated*' (UN-REDD 2012a). The '*risk of mistaking awareness raising with propaganda*' was identified in the Lessons Learned document (UN-REDD 2012b), but the TAR report is more explicit: '*the [programme's communications] materials resemble propaganda documents for REDD+ and the UN-REDD Programme*' (UN-REDD 2012a). Self-promotional and pro-REDD+ messages not only raised expectations, but perpetrated wide-spread misunderstanding of REDD+ scope and potential in Viet Nam as well as obstructing greater stakeholder ownership of the readiness process in- and outside of government.

Figure 2 - Communicating the benefits of REDD during Free, Prior, Informed Consent activities of the UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme



Source: UN-REDD (undated a)

Confused stakeholders

'Awareness raising has often been misleading and confusing rather than informative' observes the programme's Lessons Learned document, and this evaluation corroborates this apparently partially learnt lesson. The TAR report concludes that '*the programme was only partly effective in delivering the training and awareness raising [despite] significant efforts to reach its audience by employing a rich amount of media, organizing a large number of training and awareness-raising activities, and developing various materials*' (UN-REDD 2012a). At the grassroots level, local stakeholders (DPC to farmers) have misunderstood key messages of the programme's awareness raising (including FPIC and BDS) activities. This confusion has contributed to elevated expectations of imminent cash payments from the UN-REDD programme and/or the NRAP. Engagement with community representatives, during this evaluation, suggests that FPIC has not been given or withheld in any meaningful sense, as there was nothing to consent to. The entire FPIC exercise from the perspective of participating local farmers was an indistinguishable part of the programme's awareness raising campaign. Villagers could not fully explain REDD+ to the evaluation team, but did display a confused notion of potential climate change impacts (e.g. climate change causing local earthquakes).

Villagers view the programme's awareness-raising activities as basically having added a climate change mitigation dimension to previous forest protection campaigns run by the local GoV, e.g. under PFES. Local stakeholders (SFC, FPS, CPC, villagers) interviewed during the evaluation understand REDD+ to be essentially the same as PFES but with additional payments, based on performance (changes in standing volume and forest cover) that could be used to upscale (increase quantity, but not quality, of) PFES forest protection contracts to cover remaining forest not currently covered by the scheme. As a consequence of this impression that REDD+ is essentially the same as the existing PFES scheme, local stakeholders largely consider themselves already capacitated to implement REDD+.

Using BDS and FPIC as pioneering activities to introduce REDD+ to Viet Nam has defined REDD+, in the minds of many local stakeholders, as a poverty reduction mechanism that will deliver direct (predominantly cash) benefits to villagers. This was a fundamental mistake. The feasibility, not least the transaction costs, of operationalizing a national REDD+ programme at

the grassroots level has not been assessed in comparison with other policy options. REDD+ could be adopted as a national policy approach complementing existing forestry and other land use policies (CFM, SFC reform, collaborative protected area management, renewable domestic energy, agricultural intensification, agricultural and silvicultural certification, etc., etc.), which would not necessitate a working knowledge of REDD+ by grassroots stakeholders.

As the Lessons Learned document notes *‘local communities and ethnic minorities do not need intricate information about global climate change and its potential impacts in order to be fully informed of the...UN-REDD Programme or REDD+ implementation*. The report goes on to correctly advise that *‘awareness raising activities should focus on practical forestry and land management issues (UN-REDD 2012b)’*, issues that can only be discussed after thorough and inclusive dialogue on possible REDD+ PaMs (see section 3.2.4). The grassroots poverty reduction approach to introducing REDD+ adopted by the programme has far more fundamental and far-reaching consequences than just how the awareness-raising activities were delivered. It could now be very challenging to change stakeholder, particularly national GoV, perceptions to consider alternative approaches to REDD+, and the selection and prioritisation of cost-effective PaMs.

An example of how the programme has prematurely promoted certain approaches towards the REDD+ readiness process in Viet Nam, is best illustrated by the BDS, which initiated the programme’s activities. In discussing the BDS work of the programme, the Lessons Learned report acknowledges that *‘it is too early, at this stage, to be discussing payments’* and that *‘we cannot devise appropriate BDS before we know the policies and measures to be implemented’*, only to conclude that *‘the whole concept of positive incentives should be reconsidered, in light of the design of policies and measures for phase 2’* (UN-REDD 2012b). It is disconcerting that the Lessons Learnt document reports that this lesson has been understood by some CSOs, but not by the major stakeholders in the UN-REDD programme. Indeed, during this evaluation, individuals involved in the BDS work cited this research as being one of the most widely valued outputs of the programme.

REDD+ could be developed under a national programme as ‘project’ or forest management unit-level interventions embedded in sub national planning processes. Alternatively, REDD+ could be applied as a national policy instrument, whereby financing for results-based action would be used to improve performance of existing forestry and other land use sector initiatives. The approach adopted by the programme is biased towards the former: local stakeholders are assumed to receive direct benefits in return for the responsibility of implementing REDD+ activities under a future national programme. As noted by the Lessons Learned report, *‘the scale of benefits reaching local people depends largely on the policies and measures to be implemented, and is unlikely to enable significant livelihood improvements [at] scale’* (UN-REDD 2012b). PaMs have yet to be elaborated in any detail, and payments to socio-politically marginalised smallholders will not address the main, *commercial* drivers of deforestation and degradation, as they are identified and understood in Viet Nam (MARD 2011).

Alienated stakeholders

The programme, along with most other REDD+ readiness interventions globally, is also a culprit of excessive use of technical jargon and a REDD-specific vocabulary, which is impenetrable to everyday English speakers (let alone those speaking English as their second or third language), and serves as an even stronger barrier to broad stakeholder comprehension in the national (let alone ethnic minority) language. Despite the programme's intensive awareness-raising efforts, incomplete and unclear understanding of the REDD+ concept, its potential and its limitations, persist among stakeholders, from GoV leaders to local farmers, largely as a consequence of this exclusive use of jargon. Vague awareness, but not necessarily accurate knowledge, of REDD+, has been achieved. The Lessons Learned report instructs '*Don't take new terms into the field*' (UN-REDD 2012b). But local villagers are not the only stakeholders confounded by a steady rapid fire of terms like 'REDD+', 'MRV', 'REL', 'FPIC', 'BDS', 'PaMs', and so on. Misunderstandings and unduly high expectations among the forestry sector and wider development community were generated in part by this arcane lexicon. Too many practitioners who could have made valuable contributions, particularly those already engaged in more orthodox forestry initiatives, were discouraged from taking a more proactive engagement in forums such as the sub-technical working groups.

This self-referential adoption of technocratic jargon is a global phenomenon that too many REDD+ proponents indulge in. UN-REDD is particularly prone to it, elevating the REDD+ mechanism to the level of overriding purpose (see Section 2). A strong focus on novel and REDD+-specific architecture drew attention away from consideration of fundamental PaMs and a more integrated approach to introducing REDD+ into Viet Nam. It also contributed to an elevated status for REDD+ in Viet Nam, at least among some stakeholders. To a certain extent, the programme and other REDD+ readiness efforts have drawn GoV and CSO attention away from other forestry sector reform processes, such as FLEGT VPA.

Unclear ownership of the 'National Programme'

Another unintended outcome that was identified by peers of the programme, other development partners contributing to REDD+ readiness and broader forestry sector interventions, was the confusion between the UN-REDD programme and the burgeoning national REDD+ programme. Parallel and mutually supporting evolution of the UN-REDD and VN-REDD, co-ordinated by the same individuals in VNFOREST, engendered strong ownership in the department involved (DoSTIC) but blurred the distinction between GoV positions on REDD+ and that of UN-REDD.

This confusion was exacerbated by strong global UN-REDD branding, which to many stakeholders obscured GoV ownership, and therefore credibility of 'VN-REDD'⁶³. This was very important issue to many stakeholders engaging in the readiness process. Responding to critical feedback during implementation, efforts were made to reduce the intensity of UN-REDD branding and increase broader stakeholder ownership of programme-led processes and products improved during implementation. For example, a conscious effort was made to keep the MRV framework document logo-free to engender broad stakeholder ownership and a VNFOREST-led initiative.

⁶³ '*The perception of UN-REDD dominance of the national REDD+ agenda is still prevalent in some of the STWGs. As a result, some stakeholders continue to confuse the UN-REDD Programme with the National REDD+ Programme*' (UN-REDD 2012b).

Diversion of resources to Phase 2 development

Finally, some brief mention should be made of the unintended impacts of the prolonged development of a second phase proposal throughout most of the first phase's period of operations. Impacts of Phase 2 development on Phase 1 implementation have been both positive and negative. On the positive side, without Phase 2 'on the table', the incentive for MARD-VNFOREST to invest political capital and human resource energies into Phase 1 would have been greatly diminished. The prospect of a second phase, with funding an order of magnitude (or perhaps two⁶⁴) larger, clearly offered an incentive not only to the GoV, but also the three UN agencies, to sit together and discuss face-to-face the key issues of REDD+ readiness in Viet Nam. Although Phase 2 development drew on the same pool of committed, but limited and overworked, human resources (augmented by additional UNDP staff and consultants), this did permit a great deal of interaction between the two, which strengthened conceptual thinking and development of both phases.

On the negative side, the imperfect and demanding Phase 2 development process undoubtedly detract from delivery of Phase 1 activities, particularly in the final year of operations (2011-2012). From the perspective of a final evaluation, it could be argued that more dedicated resources should have been allocated to Phase 2 development to avoid negative impacts on the outputs of Phase I. Alternatively, the programme's first phase could be viewed as protracted, inefficient and somewhat expensive start-up grant for the 'main event' - Phase 2.

⁶⁴Original pledges for the second phase were in the order of USD 100 million: USD 30 million to cover the costs of UN agency technical assistance and demonstration activities (as detailed in the Phase 2 document – UN-REDD 2012c); and USD 70 million for the elusive 'results-based action component'.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The UN-REDD programme rapidly introduced new, complex REDD+ concepts to a range of stakeholders and enhanced Viet Nam's capacity to access future results-based financing. Although Viet Nam is not yet REDD+ ready, UN-REDD helped introduce *some* of the key elements of national REDD+ architecture.

Uncertainties about the global REDD+ mechanism at the time of programme design led to a variety of programme design flaws. But more robust initial analysis of the Vietnamese context would have led to better design. Adaptation of programme approaches should have been more extensive after implementation began, especially once delay in the FCPF project was evident. Institutional disincentives to such changes and the supply driven nature of the programme limited the ability of the three UN organisations to adapt UN-REDD more effectively to the Vietnamese context.

The programme was essentially an extended and mostly effective inception phase for a larger 'Phase 2'. Considered in isolation, 'Phase 1' could also be seen as a costly, hasty, supply driven initiative that was weakly administered by the UN system, but well managed day to day and achieved mostly satisfactory results.

Programme delivery was complicated by working with three more or less independent UN organisations, each with significantly different *modus operandi*, organisational cultures and visions of REDD+. Improvements during implementation came mostly because individuals learned to work together rather than the organisations making significant changes. The three UNs feel the challenges of intra UN co-ordination were mostly addressed during Phase I; the GoV believes they have *not* been adequately resolved.

UN-REDD's PMU assured programme management but lacked sufficient capacity to engage and coordinate a wide community of REDD+ participants.

The programme contributed to robust national REDD+ mechanisms including a National REDD+ Network, sub-technical working groups and the Viet Nam REDD+ Office. Positive effects of these outputs were limited by widespread over-commitment of many participants and insufficient interaction with other initiatives that are also focussed on improving forest governance and changing land use practices.

At all levels, capacities to understand REDD+ have been enhanced more than capacities to implement it.

Sub-national capacities remain insufficient to effectively operate a future provincial REDD+ programme. While UN-REDD helped develop village level awareness about the role of forests in climate change, this may not have been needed or appropriate. Support for mapping twenty years of forest cover change in pilot districts, on the other hand, made a valuable

contribution to forest management. Facilitators trained by the programme to work at the village level are an important, sustainable capacity development result.

UN-REDD re-learned some lessons that were well known internationally, such as: avoid obscure jargon, initiate work on FPIC when there is something to consent to, and on BDS when the necessary national policies and measures are in place.

Very modest progress towards Outcome 3 reflects uncertainties at the time of project design. The rationale for including this outcome in Vietnam's national UN-REDD programme is not clear.

The sustainability of UN-REDD results is weakened by ineffective co-ordination capacities within and outside the GoV. These capacities will be needed to mainstream REDD+ into activities driving deforestation and degradation such as perennial cash cropping and aquaculture. The programme engaged too little with private sector stakeholders.

While an institutional foundation has been established for REDD+ activities, human resource limitations undermine its sustainability. UN-REDD capacity development was invested in too few people to ensure self-sustaining REDD+ readiness efforts. Most national level capacity development was vested in a small group of individuals.

