

REDD+ in Asia-Pacific:

# Are capacity building services meeting countries' needs?

## Key messages

- In the space of three years capacity building and training efforts have transformed REDD+ from a little-known concept to one which is widely recognized, discussed and on the agenda of national governments across Asia-Pacific. This high level of effort being dedicated to REDD+ awareness raising is shown by the fact that 146 organizations across Cambodia, Indonesia, The Philippines and Viet Nam are engaged in awareness raising activities.
- Alongside awareness raising, substantial progress has been made in capacity building for policy development and environmental safeguards in Asia-Pacific, but key gaps remain.
- Countries in the region need to address these gaps if they are to meet their national REDD+ planning objectives. These include:
  - » Insufficient attention to leveraging the mainstream media to raise public awareness about REDD+.
  - » A lack of awareness raising and technical support for the natural resource sector (e.g. agriculture, mining and forestry) to assist companies to incorporate REDD+ into their planning processes and engage in the REDD+ dialogue. For instance only two organizations in Indonesia were reported to provide capacity building services to the sector.
  - » Inadequate training for REDD+ fund management and benefit sharing. An exception to this is Viet Nam, with higher levels of service provision in fund management and benefit sharing.
  - » Few capacity building service providers engaged in developing national REDD+ baselines.
  - » There are relatively few organizations engaged in calculating the costs versus benefits of REDD+, despite it being a vital component of national REDD+ planning. There are even fewer organizations with experience in going beyond a calculation of just carbon revenue benefits and examining the important potential wider benefits of REDD+ for forest governance, institutional development, livelihood and ecosystem services.
  - » Not enough awareness raising services provided in local and tribal languages especially in the context of REDD+ pilot projects and in countries with a high diversity of ethnicities.
- REDD+ readiness progress in the region (and globally) is often dictated by the competencies and networks of the organizations leading capacity building, and not by the most pressing needs of each country.
- Without further attention paid to addressing the gaps identified (see recommendations in Section 4) the objectives contained within national REDD+ plans will likely not be met within the intended timeframes.

RECOFTC is the only international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity building for community forestry and devolved forest management in Asia - Pacific. Beginning as a knowledge hub in 1987, RECOFTC has actively supported the development of community forestry institutions, policies and programs in the region.



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## Why is this assessment needed?

Building capacity for implementing REDD+ is a key component of REDD+ readiness processes that have been underway for over three years. Backed by substantive funding by a large number of organizations, government agencies, communities and individuals, a multitude of organizations are conducting awareness raising and training activities are conducted in all REDD+ nations. The massive increase in capacity building during a rather short period begs the question of whether the organizations providing such services have the competencies to provide REDD+ capacity building, and whether they are meeting country needs in getting ready for REDD+.

Surprisingly, little is known about the competencies and networks of these organizations which include government agencies, NGOs, community groups, academic institutions, think-tanks, consultancies, legal firms and media companies. To fill this knowledge gap, RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests, with financial and advisory support from the Global UN-REDD Programme through the United Nations Environment Programme, assessed the strengths and weaknesses and identified the gaps in the capacity building services being provided against Asia-Pacific countries' REDD+ readiness needs. This brief provides preliminary results of the assessment and recommendations to inform the REDD+ capacity building process in the region.

One stakeholder from our Indonesia workshop describes the lack of knowledge of capacity building services being provided in the country:

*"There are many good people from universities, research institutes, and government agencies who know very well about issues related to REDD+. The problem is each party is running by its own, so we do not know exactly what capacities building services are being provided."*

## What are the objectives of this study?

The objectives of the assessment were to:

