

Minutes of the 4th Meeting National Steering Committee on REDD+
held on 13th December, 2016
in the Committee Room of the Ministry of Climate Change

The fourth meeting of the National Steering Committee (NSC) on REDD+ was held under the chairmanship of the Federal Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change on 13th December, 2016. The meeting was attended by members of the NSC (**Annex – I**).

2. The meeting started with the recitation from the Noble Quran followed by welcome remarks by the chair who mentioned the complex nature of the emerging concept of REDD plus and the need for continuous capacity building of the concerned officials and other stakeholders, both in the provinces and the society at large.
3. The IG Forests stated that objective of the meeting was to take on board the members of the NSC and to ensure support, transparency and facilitate effective and efficient communication for successful implementation of REDD+ readiness activities in the country. The IGF further elaborated on the overall linkages of REDD+ to the UNFCCC process, GEF and Green Climate Fund, and the steps taken by the MoCC to take benefit of these opportunities.

AGENDA ITEM 1: PROGRESS OF PAKISTAN'S REDD+ READINESS PROJECT

(i) Dr. Ghulam Akbar, National REDD+ Coordinator (NRC) gave a detailed presentation on the concept of REDD+ and its importance. Thereafter, the NRC presented the progress of Pakistan's Readiness Process which was much appreciated by the participants.

(ii) Dr. Akbar also mentioned that according to decisions of Conference of Parties (COP) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), REDD+ is to be implemented in three phases i.e. phase 1 (awareness raising, capacity building and institutional strengthening), phase 2 (further capacity building and piloting) and phase 3 (result based financing) and that this project will bring Pakistan to be in phase 2 or early phase 3 by mid of 2018.

(iii) Inspector General Forests (IGF) further elaborated that the Paris Agreement (PA) has a strong clause (Article 5 of PA) on REDD+ where developing country parties are encouraged to implement REDD+. He further added that keeping in view the meagre funding for the REDD+ Readiness Project of Pakistan (RPP) for Phase 2, the funds from Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) project, as foreseen by MoCC, were to be used to synchronize the RPP project activities so that the funding for Phase 2 pilot sites in the state and *Guzara Forests* of Murree, Kahuta and Hazara could be used to test the systems developed under RPP.

(iv) Dr. Akbar requested the need of cooperation and commitment from all the provinces on following aspects to make this project a success:

1. Establishment of REDD+ Cells in provinces along with Grievance Implementation Units.
2. Effective cooperation from Provinces with National REDD+ Office and the international consulting firms.
3. Data sharing as required for completion of studies in accordance to standards set and acceptable to the UNFCCC.
4. Sustainability of REDD+ initiative at federal and provincial levels after the gestation period of the current project.

(v) The Chair after consulting and getting inputs from all participants highlighted that the recent COP 22 at Marrakesh in addition to other items took stock of the provisions of forests and REDD+ in the Paris Agreement that has been ratified by the GOP. He added that it is now upto the provinces to take full benefits of the tremendous funding opportunities form both market and non-market based mechanisms, to earn cash for the communities that save and do not cut trees.

Decisions:

- 1) A proposal be developed for establishment of the National REDD office from the regular budget of the Ministry

Action by National REDD Coordinator

- 2) All provinces to take up cases with their respective governments to establish provincial REDD offices

Action by all provinces, AJK, GB and FATA

- 3) The provinces will extend upon full support and share the necessary data with the National REDD+ Office and International Consulting Firms to undertake different studies as pre-requisites.

Actions by all provinces, AJK, GB and FATA including relevant NGOs, CSOs and CBOs working in respective provinces/ regions

AGENDA ITEM 2: DISCUSSION ON PERFORMANCE OF PROVINCIAL REDD+ CELLS

(i) The chair invited the provinces to share their experiences while working for REDD+. The representatives from provinces and regions shared the progress of REDD+ in their respective jurisdictions as below:

a) FATA

Mr. Hayat Ali Khan, the provincial REDD+ focal point of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), informed the committee that the Provincial Grievance and Implementation Unit (PGIU) and provincial REDD+ focal person have been notified by FATA Secretariat. He also mentioned that some officers have enhanced their capacities by attending relevant trainings organized by Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI), Peshawar in the recent past.

b) Khyber Pukhtunkhwa

Mr. Siddique Khatak, Chief Conservator of Forests, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa updated the committee that KPK forest department through its own funding sources has developed allometric equations for major forest tree species through destructive sampling that will be used to assess the above ground biomass and carbon content of the forests of KPK. He further added that the process of development of land use maps and FREL/ FRL at sub-national level for KPK are also under process.

c) Gilgit-Baltistan

Mr. Sajjad Haider, Secretary Forest, Wildlife and Environment Department of Gilgit-Baltistan informed the committee about the progress of REDD+ readiness arrangements in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). He said that GB forest department, through its own funding sources, developed biomass tables, volumes tables and allometric equations for 05 major conifer tree species (i.e. *Pinus wallichiana*, *Pinus rouxburghi*, *Pinus gerardiana*, *Abies pindro* and *Picea smithiana*) and one broad leaved tree specie (i.e. *Quercus ilex*) with the technical assistance of PFI, Peshawar. He further added that field data collection through stratified random sampling have been completed for carbon and biomass assessment of GB forests and final results will soon be available.

d) Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Mr. Abdul Rauf Qureshi, Project Director (Watershed)/ Conservator of Forests AJK, updated that due to lack of funding, there is not much progress on REDD+ in AJK. However, the Provincial Grievance and Implementation Unit PGIU, provincial REDD+ focal person and members of the working groups on REDD+ have been notified while REDD+ cell will soon be established.

e) Punjab

Mr. Iftikhar ul Hasan Farooqi, Divisional Forest Officer informed that the Rawalpindi North Forest Division of Punjab Forest Department launched a project on forest carbon stock assessment few years back which is now almost in completion phase. He further added that PGIU, Provincial REDD+ focal person and members of working groups on REDD+ have also been notified by the Punjab forest department.

f) Sindh

Mr. Abdul Sattar Khatri, Conservator of Forests from Sindh Forest Department informed the committee that REDD+ cell will soon be established in Sindh. He stressed that the lease of forest land in Sindh has to be discouraged and abandoned to prevent illegal cutting within the forest areas.

g) Balochistan

Mr. Naeem Javed, Deputy Conservator of Forests from Balochistan Forest Department mentioned that there is no progress on REDD+ relevant activities in Balochistan due to lack of capacities and financial support, however, like other provinces provincial REDD+ focal person and members of working groups on REDD+ have been notified by the Balochistan Forest Department.

AGENDA ITEM 3: DISCUSSION ON OTHER SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS RELATING TO REDD+

After completing the discussion on important agenda items, the Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change left for another important meeting. However, the discussions on different issues continued under the chairmanship of Dr. Jamal Nasir, President of Pakistan Green Task Force.

The IG Forests highlighted the need for the forestry professionals to reach out to the society at large as forestry is a multi-dimensional issue and only foresters should not be expected to address the issue of deforestation. He acknowledged the support of Dr. Jamal Nasir over the years when there was no project for REDD+ at the federal level. The IG Forests emphasized the need to get support from political leadership, media and the society at large to curb deforestation. He further added that Dr. Jamal Nasir is one such strong support.

Mr. Suleiman Shah, Director Programmes from National Commission on Status of Women put forth a suggestion that woman representatives from forest communities should also be included as members of the NSC on REDD+. His suggestion was appreciated by all the participants of the committee.

Dr. Jamal Nasir invited representatives of forest owners to share their views to move ahead and make Pakistan REDD ready by the end of project period.

Mr. Saeed Afzal, representative of forest owners from GB, stated that forests are the only source of income in major forest regions of GB and without the provision of alternative income sources or incentives to the forest dependent communities, it would be a challenging task to make the REDD+ a reality on ground.

Mr. Javed Iqbal, Brig (R), representative of forest owners from Punjab, raised the issue of illegal cutting in Kahuta district of Punjab and requested the committee members to discourage such illegal activities and promote campaign to plant more trees.

IGF assured the forest owners that under REDD+ Readiness process, a system to address and respect the social safeguards will be established to ensure the full and effective participation of local communities and redress their grievances.

The chair Dr. Jamal Nasir assured that he will use his personal influence and resources to highlight REDD plus to the main decision makers of the country. He supported the demand to have female representatives and forest industry in the NSC.

Decisions

After detailed discussion, the following important decisions were made by the NSC which were endorsed and agreed by the all the participants of the meeting.

1. Two female representatives from forest communities will also be included in NSC to attend future NSC meetings.

The National REDD+ Office will request the concerned Provincial Departments to identify and nominate the female members from forest communities of respective provinces.

2. During the formation of provincial coordination and management committees, gender equity, maximum representation and participation of forest conservation committees, and other relevant stakeholders will be ensured.

Action by National REDD+ Office and Provincial REDD+ Focal Points/ PGIUs

3. To ensure the security and necessary no-objection letters from the competent authority regarding the visit of international firms to security sensitive areas, the provincial REDD+ focal points/ coordinators should get approval from respective home departments first and once the provincial approval will be accorded, the MoCC will request Interior Ministry to issue NOC, if still required.

Action: The International Consulting Firms will share their work plan with National REDD+ Office and PGIUs well before their visit to the respective provinces/ regions. Once the visit schedules are shared, the provincial REDD+ focal points will take up the process to get NOC from their home department.

4. One forest related industry will also be included as member of the NSC. The said industry should have been registered industry under the Trade Organization of Ministry of Commerce.

Action by National REDD+ Office

5. Number of NSC meetings to be at least one every quarter and some meetings may be convened in some forested area followed by a field trip.

The meeting ended with a note of thanks by the Chair Dr. Jamal Nasir with a strong commitment by all the participants showing their will and support to protect, conserve and enhance the natural forest resource base of Pakistan.