National commitment to REDD+ is difficult to gauge, outside of 1) a small group of NGOs and service providers, 2) participants in the different working groups and the REDD+ Network, and 3) the national REDD+ office. REDD+ has been integrated into the (almost approved) Forest Development and Protection Master Plan of the province of Lam Dong and recognised in Vietnam's strategies for 'Green Growth and Development' and climate change. Yet REDD+ is not yet woven into other policies, plans, programmes, practices and processes.

The GoV is strongly committed to the objectives of REDD+ but none of the programme's outputs are self-sustaining. From the GoV perspective, REDD+ is a potential mechanism for attracting forest sector investment that is yet to demonstrate its cost-effectiveness. Financial sustainability depends on international agreement for long-term financing for REDD+.

The programme has developed *potentially* valuable approaches but their value is diminished by uncertainties about how the government would proceed once REDD+ generates payments. Qualified political commitment to REDD+ is reflected in Prime Ministerial approval of a framework national action programme. But most of the programme's technical outputs require further political process before they are formally endorsed, nationally or provincially. Sustained effective REDD+ implementation will require clarification of the forestland tenure issues that UN-REDD was not designed to address.

Viet Nam's political dialogue and capacities related to climate change need further development before mitigation can be mainstreamed into various national policies or sub-national operations. REDD+ also needs further definition internationally before it can be integrated into sectors outside forestry. Political risks need to be reduced before Ha Noi will dedicate public resources to the cross-sectoral mainstreaming needed for sustained impacts; they

will not take ownership of UN-REDD initiatives until payment for REDD+ activities is established.

Recommendations

Much experience gained in the Phase 1 programme is reflected in the design of Phase 2. The first set of recommendations below is intended primarily for these future UN-REDD activities in Viet Nam, although they are also relevant for programmes emerging in other countries. These recommendations focus on areas where the evaluators feel the Phase 1 experience may not yet have sufficiently influenced plans for the future. The last five recommendations are intended more for UN-REDD programmes in other countries that may be in a position to benefit from the Vietnamese experience. Here again however, these recommendations could prove to be of value for the second Phase of UN-REDD activities in Viet Nam – depending on how much flexibility exists in their programme.

Recommendations for UN-REDD in Viet Nam, and other countries

1. Adopt more “demand driven” approach to programme implementation and a relationship of service provider and client between the UN-REDD programme and its diverse national stakeholders. This will mean finding ways to reduce or remove institutional disincentives to flexibility among the three UN partner organisations, thereby enhancing the programme’s ability to adapt UN-REDD activities to evolving national requirements. For example, do not “lock in” overall budgets for each partner for the full life of the programme; instead allocate funds for specific project activities every year or two years, based on past performance, evolving circumstances and emerging needs. Adapt normative products to provide guidance where this is required but tailor them carefully to specific national and sub-national circumstances.
2. Adopt a single, available and knowledgeable focal point among the three UN organisations that can regularly speak with one voice to government counterparts and other stakeholders involved in REDD+. This can significantly reduce the transaction time imposed on the GoV partner by the three UN partners. It would require these organisations to dedicate time and effort to this harmonisation process, then to exercise the discipline needed to ensure its effectiveness.
3. Vigorously support development of the necessary national capacity for engaging and coordinating a broad, multi-sectoral community of REDD+ participants. The national office will need to be able to proactively reach out to a wide range of stakeholders and identify incentives for them to engage in REDD+ activities. In the process, they will need to avoid the use of arcane REDD+ jargon and ‘off the shelf’, unadapted REDD+ messages and methods.
4. Acknowledge the risks inherent to piloting REDD+ activities and establish the mechanisms needed to mitigate and manage these risks and present stakeholders with a balanced appraisal of the risks and benefits of all aspects of REDD+ readiness. Managing expectations in the face of persistent uncertainties is a key imperative.
5. Address regional ‘leakage’ issues through a discrete regional initiative that complements national programmes and other REDD+ readiness initiatives.

Recommendations for UN-REDD in other countries, and for Phase 2 in Viet Nam

6. Help country-led REDD readiness processes to define the rationale and scope for specific national REDD+ activities, based on clear identification of the national drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Identify possible national and local level policies and measures that can address these drivers. Carefully gauge the relative costs and benefits of preferred policies and measures and clearly determine different stakeholders' interests and roles in implementing them.
7. Carry out systematic analysis of the national context. Identify key entry points into existing national policy and sub-national, country specific practices. Define where REDD+ can cost-effectively strengthen the performance of existing policies and measures. Ensure that experience from such existing policies and practices informs national REDD+ programmes.
8. Develop robust and comprehensive theories of change and associated results chains for each desired outcome of the national UN-REDD programme. Use well designed consultative processes to ensure the validity of intervention logic and broad stakeholder ownership of the programme.
9. Ensure that programme communications activities and management arrangements maintain a clear and unequivocal distinction between the emerging national REDD+ programme and the temporary financial and technical assistance provided by UN-REDD.
10. Apply mandatory requirements of UN programmes such as FPIC only after extensive consultation with diverse national and sub-national stakeholders; then carefully adapt mandatory requirements to local circumstances.

ANNEXES

Annex A- Evaluation Terms of Reference

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme Final Evaluation Terms of Reference

UN-REDD Programme

12 June 2012

1. Background and Context

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), referred to as the participating UN Organization. The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.

The UN-REDD Programme supports national REDD+ readiness efforts in two ways: (i) direct support to the design and implementation of UN-REDD National Programmes; and (2) complementary support to national REDD+ action through common approaches, analyses, methodologies, tools, data and best practices developed through the UN-REDD Global Programme.

1.1 Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme

Table 1: Programme information

Programme title:	UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme (Viet Nam National Programme)		
Programme Objective:	To assist the Government of Viet Nam in developing an effective REDD+ regime in Viet Nam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emissions.		
Approval date:	10 March 2009	Fund transfer date:	5 October 2009
Completion date:	March 2011	Non cost extension date:	30 June 2012

About 40 per cent of Viet Nam is covered by forests, making the country highly suitable for a national REDD+ Programme. Despite an overall increase in forest area, various regions of Viet Nam still have high rates of deforestation. In March 2009, US\$4.4 million was approved by the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board for Viet Nam's UN-REDD National Programme, and with the final approval of the National Programme document in September 2009, the country entered its inception and implementation phase. Viet Nam was one of the first nine countries identified for country programming under the UN-REDD Programme.

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Although not suffering from excessive levels of deforestation typical of some other countries in the region, deforestation is locally significant in Viet Nam, especially in the Central Highlands. Furthermore, forest degradation is significant in natural forests. Over two-thirds of Viet Nam's natural forests are considered poor or regenerating, while rich and closed-canopy forest constitutes only 4.6 percent (in 2004) of the total.

Fast economic growth within the country and the drive to export commodities is an underlying driver of the deforestation and forest degradation within Viet Nam. There has been little information on the opportunity costs for different resource use practices in any part of Vietnam. Ultimately, REDD+ will work only if the benefits outweigh the opportunity costs of alternative land uses, and an efficient REDD+ programme needs to know where this is possible. The programme has aimed at addressing this knowledge gap. The UN-REDD programme for Viet Nam seeks to address deforestation and forest degradation, including the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, through capacity building at national and local levels. Firstly, it builds capacity at the national level to permit the Government of Viet Nam, and especially the REDD+ focal point in the Vietnam Forestry Administration (VNFORD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), to coordinate and manage the process of establishing tools to implement a REDD+ programme. Secondly, it builds capacity at local levels (provincial, district and commune) through pilots in two districts in Lam Dong province that demonstrate effective approaches to planning and implementing measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Regional displacement of emissions is known to be a significant problem in the lower Mekong Basin. If REDD+ is to be implemented effectively so as to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation within the Lower Mekong Basin, as a contribution to global efforts in this regard, there will be a need for coordinated regional action.

1.1.1 Objective, Expected Outcomes and Outputs

The Objective of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme is "To assist the Government of Viet Nam in developing an effective REDD+ regime in Viet Nam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emissions." This will contribute to the broader Goal of ensuring that "By the end of 2012 Viet Nam is REDD+-ready and able to contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation nationally and regionally."

In order to secure this Objective, three Outcomes and associated Outputs has been pursued:

Outcome 1: Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam

Output 1.1: National coordination mechanism established

Output 1.2: Data and information for national REL/RL for REDD+ available

Output 1.3: Framework National REDD Program (Strategy)

Output 1.4: Performance-based, transparent benefit sharing payment system from national to local levels

Output 1.5: Communications materials produced for sharing lessons nationally and internationally

Output 1.6: National MRV system designed

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Outcome 2: Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services at district level into sustainable development planning and implementation

Output 2.1: District-level forest land-use plan mainstreaming REDD potential

Output 2.2: Participatory C-stock monitoring (PCM) system operational

Output 2.3: Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems defined

Output 2.4: Awareness on REDD+ created at district and local levels

Outcome 3: Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions

Output 3.1: Drivers of regional displacement and inter-sectoral leakage assessed

Output 3.2: Regional synergies and collaboration on REDD+ enhanced

1.1.2 Executing Arrangements

The “Implementing Partner” (a.k.a. “Designated Institution”) of this Programme is Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. A National Programme Director (NPD) directs the programme and carries overall accountability for the programme to the Government of Viet Nam and to the UN agencies. The overall programme and each specific activity are implemented under the leadership of the Government, represented by the NPD.

Fund management is using the pass-through modality. UNDP’s Multi-donor Trust Fund Office has been designated as Administrative Agent for UN-REDD. The funds from UN-REDD will be passed through from the Administrative Agent to the Participating UN Organisations in accordance with the MOU between UN-REDD and the Multi-donor Trust Fund Office.

The programme is managed in accordance with the 2003 UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming and executed by the “National Implementing Partner” MARD, as well as other co-implementing partners such as DARD in Lam Dong Province, through the participating UN organizations, FAO, UNDP and UNEP. Each of those Implementing Agencies is accountable to the participating UN organization relating to the funds released for the delivery of a specific set of outputs and for management of inputs. Specialized service delivery costs for programme and project implementation may be charged directly to the joint programme, in accordance with the respective Participating UN Organizations’ policies, but such costs will amount to no more than 7% of the Participating UN Agency’s budget allocation. In addition, indirect costs are reflected in the Joint Programme submitted to the UN-REDD Secretariat. Indirect costs will not exceed 7 per cent of the Joint Programme budget. These costs cover general oversight, management, and quality control, in accordance with its financial regulations and rules.

The Participating UN Organizations may enter into a formal agreement with a national agency, provincial authorities, or a Mass Organisation, or procure services from other parties for the implementation of certain activities or sub-activities, in accordance to their regulations, rules, policies and procedures. They will retain the primary accountability for management of inputs and the specifically agreed outputs. National partners will use the UN-EU cost norms in accordance with the standard MoU between Participating UN Organisations and the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

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Further information on the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme executing arrangements and institutional set-up is available in the National Programme Document⁶⁵.

1.1.3 Cost and Financing

The total amount transferred to the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme is US\$4,384,756 as shown in Table 2. According to the programme's latest annual report, in addition to the UN-REDD Programme funding, additional co-financing (cash) for UN-REDD supported activities was provided by: Germany (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) (US\$33,000), SENA (US\$10,000) and UNDP (US\$20,000).

Table 2: Programme Financing (US\$)

Participating UN Organization	Amount allocated	Amount Transferred
		from the UN-REDD Multi-Partner Trust Fund
FAO	1,690,814	1,690,814
UNDP	2,501,128	2,501,128
UNEP	192,814	192,814
Total:	4,384,756	4,384,756

1.1.4 Programme Implementation Status

In the last year of programme implementation progress was made on all Viet Nam's UN-REDD National Programme outcomes. Establishment of the National REDD+ Steering Committee and the National REDD+ Office at the national level is expected to significantly contribute to the sustainability of results in the long term. Also, the National REDD+ Programme will provide guidance for implementing REDD+ beyond the UN-REDD Programme. A MRV Framework Document was drafted with stakeholder consultation processes such as the Sub-technical Working Group on MRV, and endorsed by the National REDD+ Office. Although sustainable structures are in place or in the pipeline the speed of coming into operation is slow. The National REDD+ Network and its sub-technical working groups at the national level provide forums for information sharing and discussions, which is important for continuity. To ensure knowledge on REDD+ at the local level is sustained and enhanced, the Programme has built capacity of a provincial level REDD+ working group in Lam Dong consisting of representatives from key departments and district authorities. In addition, REDD+ capacity building for some MARD, VNFORD and local DARD officials was conducted, as well as training of village facilitators for awareness

⁶⁵ Viet Nam National Programme Document is available on:

http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=931&Itemid=53

raising among local people. FPIC gives support to Viet Nam's own legal requirements for stakeholder consultations, most importantly the Grassroots Democracy Decree. Weak capacity on REDD+ in line ministries such as MPI, MOF and MONRE will have to be addressed, if mainstreaming of REDD+ into development strategies is to be successful.