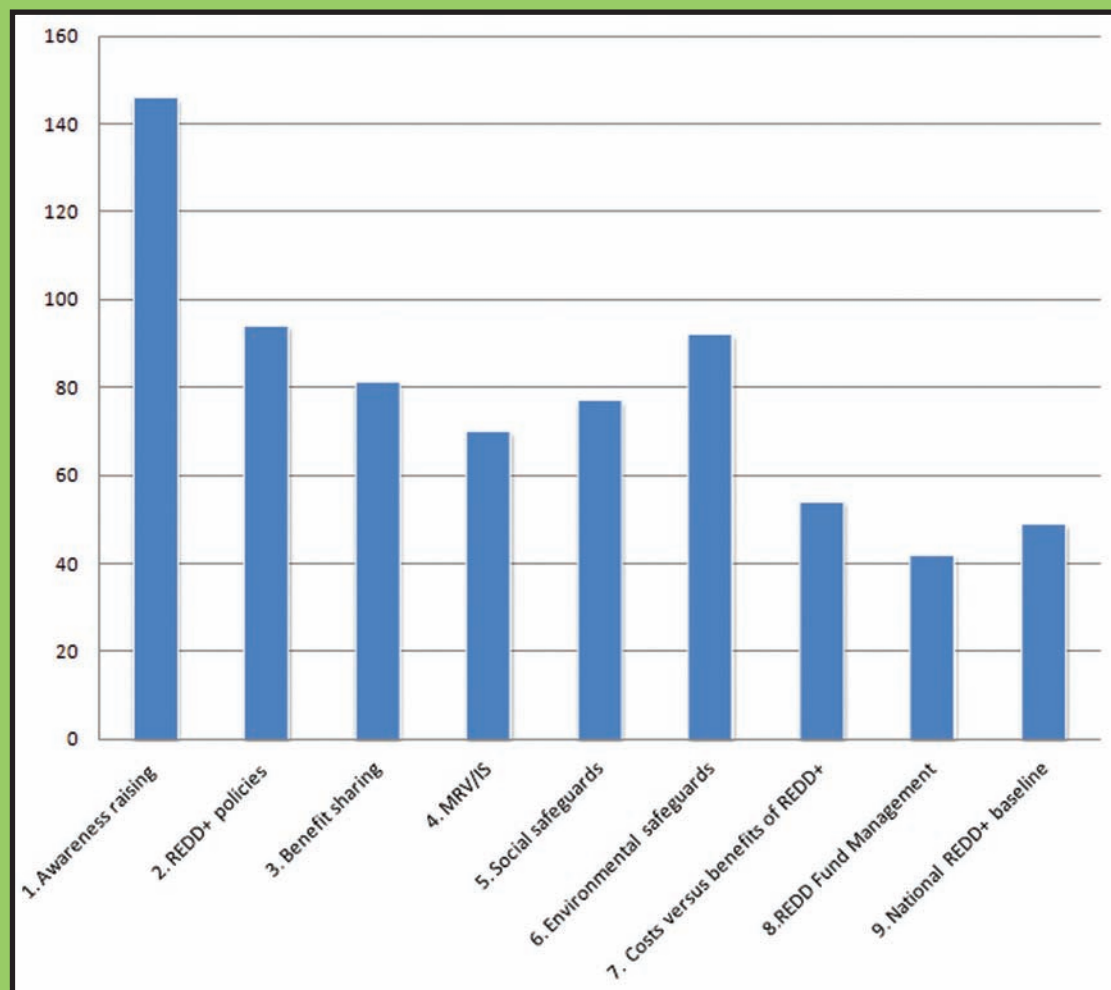
1. Identify and map the service providers involved in REDD+ capacity building in four countries: **Cambodia, Indonesia, The Philippines and Viet Nam.**
2. Identify the main objectives, competencies, type and quality of services being offered by leading service providers, their target audiences and key achievements. These are divided between the following nine main capacity building themes:
  - Awareness raising and REDD+ knowledge dissemination
  - REDD+ Policies and Measures
  - Benefit sharing
  - Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV)/ Information systems (IS)
  - Social safeguards
  - Environmental safeguards
  - Calculating the potential costs versus benefits of REDD+
  - REDD+ Fund Management
  - Developing the national REDD+ baseline
3. Identify the gaps in capacity building service provision between what is needed most in each focal country and what is actually being delivered.
4. On the basis of these gaps provide recommendations for strengthening and coordinating the actions of:
  - Capacity building service providers and programs nationally and regionally
  - National governments
  - Donor agencies and the international community including UN-REDD



# 1. An overview of capacity building service providers

Figure 1 provides an overview of service providers active under the main capacity building themes across Cambodia, Indonesia, The Philippines and Viet Nam. This is followed by Figure 2, which provides a country-by-country breakdown of the percentage of service providers active under each theme. Sections 2 and 3 provide a narrative analysis of the major capacity building strengths and gaps shown in these graphs.

Figure 1: Total number of service providers addressing each main capacity building theme across the study countries



Awareness raising has clearly been the focus of many service providers in Asia-Pacific (146 of the total 166 long-listed service providers surveyed). The difference between awareness raising and the second most popular theme, REDD+ policy making, is striking (and explained further in Section 2).