Some difficulties encountered include lack of harmonized procedures by the Participating UN Organizations, and these are being addressed through continuous harmonization. In addition, internal coordination within government ministries and agencies remain a challenge as well as weak capacity in VNFOREST. Coordination issues have been addressed through Programme Executive Board meetings. Further, the lack of substantive progress in the UNFCCC negotiations to provide international guidance on REDD+ has also affected the Programme.

Further information on the implementation of the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme can be found in the Annual and Semi-Annual Programme Reports⁶⁶.

2. Evaluation Objective and Scope

The scope of the evaluation is the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme from the time of inception, in September 2009, to closure, in June 2012.

The evaluation of the UN-REDD National Programme is undertaken to assess the programme performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness (outputs and outcomes) and efficiency, and to the extent possible determine impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the programme, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary objectives: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (2) to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the participating UN Organizations and other partners. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational and technical relevance for future programme formulation and implementation in the country, especially future UN-REDD Programmes, and/or for the UN-REDD Programme as a whole.

The primary audience for the evaluation will be the Government of Viet Nam, the three participating UN Organizations of the UN-REDD Programme and the programme resource partners. The secondary audience for the evaluation will be the UN-REDD Policy Board and national stakeholders. The evaluation will also be made available to the public through the UN-REDD Programme website (www.un-redd.org).

2.1 Evaluation Criteria

To focus the evaluation objectives, by defining the standards against which the initiative will be assessed, the following five evaluation criteria will be applied:

- i) **Relevance**, concerning the extent of which the National Programme and its intended outcomes or outputs are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of the intended beneficiaries. Relevance also considers the extent to which the

⁶⁶ All Viet Nam National Programme reports are available on the MPTF Gateway:

<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00072449>

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- initiative is responsive to the UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015⁶⁷ (or the UN-REDD Programme Framework Document⁶⁸ for Programmes approved before November 2010) and the corporate plans of the three participating UN Organizations. Relevance vis-a-vis other REDD+ or REDD+-related programmes implemented in the country should also be examined.
- ii) **Effectiveness**, measure the extent of which the National Programme's intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved or the extent to which progress towards outputs or outcomes has been achieved. Two components will be measured:
 - a) **Assessment of processes that affected the attainment of project results**– which looks at examination of preparation and readiness of the project, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, financial planning, effectiveness of national and local implementing agencies and designated supervision agency, coordination mechanism with other relevant donors projects/programmes, and reasons for any bottlenecks and delays in delivery of project outputs, outcomes and the attainment of sustainability.
 - b) **Implementation approach** - including an analysis of the project's result framework, performance indicators, adaptation to changing conditions, overall project management and mechanisms applied in project management in delivering project outcomes and outputs.
 - iii) **Efficiency**, measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to achieving stipulated outcomes and outputs.
 - iv) **Sustainability**, analyse the likelihood of sustainable outcomes at programme termination, with attention to sustainability of financial resources, the socio-political environment, catalytic or replication effects of the project, institutional and governance factors, and environmental risks.
 - v) **Impact**, measures to what extent the National Programme has contributed to, or is likely to contribute to, changes in the governance systems, stakeholder behaviour and capacity and social and environmental improvements.

2.2 Evaluation Questions

The following list includes standard questions and issues that the UN-REDD National Programme evaluation should address. It is based on the internationally accepted evaluation criteria mentioned above, i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as well as an additional

⁶⁷ The UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015 is available on:

http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4598&Itemid=53

⁶⁸ The UN-REDD Programme Framework Document is available on:

http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4&Itemid=53

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category of questions regarding factors affecting programme performance. The evaluation will assess the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme as follows:

i) **Relevance**

a) The National Programme's relevance to:

- Country needs;
- National development priorities as expressed in national policies and plans as well as in sector development frameworks;
- UN Country Programme or other donor assistance framework approved by the government;
- The One Plan 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 between the Government of Vietnam and the UN Organizations⁶⁹;
- The UN-REDD Programme Framework Document⁷⁰;
- Other REDD+ related programmes in the country.

b) Robustness and realism of the theory of change underpinning the National Programme, including logic of causal relationship between inputs, activities, expected outputs, outcomes and impacts against the specific and development objectives and validity of indicators, assumptions and risks.

c) Quality and realism of the National Programme design, including:

- Duration;
- Stakeholder and beneficiary identification;
- Institutional set-up and management arrangements;
- Overall programme results' framework
- Approach and methodology.

d) Evolution of National Programme objectives since programme formulation.

ii) **Effectiveness**

e) Extent to which the expected outputs have been produced, their quality and timeliness.

f) Extent to which the expected outcomes have been achieved.

g) Assessment of gender mainstreaming in the National Programme. This will cover:

- Analysis of how gender issues were reflected in Programme objectives, design, identification of beneficiaries and implementation;
- Analysis of how gender relations and equality are likely to be affected by the initiative;
- Extent to which gender issues were taken into account in Programme management.
- Assessment of likely distribution of benefits and costs between stakeholders.

⁶⁹ The Vietnam One Plans are available on the UN Vietnam website:

<http://www.un.org.vn/en/the-one-un-initiative-in-viet-nam-mainmenu-265/one-plan.html>

⁷⁰ The UN-REDD Programme Framework Document is available on:
http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4&Itemid=53

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- h) Actual and potential contribution of the National Programme to the normative work of the three participating UN Organizations, e.g. contribution towards the “Delivering as One” initiative and lessons learned incorporated into broader organizational strategies.

iii) Efficiency

- i) The evaluation will assess factors and processes that affected project results with particular attention to preparation and readiness of the project, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, effectiveness of national and local implementing agencies, financial planning and management and coordination mechanisms.
- j) Financial resources management of the National Programme, including:
- Adequacy of budget allocations to achieve outputs;
 - Coherence and soundness of budget revisions in matching implementation needs and programme objectives;
 - Rate of delivery and budget balance at the time of the evaluation.
 - Gaps and delays if any between planned and achieved outputs, the causes and consequences of delays and assessment of any remedial measures taken;
- k) Management and implementation of the National Programme, including:
- Efficiency in producing outputs;
 - Efficiency of fund-management arrangements.

iv) Sustainability

- l) Major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme.
- m) The prospects for sustaining and up-scaling the National Programme’s results by the beneficiaries after the termination of the initiative. The assessment of sustainability will include, as appropriate:
- Institutional, technical, economic and social sustainability of proposed technologies, innovations and/or processes;
 - Perspectives for institutional uptake and mainstreaming of the newly acquired capacities, or diffusion beyond the beneficiaries or the National Programme.

v) Impact

- n) Overall performance of the National Programme: extent to which the initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its intermediate/specific objectives; this will also include the identification of actual and potential positive and negative impacts produced by the initiative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.⁷¹
- o) Use made by the National Programme of the UN-REDD Programme’s normative products, guidelines and safeguards, e.g. the UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness, and the extent of which they have contributed towards national safeguards⁷².

⁷¹ The Theory of Change will be used to review the progress towards impacts, by applying the ROtI methodology assessing the likelihood of impact achievement (Annex 6).

⁷² None of the guidelines referred to were available during most of the period of programme implementation.

vi) Factors affecting performance

- p) Assessment of coordination mechanisms and decisions taken between the three participating UN organizations to ensure joint delivery.
- q) Assessment of coordination mechanisms and decisions taken between the Government and the three participating UN organizations to ensure programme outcomes are achieved.
- r) Assessment of coordination within and between Government ministries in order to ensure programme outcomes is achieved.
- s) Assessment of coordination mechanisms between the National Programme and other bilateral and multilateral REDD+ initiatives.
- t) Management and implementation of the National Programme, including:
 - Efficiency of management, including quality and realism of work plans;
 - Efficiency and of operations management;
 - Efficiency of coordination and steering bodies (if any);
 - Quality and quantity of administrative and technical support by the three participating UN Organizations; and
 - Timeliness, quality and quantity of inputs and support by the Government and partners.

3. Evaluation Methodology

The UN-REDD National Programme final evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards⁷³. It will be conducted by two independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the three participating UN Organizations' Evaluation Departments through their participation in the Evaluation Management Group, in consultation with relevant headquarter, regional and country staff of the participating UN Organizations.

Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned⁷⁴. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out. The limitations of the methodological framework should also be spelled out in the evaluation reports.

The evaluation will assess the programme with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria using the table for rating performance in Annex 6.

In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the programme, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with and what would have happened without the programme. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended programme outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes,

⁷³UNEG Norms & Standards: <http://uneval.org/normsandstandards>

⁷⁴ Individuals should not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved. In such cases sources can be expressed in generic term (Government, NGO, donor etc.).

FINAL EVALUATION of UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme

adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

As this is a final evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds throughout the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the programme performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance turned out the way it did, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of programme results. This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the programme. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today. The consultant could also provide recommendations for the way forward.

4.2 Tools

The Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme final evaluation will make use of the following tools:

- a) A desk review of project documents including, but not limited to:
 - Relevant background documentation, including the UN-REDD Programme Framework Document⁷⁵;
 - Relevant reports, such as National Programme Annual, Semi-Annual and quarterly Reports, Year in Review publication, external evaluations by donors, partners etc.;
 - Project design documents, such as the National Programme Document, annual work plans and budgets, revisions to the logical framework and project financing;
 - Documentation related to National Programme outputs and relevant materials published on the Programme website;
 - Other relevant documents, such as possible new national policy documents, sector plans and available evaluations bearing relevance for UN-REDD.
- b) Semi-structured interviews⁷⁶ with key informants, stakeholders and participants, including:
 - Government counterpart;
 - Government stakeholders including all ministries participating from coordinating bodies or steering committees;
 - Civil Society Organizations;

⁷⁵ The UN-REDD Programme Framework Document is available on: http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4&Itemid=53

⁷⁶ Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communications

- Indigenous Peoples Organizations;
 - Country , regional and headquarter personnel from the three UN-Agencies involved in the National Programme, e.g. the Programme Management Unit, Resident Coordination and Regional Technical Advisers;
 - Representatives from other bi-lateral or multi-lateral initiatives co-financing the NP if applicable.
- c) The Theory of Change and subsequent application of the ROTI approach on progress towards impact⁷⁷.

A list of key stakeholders and other individuals who should be consulted is included in Annex 5.

5 Consultation process

The Evaluation Team will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders. Throughout the process the evaluation team will maintain close liaison with: the Evaluation Management Group (Consisting of representatives of the evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations and the UN-REDD Secretariat), the Programme Management Unit, UN headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country level staff members, and other key stakeholders. Although the mission is free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitment on behalf of the Government, the donor or the participating UN Organizations.

The draft evaluation report will be circulated among the three participating UN Organizations, including the Evaluation Management Group, and other key stakeholders for comment before finalisation; suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate by the evaluation team.

6 The Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team should consist of two evaluators, including one team leader. The Team Leader will have sound evaluation experience. The evaluation team should comprise the best available mix of skills that are required to assess the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme. Knowledge of the country in question, good technical understanding of the REDD+ field, as well as competence and skills in evaluation will be required. To the extent possible the Evaluation Team will be balanced in terms of geographical and gender representation to ensure diversity and complementarity of perspectives.

The Evaluation Team members will have had no previous direct involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the initiative. All members of the Evaluation Team will sign the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct⁷⁸ Agreement Form (Annex 3).

⁷⁷ GEF Evaluation Office, (OPS4) Progress towards Impacts: The ROTI Handbook: Towards enhancing the impacts of environmental projects – Methodological paper 2.

⁷⁸ UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system: www.unevaluation.org/unegecodeofconduct

The Evaluation Team is responsible for conducting the evaluation and applying the methodology. All team members, including the Team Leader, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs.

7 Evaluation Team Deliverables

7.2 Inception Report

Before going into data collection the Evaluation Team shall prepare an *inception report* containing a thorough review of the project design quality and the evaluation framework. The *inception report* should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how the evaluation questions can be answered by way of: proposed methods and sources of data, as well as data collection procedures. The *inception report* should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, as well as a desk based Theory of Change of the programme⁷⁹. The evaluation framework should summarize the information available from programme documentation against each of the main evaluation parameters. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection, verification and analysis should be specified. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the evaluation questions under each criterion with their respective indicators and data sources. This will allow the three participating UN Organizations to verify that there is a shared understanding about the evaluation and clarify any misunderstandings at the outset. A list of important documents and web pages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report is included in Annex 4. The Inception Report will be shared with the three participating UN Organizations and other relevant stakeholders and reviewed by the Evaluation Management Group.

7.3 Evaluation Report

The reviewers shall prepare a *draft evaluation report* to ensure that the evaluation meets the required criteria as described in the Terms of Reference. The Team Leader bears responsibility for submitting the draft report to the three participating UN Organizations within three weeks from the conclusion of the mission. The draft evaluation report will be circulated among the three participating UN Organizations, including the Evaluation Management Group, and other key stakeholders for comments. Suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate by the evaluation team.

The *final evaluation report* will illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation issues, questions and criteria listed in the Terms of Reference. The length of the final evaluation report should be 15-18,000 words, excluding executive summary and annexes. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. The recommendations will be addressed to the different stakeholders and prioritized: they will be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated and actionable.

⁷⁹GEF Evaluation Office, (OPS4) Progress towards Impacts: The ROtI Handbook: Towards enhancing the impacts of environmental projects – Methodological paper 2.

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The Evaluation Team shall agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided in Annex 2 of this Terms of Reference. The report shall be prepared in English, and translated into French and Spanish.

Annexes to the evaluation report will include, though not limited to, the following as relevant:

- Terms of reference for the evaluation;
- Additional methodology-related documentation;
- Profile of team members;
- List of documents reviewed;
- List of institutions and stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team;
- List of programme outputs/Programme results framework;
- Evaluation tools.

The Evaluation Team is fully responsible for its independent report which may not necessarily reflect the views of the Government or the three participating UN Organizations. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by the evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations, although they are responsible for ensuring conformity of the evaluation report with standards for programme evaluation in the three Organizations. The final report will be published on the UN-REDD Programme web site (www.un-redd.org).

8. Evaluation timetable and budget

Table 3 outlines the tentative timetable and responsibility of the evaluation process. The timetable will be adjusted according to the availability of the selected consultant.

Table 3: Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme Evaluation Timeline

Date:	Activity	Responsibility
May 2012	Draft National Programme Final Evaluation Terms of Reference (draft to be based on the “National Programme Final Evaluation Template”)	The UN-REDD Secretariat prepares the first draft of the Evaluation ToR, and shares it with the three participating UN Organizations for comments. The National Programme staff should ensure the draft Terms of Reference is shared with the Government counterpart and other relevant key stakeholders for information and their comments.
May/June 2012	Review National Programme Final Evaluation Terms of Reference	Evaluation Management Group (Evaluation Departments of the three participating UN Organizations and the UN-REDD Secretariat)
June/July 2012	Recruit consultants	National Programme Evaluation budget holder in consultation with the Evaluation Management Group (Evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations and

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		the UN-REDD Secretariat)
9-13 August 2012 (TBC)	Preparation of Inception Report (5 days)	Evaluation Team (consultants) Logistical support provided by the participating UN Organizations National Programme staff
16-23 August 2012 (TBC)	Review inception report (two weeks)	The three participating UN Organizations and the Evaluation Management Group (Evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations and the UN-REDD Secretariat)
30 August- 27 September 2012 (TBC)	Evaluation Mission (21 days)	Evaluation Team (consultants) Logistical support provided by the participating UN Organizations' National Programme staff. Also, a one day debriefing workshop with stakeholders should be held at the end of the Evaluation Mission.
3-14 October 2012 (TBC)	Draft Evaluation Report (8/10 days)	Evaluation Team (consultants) Logistical support provided by the participating UN Organizations National Programme staff
17 October- 5 November 2012 (TBC)	Review Draft Evaluation Report by participating UN Organizations (two weeks)	The three participating UN Organizations and the Evaluation Management Group (Evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations and the UN-REDD Secretariat) reviews the draft from the point of view of its evaluation quality and make comments to the Evaluation Team in that respect. If need be, the evaluation team will revise the draft report. The latter will be then circulated to other stakeholders for comment.
8-19 November 2012 (TBC)	Review Draft Evaluation Report by Government Counterpart and other stakeholders (two weeks)	The National Programme staff should ensure the Draft Evaluation Report is shared with the Government Counterpart and other relevant key stakeholders for information and their comments.
22-26 November 2012 (TBC)	Final Report (2/4 days)	Evaluation Team (consultants) Logistical support provided by the participating UN Organizations National Programme staff
December 2012 (TBC)	Management response from the Participating UN Organizations (one month)	Participating UN Organizations
December 2012 (TBC)	Management response from the Government Counterpart (one month)	Government Counterpart

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(TBC)	Dissemination of the report	The UN country offices on the national level and the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat on the global level.
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Annex 1: Evaluation consultancies Terms of Reference

The Evaluation Team should consist of two evaluators, including one team leader. Ideally, the Team Leader will have sound evaluation experience. The evaluation team should comprise the best available mix of skills that are required to assess the Viet-Nam UN-REDD National Programme, and ideally include in-depth knowledge of the National Programme country in question, good technical understanding of REDD+, as well as competence and skills in evaluation. To the extent possible the Evaluation Team will be balanced in terms of geographical and gender representation to ensure diversity and complementarity of perspectives.

The Evaluation Team members shall have had no previous direct involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the National Programme. All members of the Evaluation Team will sign the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct⁸⁰ Agreement Form (Annex 3).

The Evaluation Team is responsible for conducting the evaluation and applying the methodology. All team members, including the Team Leader, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs. The Evaluation Team shall collaborate on a single document for each of the three main deliverables (inception report, draft report and final report), while the Team Leader is responsible for consolidating the reports and ensuring all deadlines are met.

Competences:

- Independent from the UN-REDD Programme and the participating UN Organizations, FAO, UNEP and UNDP.
- The evaluation team should comprise the best available mix of skills that are required to assess the National Programme, including:
 - Good technical understanding of REDD+;
 - Preferably in-depth knowledge of Viet Nam.
- Demonstrate experience from evaluations of similar types of programmes.
- Excellent writing and editing skills.
- Attention to detail and respect for timelines.

Qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in relevant field.

⁸⁰ UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system: www.unevaluation.org/uneqcodeofconduct

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- Minimum 11 (team leader)/7 (team leader assistant) years of professional experience is required, longer professional experience is an advantage, including proven experience from developing countries.
- Fluency in English language, both written and spoken is a requirement. Knowledge of local language would be a distinctive advantage.

Deliverables:

- Prepare an inception report detailing the evaluators understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how to respond to the scope of the evaluation by way of: proposed methods and sources of data as well as data collection procedures. The team leader is responsible for consolidating the report.
- Produce a consolidated draft report responding to the scope of the evaluation. The team leader is responsible for consolidating the report.
- Produce a consolidated final report. The team leader is responsible for consolidating the report.

Application:

- Applications to be sent as per UNOPS instructions.

Total days:79 days

Activity	Consultant One (Team Leader)	Consultant Two
Preparation of inception report	5 days	5 days
Evaluation mission and desk review	21 days	21 days
Draft evaluation report	10 days	8 days
Final report	4 days	2 days
Total	40 days	36 days

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverables	Percentage payment to Consultant One (Team leader):	Percentage payment to Consultant Two:
Inception report	12.5%	13.9
Submission and approval of the draft evaluation report	25%	22.2%
Submission and approval of the final	62.5%	63.9%

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evaluation report		
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Annex 2: Annotated UN-REDD National Programme evaluation report outline

The Evaluation Team can modify the structure of the report outline below, as long as the key contents are maintained in the report and the flow of information and analysis is coherent and clear. The length of the UN-REDD National Programme final evaluation report should be 15-18,000 words, excluding executive summary and annexes.

Acknowledgements

Insert acknowledgements.

Composition of the Evaluation Team

Insert description of the composition of the Evaluation Team.

Table of Contents

Insert Table of Contents.

Acronyms

When an abbreviation is used for the first time in the text, it should be explained in full; it will be included in the list of acronyms when it is used repeatedly within the report.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should:

- Be in length approximately 10-15% of the main report, excluding annexes;
- Provide key information on the evaluation process and methodology;
- Illustrate key findings and conclusions;
- List all recommendations: this will facilitate the drafting of the Management Response to the evaluation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and purposes of the evaluation

This section will include:

- The purpose of the evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference;
- National Programme title, starting and closing dates, initial and current total budget;
- Dates of implementation of the evaluation.

It will also mention that Annex I of the evaluation report is the evaluation Terms of Reference.

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

This section will comprise a description of the methodology and tools used and evaluation criteria that were applied by the evaluation. This should also note any limitations incurred in applying the methodology by the evaluation team.

2. Context of the National Programme

This section will include a description of the developmental context relevant to the National Programme including major challenges in the area of the intervention, political and legislative issues, etc. It will also describe the process by which the programme was identified and developed and cite other related and bilateral interventions if relevant.

3. Concept and relevance

3.1 Design

National Programmes are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve the agreed objectives through the selected strategy; this set of assumptions constitutes the programme theory or 'theory of change' and can be explicit (e.g. in a logical framework matrix) or implicit in a programme document.

This section will include a short description of the programme theory of change, of its objectives and assumptions and will analyse critically:

- The appropriateness of stated development goals and outcomes (immediate objectives);
- The causal relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes (immediate objectives) and impact (development objectives);
- The relevance and appropriateness of indicators;
- The validity of assumptions and risks.

This section will also critically assess:

- The programme's institutional set-up and management arrangements;
- The adequacy of the time-frame for implementation;
- The adequacy of resources from all parties and appropriateness of budget allocations to achieve intended results;
- The adequacy of the methodology of implementation to achieve intended results;
- The quality of the stakeholders' and beneficiaries identification.

3.2 Relevance

This section will analyse the extent to which the National Programme's objectives and strategy were consistent with country's expressed requirements and policies, with beneficiaries' needs, and other programmes, at the time of approval and at the time of the evaluation.

There will also be an analysis of the degree to which the programme corresponds to priorities in the UN-REDD Programme Strategy.

4. Results and contribution to stated objectives

4.1 Outputs and outcomes

This section will critically analyse the National Programme outputs: ideally, the evaluation team should directly assess all of these, but this is not always feasible due to time and resources constraints. Thus, the detailed analysis should be done on a representative sample of outputs that were assessed directly, while a complete list of outputs prepared by the programme team should be included as annex. If appropriate, the section will also include an analysis of gaps and delays and their causes and consequences.

Further, the section will critically analyse to what extent expected outcomes (specific/immediate objectives) were achieved. It will also identify and analyse the main factors influencing their achievement and the contributions of the various stakeholders to them.

4.2 Gender issues

This section will analyse if and how the programme mainstreamed gender issues. The assessment will cover:

- Analysis of how gender issues were reflected in objectives, design, identification of beneficiaries and implementation;
- Analysis of how gender relations and equality and processes of women's inclusion were and are likely to be affected by the initiative;
- Extent to which gender issues were taken into account in programme management.

4.3 Capacity development

The evaluation will assess:

- The extent and quality of programme work in capacity development of beneficiaries;
- The perspectives for institutional uptake and mainstreaming of the newly acquired capacities, or diffusion beyond the beneficiaries or the programme.

4.4 Sustainability

This section will assess the prospects for long-term use of outputs and outcomes, from an institutional, social, technical and economic perspective. If applicable, there will also be an analysis of environmental sustainability (maintenance and/or regeneration of the natural resource base).

4.5 Impact

This section will assess the current and foreseeable positive and negative impacts produced as a result of the programme, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. It will assess the actual or potential contribution of the programme to the planned development objective and to UN-REDD strategic objectives, described in the UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015.

5. Implementation

5.1 Budget and Expenditure

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This section will contain the analysis of the National Programme financial resources and management, including:

- Efficiency in production of outputs;
- Coherence and soundness of Budget Revisions in matching implementation needs and programme objectives; and
- Assessment of rate of delivery and budget balance at the time of the evaluation, compared to the initial plan.

5.2 Programme Management

This section will analyse the performance of the management function, including:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of operations management, both within the programme and by the participating UN Organizations, including timeliness, quality, reasons for delays and assessment of remedial measures taken if any;
- Effectiveness of strategic decision-making by programme management;
- Realism of annual work-plans;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring system and internal evaluation processes;
- Elaboration and implementation of an exit strategy;
- Role and effectiveness of institutional set-up, including steering bodies;

5.3 Technical Backstopping

This section will analyse the extent, timeliness and quality of technical backstopping the programme received from involved units in the participating UN Organizations, at all levels (headquarter, regional, sub-regional and country offices).

5.4 Government's participation

This section will analyse government's commitment and support to the programme, in particular:

- Financial and human resources made available for programme operations;
- Uptake of outputs and outcomes through policy or investment for up-scaling.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions need to be substantiated by findings consistent with data collected and methodology, and represent insights into identification and/or solutions of important problems or issues. They may address specific evaluation questions raised in the Terms of Reference and should provide a clear basis for the recommendations which follow.