The position of REDD+ policy making as receiving the 2nd highest level of attention is in accordance with Phase 1 of the phased approach to REDD+ readiness<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on policies and planning. Somewhat less expected is the presence of environmental safeguards within this same banding of 80 and 100 service providers. This may be due to a high level of involvement from international conservation NGOs in the REDD+ readiness process, with a mandate for biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation.

Benefit sharing, MRV and social safeguards all fall within the next banding of between 60 and 80 service providers. This again reflects the fact that many countries are in Phase 1 of REDD+ readiness, with countries such as Viet Nam now designing a REDD+ benefit distribution system.

Calculating the costs and benefits of REDD+, REDD+ fund management and estimating the national REDD+ baseline received less attention, with only between 40 and 60 organisations providing capacity building services in these areas. This is of pressing concern as each of these are essential elements of the REDD+ policy and planning process and implementation.

<sup>1</sup> Phase 1: Policies and planning; Phase 2: Policy implementation and piloting; Phase 3: Payments for performance

There is considerable variation between countries in the number of capacity building service providers and the main capacity building themes they are addressing. As reflected in Figure 1, awareness raising has been the principle focus of capacity building efforts – particularly in The Philippines where 97% of services providers are active in this area.

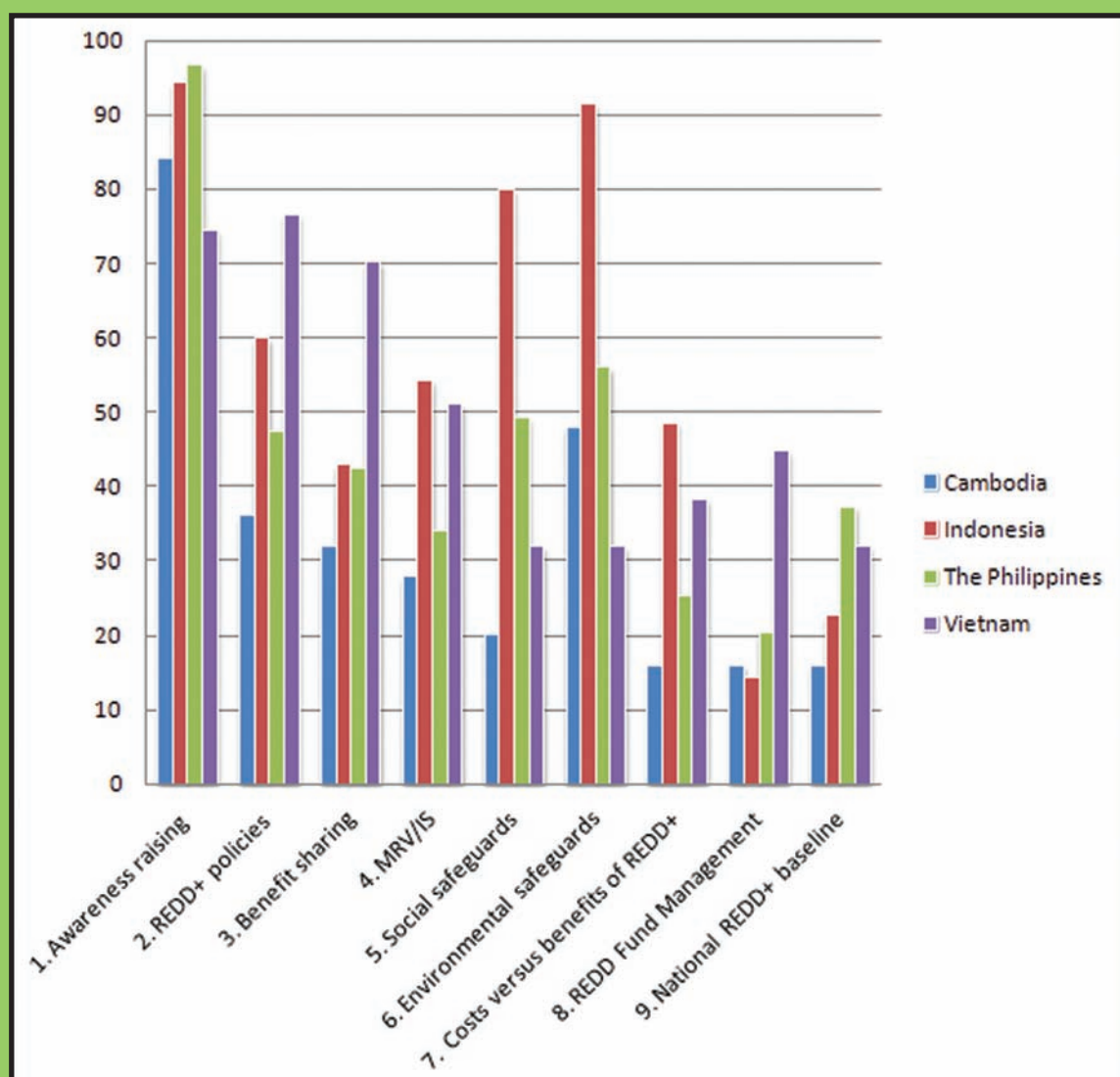


Figure 2: The percentage of service providers addressing each main capacity building theme in the study countries

REDD+ policymaking only receives noticeably higher attention than other themes in Viet Nam and receives mid-level attention in other countries. A similar pattern is reflected for benefit sharing and only mid-level attention is paid to MRV across the study countries.

There are pronounced differences in the number of service providers focusing on social and environmental safeguards between the countries. In Indonesia and The Philippines these reportedly receive much more attention than in Cambodia and Viet Nam. This may be associated with a greater emphasis on community ownership of forest land in The Philippines and a strong NGO presence in national REDD+ planning. In Indonesia, this may be due to a large number of organizations being involved in REDD+ pilot project activities, which requires the development of environmental and social safeguards at a project level.

Capacity building services for the calculation of the costs and benefits of REDD+ receive little attention across the board. The only country where serious attention is being paid to REDD+ fund management is Viet Nam. Capacity building for setting the national REDD+ baseline receives low attention in every country (except perhaps The Philippines). This again is of particular concern in Indonesia, where only eight organizations are engaged in providing training for setting the national baseline in the largest REDD+ nation in the region.