The Conclusions will synthesise the main findings from the preceding sections: main achievements, major weaknesses and gaps in implementation, factors affecting strengths and weaknesses, prospects for follow-up, any emerging issues. It will consolidate the assessment of various aspects to judge the

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extent to which the programme has attained, or is expected to attain, its intermediate/specific objectives. Considerations about relevance, costs, implementation strategy and quantity and quality of outputs and outcomes should be brought to bear on the aggregate final assessment.

The section will include an assessment of the three participating UN Organizations role as implementing organizations and the quality of the feedback loop between the programme and the organizations' normative role, namely:

- Actual use by the programme of relevant participating UN Organizations' normative products (databases, publications, methodologies, etc.);
- Actual and potential contribution of programme outputs and outcomes to the participating UN Organizations normative work.

Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant and realistic, with priorities for action made clear. They can tackle strategic, thematic or operational issues. Recommendations concerned with on-going activities should be presented separately from those relating to follow-up once the National Programme is terminated. Each recommendation should each be introduced by the rationale for it; alternatively, it should be referenced to the paragraphs in the report to which it is linked.

Each recommendation should be clearly addressed to the appropriate party (ies), i.e. the Government and the Participating UN Organizations at different levels (headquarter, regional, and national). Responsibilities and the time frame for their implementation should be stated, to the extent possible. Although it is not possible to identify a 'correct' number of recommendations in an evaluation report, the evaluation team should consider that each recommendation must receive a response.

7. Lessons Learned

The evaluation will identify lessons and good practices on substantive, methodological or procedural issues, which could be relevant to the design, implementation and evaluation of similar projects or programmes, especially future UN-REDD activities and programmes in Viet-Nam. Such lessons/practices must have been innovative, demonstrated success, had an impact, and be replicable.

Annexes to the evaluation report

I. Evaluation Terms of Reference

2. Brief profile of evaluation team members

2I. List of documents reviewed

IV. List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process

The team will decide whether to report the full name and/or the function of the people who were interviewed in this list.

V. List of programme outputs

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This includes training events, meetings, reports/publications, initiatives supported through the programme. It should be prepared by the programme staff, in a format decided by the evaluation team, when details cannot be provided in the main text because too cumbersome.

VI. Evaluation tools

Annex 3: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct⁸¹ Agreement Form

The form is to be completed by all consultants and included as an annex in the final report.

<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form</p> <p>Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System</p> <p>Name of Consultant: _____</p> <p>I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.</p> <p>Signed at (place) on (date)</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>
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Annex 4: Documents to be consulted

The following list of documents should be consulted by the evaluators at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report:

- Vietnam One Plan 2006-2010 and 2012-2016:

<http://www.un.org.vn/en/the-one-un-initiative-in-viet-nam-mainmenu-265/one-plan.html>

The Vietnam Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010:

http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Information%20Service/Legal%20docs/General/sedp_edited_eng_16_3.pdf

- UN-REDD Programme Strategy:

http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4598&Itemid=53

- Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme Document (signed):

http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=931&Itemid=53

- Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme Annual and Semi-Annual Reports:

<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00072449>

- Relevant documents under the UN-REDD page of the REDD+ Viet Nam website:

⁸¹ Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System: www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

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<http://vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?tab=project&zoneid=110&lang=en-US>

- Other not yet official documents, such as programme executive board meeting minutes, to be provided by the Programme Management Unit

Annex 5: Key stakeholders and partners

The following list of key stakeholders and other individuals should be consulted:

Name	Affiliation	Relevance	Contact information
Participating UN Organizations			
Akiko Inoguchi	FAO		
Yuriko Shoji	FAO		
Danilo Mollicone	FAO		
Mikko Leppanen	FAO		
Patrick Durst	FAO		
Tore Langhelle	UNDP		
Dao Xuan Lai	UNDP		
Tim Boyle	UNDP		
Thomas Enters	UNEP		
Niklas Hageberg	UNEP		
Patrich van Laake		Former STA	
Non-Governmental Organizations			
Nguyen Tan Quang	RECOFTC		
Vu Thi Hien	CERDA		
Vu Thi Bich Hop	Center for Sustainable Rural Development		
Phuc Xuan To	Forest Trends		

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Adrian Enright	SNV
Steve Swan	SNV
Richard McNally	SNV
John Parr	FFI
Luong Thi Truong	CSDM

Donor/Bilateral projects

Eiji Egashira	JICA
Tapio Leppanen	FORMIS
Ho Manh Tuong	National Forest Assessment Project (PMU)
Juergen Hess	GIZ
Do Trung Hoan	ICRAF
Tim Dawson	EFI
Vu Minh Duc	Embassy of Norway
Hoang Thanh	EU delegation
Douglas Graham	World Bank
Nguyen Thi Thu Lan	World Bank

Vietnam Government

Nguyen Thi Thuy Hanh	MONRE (Climate change)
Hoang Manh Hoa	MONRE (Climate change)
Pham Thi Thuy Hanh	MONRE (Land administration)
Nguyen Huu Dzung	FPD
Nguyen Quoc Hieu	FPD

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Research Institutes

Nguyen Dinh Hung	FIPI
Vu Tan Phuong	FSIV (RCFEE)
Phun Van Khoa	Vietnam Forestry University

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Annex 6: Rating Programme Performance

Criteria		Comments
Agency Coordination and implementation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall Quality of Project Implementation	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<i>Agency coordination</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<i>Project Supervision</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<i>Relevance:</i> relevant (R) or not relevant (NR)	(rate 2pt. scale)	
<i>Effectiveness</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<i>Efficiency</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).		
Overall likelihood of risks to Sustainability:	(rate 4pt. scale)	
<i>Financial resources</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	
<i>Socio-economic</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	
<i>Institutional framework and governance</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	
<i>Environmental</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	
Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N)		
Environmental Status Improvement	(rate 3 pt. scale)	
Environmental Stress Reduction	(rate 3 pt. scale)	
Progress towards stress/status change	(rate 3 pt. scale)	
Overall Programme Results		
	(rate 6 pt. scale)	

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<p><i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, project implementation:</i></p> <p>6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings</p> <p>5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings</p> <p>4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p>3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings</p> <p>2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems</p> <p>1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems</p>	<p><i>Sustainability ratings:</i></p> <p>4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks</p> <p>2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks</p> <p>1. Unlikely (U): severe risks</p>	<p><i>Relevance ratings</i></p> <p>2. Relevant (R)</p> <p>1. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p><i>Impact Ratings:</i></p> <p>3. Significant (S)</p> <p>2. Minimal (M)</p> <p>1. Negligible (N)</p>
<p><i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) ; Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		

Annex B - Brief profiles of evaluation team members

Steven Swan – National specialist

Steven Swan is a biodiversity conservationist with fifteen years' work experience in sustainable forest resource management, governance and financing in Southeast and East Asia, most of which has been gained and applied in Viet Nam. He divides his professional time between operational and technical aspects of his work. Operationally, Mr. Swan has over ten years' experience in public and private sector-financed project and programme development, management, monitoring and evaluation. His technical expertise includes: forest ecosystem service financing (REDD+ and PES); support to forestry sector policy, legislative and regulatory reform processes; biodiversity and sustainable livelihood linkages; landscape conservation planning; and protected area development and management. His experience with REDD+ dates back to attendance at UNFCCC CoP13. Mr. Swan currently serves as a senior technical advisor to the project '*Delivering Environmental and Social Multiple Benefits from REDD+ in Southeast Asia*', which in Viet Nam is implemented by VNFOREST in partnership with SNV.

Mr. Swan has been living and working based in Viet Nam since 1997. Over the years, he has developed trust and a close working relationship with a network of national government civil servants, and technical advisors, across MARD and MoNRE. His career in Viet Nam and the wider region has provided opportunities to work with stakeholders at all levels: international inter-governmental agencies, national and sub national government, local (ethnic minority) communities, civil society and private sector. Mr. Swan holds a Masters of Science degree in Biodiversity Conservation and Management from the University of London's School of Oriental & African Studies and a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology with Marine Zoology from the University of North Wales, Bangor.

Howard Stewart – International specialist and evaluation team leader

Mr. Stewart has over thirty years experience working in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. He is currently teaching at the Geography Department of the University of British Columbia. International work since 2008 has included review and advice on final evaluations of Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, thematic evaluations by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a donors' evaluation (MOPAN) of the United Nations Environment Programme and development of UN staff environmental training. Most recently he has led evaluations of the UNDP's development results in Djibouti and, currently, Viet Nam's UN-REDD programme.

From 2006 to 2008 Mr. Stewart was an advisor in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Evaluation Office in New York where he participated in the design, implementation and review of evaluations of international environmental programmes. These included evaluations of UNDP's overall environmental programming since 2002 and of the GEF's global Small Grants Programme for which he led a number of country level studies. He

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also developed and implemented a system for reviewing final evaluations of UNDP-GEF financed projects and managed the assessment of UNDP's results in Rwanda.

Between 1990 and 2006, Mr. Stewart worked as an independent environmental analyst based in Vancouver. He worked with many local and national governments and international agencies, communities, NGOs, and industries, helping them plan, carry out, monitor and evaluate their own practical policies, plans and strategies for sustainable development.

Mr. Stewart spent the 1980's working with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) where he acted as environmental advisor to CIDA's programmes in Latin America and francophone Africa. Prior to this he planned and managed Canadian participation in international co-operation projects, at both community and national levels, in West and Central Africa, in the agriculture, forestry, water and energy sectors.

From 1975 to 1981 Mr. Stewart worked as a researcher in forest ecology in Central America, a land planning officer with a World Bank agricultural programme in West Africa and an environmental consultant to western Canada's mining and resource industries. He also worked with an early private sector eco-tourism initiative in the Danube Basin of central Europe.

Annex C - List of documents reviewed

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Annex D - List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process

Institution	Position	Name
Government of Viet Nam (GoV)		
[Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (MARD)]	Former Vice Minister (Forestry)	Hua Duc Nhi
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST)	Deputy Director General	Nguyen Ba Ngai
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Protection Department (FPD)	Director	Nguyen Huu Dung
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Department of Science Technology & International Co-operation (DoSTIC)/UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme	Director	Pham Minh Thoa
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Department of Science Technology & International Co-operation (DoSTIC)/Viet Nam REDD+ Office (VRO)	Deputy Director/Director	Pham Manh Cuong
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Protection Department (FPD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Office	Officer	Nguyen Minh Thuong
[Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), UN-REDD Project Management Unit]	Manager	Nguyen Thi Thu Huyen
	Former Senior Technical Advisor	Patrick van Laake
Viet Nameese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS), Research Centre for Forest Ecology & Environment (RCFEE)	Director	Vu Tan Phuong
Viet Nam Forestry University (VFU)	Deputy Dean of Postgraduate Studies	Phung Van Khoa

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Institution	Position	Name
	Faculty	
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Development of a Management Information System for the Forestry Sector (FORMIS) project	Chief Technical Advisor	Tapio Leppanen
Ministry of Planning & Investment (MPI), Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD)	Deputy Director General	Nguyen Thi Yen
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Inventory & Planning Institute (FIPI)	Deputy Director General	Nguyen Phu Hung
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Inventory & Planning Institute (FIPI)	Data Analysis Expert	Nguyen Dinh Hung
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Inventory & Planning Institute (FIPI), Project on Support to National Assessment of Forest Resources in Viet Nam (NFA)	Chief Technical Advisor	Tani Hoyhtya
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), Forest Inventory & Planning Institute (FIPI), International Co-operation Division/Project on Support to National Assessment of Forest Resources in Viet Nam (NFA)	Head/National Project Co-ordinator	Ho Manh Tuong
Ministry of Planning & Investment (MPI), Foreign Economic Relations Department, International Organisations & International Non-Government Organisations Division	Head of Division	Nong Thi Hong Hanh
Intergovernmental organisations		
Food & Agriculture Organisation of the	Forestry Officer (Monitoring and	Danilo Mollicone

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Institution	Position	Name
United Nations (FAO)	Assessment)	
	Representative in Viet Nam	Yuriko Shoji
	Forestry Program Officer	Akiko Inoguchi
	UN-REDD Regional Coordinator	Timothy Boyle
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Assistant Country Director/Head of Sustainable Development Cluster	Dao Xuan Lai
	Programme Officer	Tore Langhelle
	Former Programme Officer	Huynh Thu Ba
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	UN-REDD Regional Coordinator	Thomas Enters
World Bank Viet Nam, Rural Development Unit		Nguyen Thi Thu Lan
Bilateral development partners		
Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)	Senior Project Formulation Advisor	Eiji Egashira
German Development Co-operation (GIZ), Management of Natural Resources Programme	Programme Director	Jurgen Hess
	Ambassador	Stale Torstein Risa
Royal Norwegian Embassy	First Secretary	Larissa Falkenberg Kosanovic
	Development Adviser	Vu Minh Duc
Embassy of Finland	Programme Co-ordinator	Le Thi Thu Huong
European Union (EU), Delegation of the European Commission to Viet Nam, Rural Development & Environment Co-operation Section	Programme Officer	Hoang Thanh

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Institution	Position	Name
Non-government organisations		
Centre of Research & Development in Upland Area (CERDA)	Director	Vu Thi Hien
The Center For Sustainable Development In Mountainous Areas (CSDM)	Director	Luong Thi Truong
The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC)	Viet Nam Programme Co-ordinator	Nguyen Tan Quang
SNV – The Netherlands Development Organisation	Viet Nam Manager, Lower Emissions in Asia’s Forests (LEAF) project	Ly Thi Minh Hai
	Climate Change Advisor	Adrian Enright
World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)		Do Trung Hoan
European Forestry Institute (EFI)	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance & Trade (FLEGT facilitator)	Tim Dawson
Sub-national stakeholders in Lam Dong province		
Lam Dong Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)	Director	Le Van Minh
Center for Agriculture and Forestry Extension, Lam Dong Province/ UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme	Director/ Provincial Focal Point	Nguyen Truc Bong Son
[Lam Dong Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)]	Former Director	Pham Van An
Da Lat University, Department of Environmental Science	Dean	Lam Ngoc Tuan
Di Linh District People’s Committee (DPC)	Vice Chairman	Le Viet Phu
Di Linh State Forest Company	Officers	
Di Linh District Forest Protection Station	Rangers	
Bao Thuan Commune People’s Committee	Chairman	

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Institution	Position	Name
(CPC), Di Linh District	Vice Chairman	
	Forest Protection Officer	
	Agricultural Officer	
Kala To Kraeng village, Bao Thuan Commune	Villagers	
Lam Ha District People's Committee (DPC)	Vice Chairman	Dinh Tan Bai
Phu Son Commune People's Committee (CPC), Lam Ha District	Chairman	
	Vice Chairman	
Pre Teng 2 village, Phu Son Commune	Villagers	

Annex E – Theory of Change Analysis

1 Identification of intended impacts

Explicit statements of impact were not made in the original Joint Programme Document (JPD). Programme goal (Viet Nam REDD-ready by 2012) and the stated objective (Viet Nam develops an effective REDD regime) can be considered to be an intermediary state necessary to achieve the implicit impact of any REDD programme – climate change mitigation through reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from avoided deforestation and forest degradation.

In addition to the inherent climate change mitigation impact of an effective REDD mechanism, the JPD also discusses ‘*social impacts and potential additional benefits*’ of such a national-level REDD regime. However, these social impacts are not explicitly stated in the project’s logical, results or monitoring frameworks. Ethnic minority livelihoods and forestland tenure are mentioned in the JPD in terms of stakeholder *inputs* to sustainable forest management and monitoring for REDD, but not as potential *outcomes* of an effective national REDD regime.

Co- or multiple benefits of REDD, identified in, and elaborated since, the UNFCCC Bali Roadmap (2007) are not explicitly identified as programme impacts. These multiple benefits broadly include: pro-poor rural development; improved forest governance; respect for human rights; biodiversity conservation and maintained/enhanced ecosystem service provision; and positive climate change adaptation impacts.

The relevant One-Plan outcome, identified in the programme’s results framework, also encapsulates intended impacts not explicitly stated in the intervention logic, namely reduced poverty, economic growth and improved quality of life in Viet Nam through ‘*adequate policies and capacities for environmental protection and the rational management of natural resources*’.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the principle implied impact of the programme is climate change mitigation through reduced GHG emissions from land use, with acknowledgement that an effective national REDD regime could also contribute to other, social impacts – reduced poverty, sustainable rural livelihoods; improved forest governance - desirable to programme implementers.

2 Verification of programme logic

Prior to analysis and verification of programme logic, note should be made of some inherent weaknesses of the higher orders of the logic – goal and objective – as originally formulated in the JPD.

Goal — by the end of 2012 Viet Nam is REDD-ready and able to contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation nationally and regionally

Objective - to assist the Government of Viet Nam in developing an effective REDD regime in Viet Nam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emissions

The first point to note is that both goal and objective are more statements of intermediary states rather than impacts. This makes identification of programme impacts more challenging (see section 1), and climate change mitigation impacts of REDD remain implicit and assumed.

A second point to note is that the inclusion of national ‘and’ regional elements in both goal and objective statements weakens them from an intervention logic perspective and elevates programme

ambition by setting dual goals/objectives, i.e. the programme aims to achieve two things at once, or in this case, the same thing (emissions reductions) at two scales (national and regional) simultaneously.

Thirdly, there are some inherent conceptual flaws in goal and objective statements. The goal is *undefined* because REDD+, under international climate change negotiations, remains undefined. Until such time as the details of an international REDD+ mechanism are agreed, it is challenging to define what constitutes REDD-readiness. The objective is *ill-defined* as use of the term REDD regime and what constitutes such a regime, is not clear.

The programme's logic, as encapsulated in its logical framework matrix, appears to have remained unmodified throughout the period of operations and comprises three potential results chains, one for each identified outcome:

Outcome 1: Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam

Outcome 2: Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services at provincial and district levels through sustainable development planning and implementation

Outcome 3: Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions

The logical framework matrix is the principal articulation of programme intervention logic and causal results chains - explicitly elaborating how activities deliver outputs, outputs achieve outcomes, and outcomes combine to deliver object – were not presented. For the purposes of verifying programme logic two results chains, comprising a revised theory of change for the programme, are elaborated in Annex I below.

Verifying the programme logic, descending down the hierarchy of intervention logic - from impact to outcomes to outputs – reveals largely robust chains of results. No significant outcomes are missing, and outputs are largely relevant, but a number can be improved through reformulation and a shift in emphasis on composite activities. No significant gaps are identified, but significant redundancies are. Outcome 3 on regional emissions displacement is arguably not necessary to develop an effective national REDD programme (or 'regime'). Although a tiered programme structure designed around geographical scale – with regional, national and subnational components – may appear superficially intuitive, programme progress reporting clear demonstrates the challenge to achieve the regional Outcome 3. A regional component is both unnecessary and overambitious. An additional argument could also be made that UN-REDD, as a global programme with regional structures, could or should address regional aspects of REDD+ outside of national programmes.

REDD+, as evolving under the international climate change negotiations, is national programmatic level mechanism, requiring subnational operationalization. Consequently, a focus on national-level outcomes, with a view to piloting subnational operationalization is highly appropriate. At the national-level, the key elements of a REDD+ readiness programme are present at the output level but their formulation could be modified to achieve greater relevance to Outcome 1 and a programme objective of an effective REDD+ programme. The single most significant output reformulation would be Output 1.3, Framework national REDD program (strategy), where the emphasis should have been on consultative processes of analysing the various policy and measure (PaM) options available to Viet Nam that could be adopted to reduce emissions from deforestation/degradation, and which would comprise a national REDD+ strategy/programme. Such a multi-stakeholder dialogue on PaMs, as a core element of the readiness process, should form the basis of all other national REDD+ programme architecture design and development, in addition to informing the substantive content of any national REDD+ programme design.

At a subnational level (Outcome 2), an emphasis on piloting of models and mechanisms to operationalize, and inform, a future national REDD+ programme's formulation would be most appropriate. An effective national REDD+ programme would require systems and capacity in place across multiple provinces, which is beyond the scope and scale of a UN-REDD national programme, and beyond the remit of the implementing UN agencies. Design and field testing 'proof-of-concept' pilots at the subnational level would, however, make a significant and necessary contribution to an effective national REDD+ programme objective. Essentially, subnational readiness interventions should reflect those at the national (Outcome 1), i.e. development of:

- Institutional systems and capacity
- Reference scenario and monitoring system
- Measures to reduce emissions/enhance removal mainstreamed into planning processes
- Local-level benefit distribution systems (BDS)
- Stakeholder engagement strategy

The original programme logic comprised most of these key outputs for Outcome 2. Notable omissions included: a) subnational institutional systems and capacity development (with an emphasis more on the capacity than the systems), reflecting Output 1.1 at the national level; and b) establishment of subnational reference scenarios, such as RELs/FRLs⁸², although a (participatory) monitoring system was included. BDS and awareness raising were included in the original programme logic under Outcome 2, although these are relevant and necessary elements of subnational readiness, it could be argued, that at the very early stages of REDD+ evolution when the programme was operational, high levels of risks are attached to premature engagement of local stakeholders in discussing an incentive-based mechanism that has yet to identify clear and secure financing.

3 Analysis of programme outcome-impact pathways

3.1 Identification of intermediate states

As presented at the very beginning of this review of outcomes to impacts (ROI), the original programme goal (Viet Nam REDD ready) and objective (effective national REDD+ regime) can be considered as intermediary states between Outcomes 1 and 2 and the implied impact of reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (see section 1). The revised theory of change presented in Annex I illustrates these intermediary states and elaborates on a third – subnational systems and capacity to operationalise the national REDD+ programme.

To summarise, the intermediary states for the programme would be:

1. Viet Nam is REDD+ ready – 'meta'-intermediary state comprising the following elements:
2. National REDD+ programme – comprising the five key elements reflected in the programme's outputs (institutional structures and capacity; carbon accounting system; identification of policies and measures; benefit distribution system; and stakeholder engagement strategy)
3. Subnational systems and capacity to operationalize the national REDD+ programme functional in at least one province - a single pilot province being an appropriate scale of ambition for the level of programme resources

If the programme, in its first phase of operations has achieved these intermediary states, then impacts should be achieved if assumptions are met and catalytic 'impact drivers' are in operation (see section 3.2).

3.2 Identification of impact drivers and assumptions

A comprehensive identification of impact drivers and assumptions, that would respectively catalyse or hinder transition from achieved outcomes to impacts via intermediary states, is not possible in the

⁸²Reference emission levels/forest reference levels

timeframe of this rapid desk-based ROTI. An attempt to capture the most important impact drivers and assumptions is presented in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. and illustrated in the figure at the end of this note.

Impact drivers are the necessary catalytic changes that are required to convert outcomes into impacts, and are, to some degree, within the programme's control or influence. Assumptions are equally conditional to achieving impact from outcomes, but are largely beyond the programme's control or influence. For the purposes of this final evaluation of the first phase of operations, the first point to note is that assumptions are numerous, diverse and substantive, i.e. REDD+ readiness is a high-risk intervention. But this risk is generic to any and all REDD+ readiness investments and not particularly to the UN-REDD Viet Nam national programme. Perhaps the single greatest assumption that all REDD+ readiness interventions operate under is that international climate change negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) can result in a legally binding compliance regime that incorporated REDD+ within a timeframe in which political appetite can be maintained among Parties to the convention.

Impact drivers are also diverse and numerous, and preliminary document analysis indicates that the programme's first phase invested significant resources in attempting to ensure these impact drivers were in place and of sufficient critical mass to catalyse future change (impact). This is most evident in the extensive process embarked to develop a second phase of the Viet Nam national programme. At the time of this evaluation, a second phase proposal is very close to approval with plans to showcase the signing of a second JPD scheduled for UNFCCC 18th Conference of the Parties.

Securing a second phase should significantly contribute to developing the following impact drivers:

- additional REDD+ readiness investments secured beyond programme's first phase
- intermediate financing for results-based action secured for demonstration phase of REDD+
- subnational operational elements of REDD+ are effectively replicated to multiple provinces

Areas where the first phase of operations, based on preliminary desk-based document analysis only, has identified impact drivers, but significant influence appears to have not yet to be achieved include:

- private sector engagement in sectors implicated as driving deforestation/degradation
- public sector engagement across the forestry and other sectors and line ministries
- co-ordinated with other REDD+ readiness investments⁸³, which have multiplied and diversified over the programme's lifetime

A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this rapid ROTI is that the first phase of the programme was overambitious in its original design, considering the resources (particularly time) available. Yet, the limitations of this phase of the programme in achieving intermediary states, and subsequent sustained impact, were identified and acknowledged early in implementation and much of the investment and actions required to achieve impact drivers and mitigate the risks of assumptions are to be addressed in the programme's second phase.

3.2.1 Principal impact drivers

Financial:

- additional REDD+ readiness investments secured beyond programme's first phase
- intermediate financing for results-based action secured for demonstration phase of REDD+
- private sector operators engaged in land use activities that drive deforestation/degradation are engaged and regulatory or financial alternatives identified through dialogue with industry

⁸³Notably, those investments implemented by VNFOREST together with other development partners, such as the delayed Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) readiness grant and possibility of a follow-on emissions reduction programme under the facilities Carbon Fund.

Institutional:

- additional REDD+ readiness interventions are delivered in a co-ordinated and coherent way to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of synergistic investments
- capacities to implement national REDD+ programme expanded horizontally across national government institutions (not individuals) and vertically down the hierarchical administrative structure to subnational levels
- if positive incentives from REDD+ are to be applied at the local level, statutory forestland tenure will need to be resolved to the point where ‘forest owners’ are unambiguous
- subnational operational elements of a national REDD+ programme are effectively replicated to multiple provinces to demonstrate GHG emissions reduction/enhanced removal potential at scale

Socio-political

- REDD+, as a cross-sectoral national policy instrument for forest protection and development with a triple bottom line (i.e. economic, environmental and social policy goals), accrues significant political capital at the highest levels of government
- Viet Nam proactively engages in international climate change negotiations to drive development of the REDD+ mechanism forward and mitigate risk of failing to achieve agreement on this aspect of an international comprehensive climate change regime

3.2.2 Principal assumptions**Financial:**

- long-term financing modalities for an international REDD+ mechanism identified and agreed before political appetite (on either ‘supply’ or ‘demand’ side) significantly wanes

Institutional:

- REDD+ presents significant incentive to ‘break fences’ maintaining inherently compartmentalised government structures and allow mainstreaming of REDD+ across forestry and other land-based productive sectors (address deforestation/degradation drivers)
- sub-national planning processes, and the institutions responsible for co-ordinating them, can effectively accommodate GHG emissions reduction/enhanced removals as an objective additional to those of socio-economic development and environmental sustainability

Socio-political:

- government invests in and ensures matching disincentives (i.e. effective law enforcement) for deforestation/degradation to balance potential incentives offered by REDD+
- broader multiple benefits now expected from REDD+ are politically acceptable can be cost-effectively safeguarded, above and beyond original climate change mitigation impacts

Economic:

- international REDD+ financing, if/when secured, can compete with opportunity costs of other productive land uses

Technical:

- carbon accounting and monitoring of adopted policies and measures (together with potential non-carbon benefits) are within the reach of existing institutional capacities and anticipated timeframes for full results-based action under REDD+

3.3 Synthesis and assessment of programme theory of change

A retroactive revised theory of change is presented in t A summary of an assessment of the original programme logical, elaborated to incorporate intermediary states and impact statements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary assessment of UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme Phase 1 theory of change

UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme Phase 1: 2009-2012							
Outputs	Outcomes	Outcome rating	Intermediary states	Intermediary state rating	Impact	Impact rating	Overall rating
1.1. National coordination mechanism							
1.2. National reference scenario							
1.3. Framework National REDD Program	1: Improved technical and institutional capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet		National REDD+ programme – comprising the five key elements reflected in the programme's outputs				
1.4. Benefit sharing system from national to local levels							
1.5. Communication materials for sharing lessons internationally		B		D	GHG emissions reduced /removals enhanced from forestry and other land uses in Viet Nam		BD
2.1. District-level forest land-use plan mainstreaming REDD potential	2: Improved Capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services at district-level through sustainable development planning and implementation		Subnational systems and capacity to operationalize the national REDD+ programme functional in at least one province				
2.2. Participatory C-stock monitoring							
2.3. Benefit sharing systems							
2.4. Awareness raising at local levels							
3.1. Quantification of regional displacement of	3: Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional		Regional inter-governmental mechanisms agreed on				

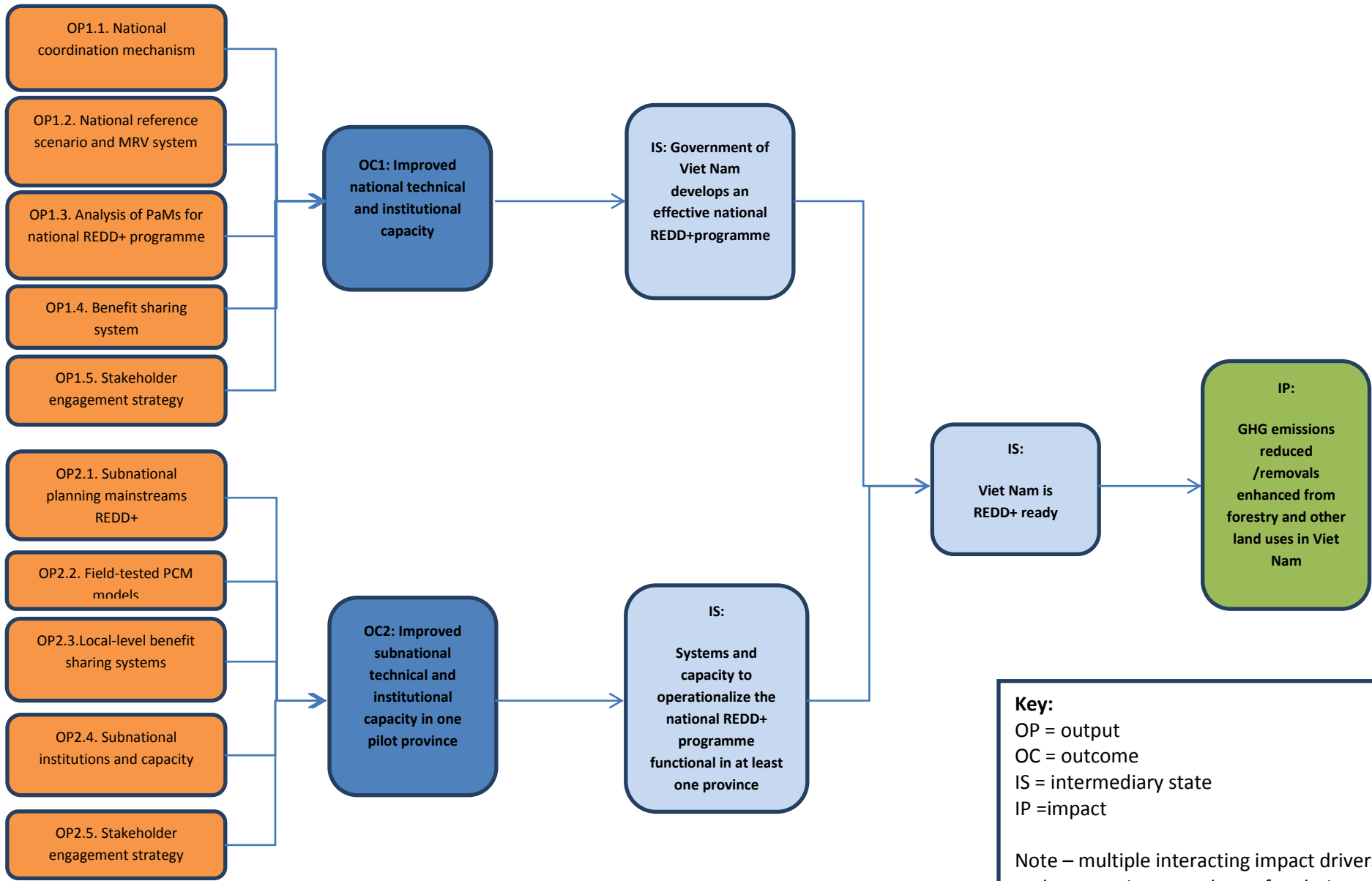
UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme Phase 1: 2009-2012

Outputs	Outcomes	Outcome rating	Intermediary states	Intermediary state rating	Impact	Impact rating	Overall rating
emissions risk 3.2. Regional dialogue on displacement of emissions risk 3.3 Analysis of linkage with non-REDD initiatives to reduce cross-border flow of illegal timber	displacement of emissions		reduce regional displacement of emissions				

RATING	OUTCOME	INTERMEDIARY STATES	IMPACT
A	A: The outcomes delivered were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after programme closeout.	A: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are in place and have produced secondary outcomes or impacts, with high likelihood that they will progress toward the intended impact.	+: measurable impacts achieved and documented within the programme life-span
B	B: The outcomes delivered were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after programme closeout.	B: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are in place and have produced secondary outcomes or impacts, with moderate likelihood that they will progress toward the intended impact.	
C	C: The outcomes delivered were not designed to feed into a continuing process after programme closeout.	C: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are in place, but are not likely to lead to impact.	
D	D: The intended outcomes were not delivered	D: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are not yet met.	

Interpretation of this assessment suggests that the original programme logic was sound in terms of outcomes 1 and 2. Yet, overambitious design coupled with no attempt to extend the results chains from outcomes to impacts, indicates that intermediary states are unlikely to be achieved and resultant impacts are unlikely to be realised without further and significant investment in REDD+ readiness. This status is implicitly acknowledged in the programme's investment in a substantial second phase of operations, which could have the prospects of fully achieving outcomes, realising intermediary states and a significantly higher chance of delivering impact if the many challenging assumptions can be met.

Simplified revised theory of change for the UN-REDD Viet Nam National Programme Phase 1: 2009-2012



Key:
 OP = output
 OC = outcome
 IS = intermediary state
 IP = impact

Note – multiple interacting impact drivers and assumptions not shown for clarity

Annex F - Financial information as of September 2012

PROGRAMME OUTCOME	UN ORGANISATION	IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS				Balance (E) A - D
		Amount Transferred by MPTF to Programme (A) ¹⁰	Cumulative Expenditures up to programme closure			
			Commitments (B)	Disbursements (C)	Total Expenditures (D) B + C	
Outcome 1: Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam	FAO	1,245,920	169,217	1,022,041	1,191,258	54,662
	UNDP	779,090	4,808	785,706	790,515	-11,425
	UNEP	87,772		85,850	85,850	1,922
Sub-total		2,112,782				
Outcome 2: Improved Capacity to manage REDD+ and provide other Payment for Ecological Services at district-level into sustainable development planning and implementation	FAO	221,730	667	205,663	206,330	15,400
	UNDP	643,767	63,452	533,687	597,139	46,628
	UNEP	92,428		93,912	93,912	-1,484
Sub-total		957,925				
Outcome 3: Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions	FAO	112,550	17,143	143,541	160,683	-48,133
	UNDP	54,756	1,815	35,758	37,573	17,183
	UNEP					
Sub-total		167,306				
Programme management	FAO					
	UNDP	859,890	13,166	861,366	874,531	-14,641
	UNEP					
Sub-total		859,890				
Programme Indirect Support Cost (7%)	FAO	110,614	4,900	104,179	109,079	1,535
	UNDP	163,625		163,625	163,625	0
	UNEP	12,614		12,614	12,614	0

Sub-total		286,853				
	FAO (Total):	1,690,814	191,926	1,475,424	1,667,350	23,464
	UNDP (Total):	2,501,128	83,241	2,380,142	2,463,383	37,746
	UNEP (Total):	192,814		192,376	192,376	438
	Grand TOTAL:	4,384,756	275,167	4,047,942	4,323,108	61,648

Annex G - Summary information on Viet Nam's UN-REDD programme outcomes and outputs

(provided in final progress report, 2012)

Outcome 1 - Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in VN – S

‘Overall progress’ towards this outcome at the end of project was described as:

- « A cross-ministerial National REDD+ Steering Committee was set up to enhance structural coordination among government agencies, with the National REDD+ Office as its standing office since January 2011. However, challenges on cross-ministerial coordination and involvement remain. Awareness raising and capacity building on REDD+ among key government agencies, even within VNFOREST, is still clearly weak. Coordination among stakeholders has been supported through a total of six sub-technical working groups under the National REDD Network, and they receive good participation and contributions. The National REDD+ Action Programme was approved in June 2012. This is one of the key achievements under Outcome 1. The MRV framework is a key document developed in Phase I. The framework has gone through a wide stakeholder consultation process and has been endorsed by the National REDD+ Office as the Ver.1.3 document for its essence to be integrated into the NRAP.... (to be reviewed again after further deliberations from UNFCCC). The document discusses measurement of activity data, development of country-specific emission factors and capacity and institutional needs through which GHG emissions and removals from the forestry sector will be reported.
- “Through coordination with other REDD+ projects, it was decided early on that work on REL/RL by the Programme would be carried out only through focused technical input to augment other on-going initiatives, namely that of JICA. National circumstances which relate to climate change have been well documented in various documents including the NRAP, R-PP, and the Phase 2 UN-REDD proposal. The study on ecological stratification based on ecological regions will contribute to develop REL and further implement MRV.
- “Lessons learned have been documented and shared widely with other countries and programs. In the 6th Policy Board meeting in March 2011 in Vietnam, such lessons-learned documents were shared with international participants and exchanges carried out with national and local partners on FPIC, PCM, NRAP, BDS. A final lesson learned report has been developed and ready to share. The report can be viewed at http://vietnam-redd.org/Upload/Download/File/Lessons_Learned_UN_REDD_VN_phase_1_final_1604.pdf

Output 1.1 - National coordination mechanism established (Original Output: “National coordination mechanism”) – HS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “Supported by the UN-REDD Programme, the National REDD Network was established in 2009, and had two sub-Technical Working Groups (STWG) - MRV and Local Implementation - quickly up and running. Another four have been added as of 2012. A website dedicated to serve the Network was launched in 2010 (vietnam-redd.org), also containing the description of all STWG.
- “The Network provided a stage for national stakeholder consultations, for example for the background document to the NRAP and the MRV framework document. Presentations by the STWG to the Network on their work were held regularly, although it is less clear if the mechanism to promote policy uptake has been successful.
- “The Cross-Ministerial REDD+ Steering Committee has provided inputs to the NRAP and guidance to the REDD+ process, especially in 2012.”

Output 1.2 – Data and information for national REL / RL for REDD available (Original: “National reference scenario for REDD”) - MS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “Review of methodologies for establishing RELs/RLs and RS and selection of a suitable method for national circumstances has been conducted.
- “Some applicable proposals have been made available such that Viet Nam has collaborated with other partners (Finland and JICA) in reviewing, digitizing and validating historical NFI data for REL development.
- “A study on ecological stratification has been completed. The main results include classified eco-region system, from which Viet Nam's territory is divided into two areas, 8 regions and 40 sub-regions.
- “On National Circumstances, as qualified international consultants could not be recruited thus could not be addressed.”

Output 1.3 – Framework National REDD+ Action Programme Strategy (“Framework National REDD Program (Strategy)”) - MS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “Drafting of the National REDD+ Action Programme started mid- 2010. A report on the possible content of the NRAP was submitted to VNFOREST in February 2011. This served as a background document for the NRAP development, and consultations with the National REDD Network were held in May 2011. After continued support from UN-REDD in the drafting, as well as after consultations in the GoV, the NRAP was signed by the Prime Minister 27 June 2012, through Decision 799/QD-TT, which clearly defines the role of relevant agencies in the REDD+ rollout through 2020. Parties invited to the NRAP consultation process after May 2011 was limited to other ministries, and the UN-REDD agencies.”

Output 1.4 – Performance based, transparent benefit sharing payment system from national to local levels (Original Output: Same) MU

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “A comprehensive BDS study was completed in 2010 that presented 17 policy recommendations. Further follow-up studies, such as on the use of opportunity cost analysis, piloting of payment scenarios, consultations with local communities on BDS and development of R co-efficients, have been completed to lay the basis for a legal decision.
- “Some of the recommendations on BDS were also reflected in the approved NRAP.
- “As part of the drafting process for the Phase 2 proposal, research has been done on the Forest Protection Development Fund and how it could be relevant for the set-up of the National REDD+ Fund.”

Output 1.5 – Communications material produced for sharing lessons nationally and internationally (Original Output: “Communications material for sharing lessons internationally”) - HS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “Programme has documented and updated the UN-REDD Viet Nam brochure, and fact sheet (NRP, FPIC, R-Coefficient, BDS, and MRV) to share nationally and internationally, e.g. Policy Board; Mexico; Ecuador; Oslo REDD+ exchange; World Environmental Day; COP 17; VNFOREST trainings.
- “The Programme is known for its FPIC implementation. Organizations like JICA, FFI came to learn about the FPIC implementation.
- “Many organizations interested in learning about implementation of REDD+ in Viet Nam (e.g. Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC), in Kyrgyzstan; National REDD+ Program of Vanuatu, the Laos PDR, Biodiversity Association.
- “Website continuously updated.”

Output 1.6 – National MRV system designed (Original Output: Not in original Log frame) - HS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “MRV framework document has been developed. The document focuses on description of the MRV System and its components, Safeguards, and monitoring of PaM. The draft version has been revised several times after numerous meetings of STWG-MRV, consulting with relevant stakeholders; and two technical workshops in July and August 2011. The final document has been endorsed by the National REDD+ Office and uploaded on the website at: vietnam-redd.org
- “Discussions on the development of the Land Monitoring System (LMS) in progress.
- “Allometric equations: PMU and VRO have discussed with relevant technical agencies (VFU, FIPI, FSIV and Tay Nguyen University) on:

- “Reviewing work on development of equations for forest timber volume and forest growth, biomass estimation and wood density;
- “Identifying the gaps and proposing activities need to be done in 2011 as well as for long term plan.”

Outcome 2 - Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other payment for Ecological Services at provincial and district levels through sustainable development planning and implementation - MS

« Overall progress » towards this outcome at the end of project was described as :

- “This outcome focuses specifically on integrating REDD+ into provincial and local development planning processes, involving local people in monitoring of carbon stocks, preparing for and piloting benefit distribution systems as well as awareness raising on REDD+. The effectiveness of awareness raising was also reviewed and completed in June 2012.
- “Recommendations on how to integrate opportunity cost analysis and historical land-use maps into the provincial planning process were developed. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Lam Dong integrated REDD+ into the provincial 2011-2020 Forest Protection Development Plan, which now awaits endorsement from the Lam Dong PPC. The next step would be for Lam Dong to allocate resources to REDD+ priority areas in the FPDP in the next Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP). In the development of the Phase 2 proposal, demonstration activities for Lam Dong were identified based on forest cover and forest cover change, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, spatial distribution of carbon and other forest services, spatial distribution of poverty, and opportunity costs of alternative land uses.
- “Thousands of villagers have been involved in REDD+ activities in Lam Dong. FPIC was piloted in 78 villages of 20 communes in the 2 pilot districts in 2010, involving 5,500 villagers, whereas stakeholder consultations on BDS targeted 11 villages of 4 districts in 2 provinces, Lam Dong and Bac Kan. The findings from activities such as piloting of payment scenarios, consultations with local communities on BDS and development of R-factors will be used to design a BDS, which will be tested under the National REDD+ Action Programme’s Phase 2.”

Output 2.1 – District level forest land use plan mainstreaming REDD potential (Original Output: “REDD potential mainstreamed in provincial and district-level forest land-use plan”) - MS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “In September 2011 maps and analysis of historical forest changes were developed for two districts in Lam Dong, which identified critical areas for REDD+ interventions. They will be used to mainstream REDD+ into the land-use planning process.

- “A methodology for assessment of opportunity cost for REDD+ was finalized in June 2011. Together with the land-use plans, it was subsequently recommended to use opportunity cost analysis as a tool when integrating REDD+ into the Forest Protection and Development Plans (FPDP).
- “Supported by the Programme, a provincial forest protection development master plan which has taken REDD+ considerations into account, is expected to be endorsed by the PPC in September 2012. After that, the allocation of budget to REDD+ interventions through the SEDP can be expected.
- “A detailed provincial planning approach for REDD+ was devised for Lam Dong province.”

Output 2.2 – Participatory C-stock monitoring (PCM) system *operational*(Original Output: “Participatory C-stock monitoring system”) - MU

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “PCM was planned to be tested on a larger scale in Di Linh and Lam Ha districts. This has been cancelled, and changed to a review of the PCM approach and a discussion of PCM with stakeholders. A manual has been produced in English and Vietnamese. Current discussions in the country are looking to expand the concept of PCM to Participatory Monitoring, not to be restricted to obtaining carbon related data for reporting (MRV) through participatory means, but to engage communities (and other stakeholders) for wider monitoring of REDD+ implementation.
- “The earlier request for assistance to piloting the NFI in two pilot districts from the Government, has been cancelled, as a relevant proposal could not be submitted to the Programme in time.
- “Nevertheless, piloting of the NFI is ongoing in two provinces to test methodologies and to explore how and to what extent local stakeholders could be involved in the forest monitoring activities before the GoV conducts the nation-wide forest inventory.”

Output 2.3 – Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems *defined* (Original Output: “Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems”) - MS

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- (“See elaboration of achievements under output 1.4”, i.e.): “A comprehensive BDS study was completed in 2010 that presented 17 policy recommendations. Further follow-up studies, such as on the use of opportunity cost analysis, piloting of payment scenarios, consultations with local communities on BDS and development of R co-efficients, have been completed to lay the basis for a legal decision. Some of the recommendations on BDS were also reflected in the approved NRAP.
- “As part of the drafting process for the Phase 2 proposal, research has been done on the Forest Protection Development Fund and how it could be relevant for the set-up of the National REDD+ Fund.”

Output 2.4 – Awareness on REDD+ *created at district and local levels* (Original Output: “Awareness raising at provincial, district and local levels”) - S

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “Together with RECOFTC the Programme conducted a capacity building needs assessment in the pilot province. A proposal has been made to build capacity for grassroots stakeholders in REDD+.
- “In collaboration with local radio and television in Lam Ha and Di Linh district, broadcasted regularly about Climate Change, Forest, REDD+ and UN-REDD activities. The Programme is providing local radio and television station news on REDD+ and events and activities.
- “Built a strong team of twenty one village facilitators who help to convey the message on climate change, forests and REDD+ to local people through regular activities and meetings at village and commune levels.”

Outcome 3 - Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions - U

« Overall progress » towards this outcome at the end of project was described as :

- “While this Outcome proved difficult to reach, mostly due to the sensitivity of this issue, some promising steps were made in 2012. A workshop with forest companies organized in Kon Tum Province (bordering Cambodia and Lao PDR) to address Sustainable Forestry Management and implications of REDD+ on cross-border timber flow issues was set up, and delegations from national forestry agencies in both Myanmar and Cambodia paid visits to Viet Nam. Viet Nam signed a MoU with Cambodia on forestry issues in July 2012, and shared its experiences with Cambodia as well as Myanmar in REDD+ readiness preparation as well as UN-REDD implementation. Viet Nam, Cambodia and Myanmar agreed to further promote the collaboration at the working level, through study exchanges and workshops.
- “Activities contributing to this outcome were also conducted through projects with other development partners, such as JICA and WWF or by the GoV itself.
- “Lastly, a more analytical assessment will be made through the final evaluation process and the UN organizations will provide an assessment as part of the evaluation.”

Output 3.1 – Drivers of regional emissions displacement and inter-sectoral leakage assessed (Original Output: “Quantification of regional displacement of emissions risk”) - U

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “A workshop was held in Kon Tum Province (bordering Cambodia and Lao PDR) with Vietnamese State-owned enterprises to discuss SFM and implications of REDD+ including cross-border timber flow issues.
- “The activities related to the establishment of a framework for assessment of international displacement of emissions are not progressing due to difficulty in identification of relevant

international authorities to lead the study. It is being proposed that the activities be taken up by the Global Programme”

Output 3.2 – Regional *synergies and collaboration* on REDD+ *enhanced* (Original Outputs 3.2, 3.3: “Regional dialogue on displacement of emissions risk”, “Analysis of opportunities for linkage with non-REDD initiatives to reduce cross-border flow of illegal timber”) - U

“Cumulative Progress” reported at end of project:

- “A regional workshop held in Bangkok in 2010 ranked elements of where collaboration between countries on REDD+ would be of interest.
- “Progress on regional cooperation between governments specifically facilitated by UN-REDD was slower than expected.
- “A delegation from Myanmar and Cambodia visited Viet Nam in July/August 2012, which is a good step in closer collaboration between the countries on REDD+ issues.”

Annex H - "Progress scores" according to the FCPF's "readiness assessment framework"

R-package progress scores

Green - Significant progress

Yellow - Progressing well, further development required

Orange - Further development required

Red - Not yet demonstrating

Outcome 1 - Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in VN - S

- **Output 1.1 - National coordination mechanism established (Original Output: "National coordination mechanism") – HS**
- **Output 1.2 – Data and information for national REL / RL for REDD available (Original: "National reference scenario for REDD") - MS**
- **Output 1.3 – Framework National REDD+ Action Programme Strategy ("Framework National REDD Program (Strategy)") - MS**
- **Output 1.4 – Performance based, transparent benefit sharing payment system from national to local levels (Original Output: Same) MU**
- **Output 1.5 – Communications material produced for sharing lessons nationally and internationally (Original Output: "Communications material for sharing lessons internationally") - MS**
- **Output 1.6 – National MRV system designed (Original Output: Not in original Log frame) - S**

Outcome 2 - Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other payment for Ecological Services at provincial and district levels through sustainable development planning and implementation - MS

- **Output 2.1 – District level forest land use plan mainstreaming REDD potential (Original Output: "REDD potential mainstreamed in provincial and district-level forest land-use plan") - MS**
- **Output 2.2 – Participatory C-stock monitoring (PCM) system operational(Original Output: "Participatory C-stock monitoring system") –MU**
- **Output 2.3 – Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems defined (Original Output: "Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems") - MS**
- **Output 2.4 – Awareness on REDD+ created at district and local levels (Original Output: "Awareness raising at provincial, district and local levels") - MS**

Outcome 3 - Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions - U

- **Output 3.1 – Drivers of regional emissions displacement and inter-sectoral leakage assessed (Original Output: “Quantification of regional displacement of emissions risk”) - U**
- **Output 3.2 – Regional synergies and collaboration on REDD+ enhanced (Original Outputs 3.2, 3.3: “Regional dialogue on displacement of emissions risk”, “Analysis of opportunities for linkage with non-REDD initiatives to reduce cross-border flow of illegal timber”) – U**