## 2. Key capacity building strengths

Consultation with leading service providers in each study country revealed the following capacity building themes where service provision is highest and is leading to relatively quick REDD+ readiness progress.

- Awareness raising** – Considerable resources are directed at raising general awareness of REDD+ with 88 % of the organizations reviewed reporting activities in this area. However, services have focused on policymakers, NGOs and academia. Far more attention has to be paid to local government officials, communities and natural resource industries (the latter being a significant driver of deforestation). REDD+ awareness has slowly grown outside of government forestry and environment agencies to other industry-sector agencies, although their levels of awareness are basic.

**“Awareness raising has particularly targeted local communities in ‘project’ areas. Reach beyond such areas remains limited.”**

The most common medium for awareness raising have been workshops and publications – again reflecting the government and NGO audience. Some leading service providers also use video (e.g. animated films), television and radio to raise public awareness. This is particularly useful when addressing illiterate audiences, though not yet widespread. In some countries such as Indonesia, the national media have played an important role in raising general awareness on REDD+ although there have been challenges associated with raising false expectations amongst the public (see Section 3).

The majority of local-level awareness raising has been focused on communities living near existing or planned REDD+ pilot projects and pilot districts selected under the UN-REDD National Programmes (e.g. in Indonesia and Viet Nam). Awareness raising has particularly targeted local communities in “project” areas. Reach beyond such areas remains limited. One reason for this is the low number of qualified and informed trainers who clearly understand the audiences and tailor their efforts accordingly. As a result, many local communities, NGOs government officials and industry representatives are unaware of REDD+, if there is no external project at their doorstep. Some programs are seeking to address this gap (see box below).

### RECOFTC - Grassroots REDD+ capacity building

This US\$1.2 million Norad supported project started in 2009 and focuses on Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal and Viet Nam. The project began with needs assessments being conducted within each country, and based on the knowledge gaps identified in these assessments specialized materials, manuals, and training courses in local languages were created to address these gaps. RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests also works with local radio, television, and newspapers to raise awareness of REDD+ and climate change. Before and after trainings, surveys are conducted to closely monitor and evaluate participants’ progress and information retention, as well as the appropriateness of the materials in different contexts. To date 11,000 community members have attended awareness raising sessions with 350 national and sub national government and NGO representatives receiving four-five day REDD+ training.

*Source: RECOFTC (2011), Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+; Pers. communication Chandra Silori*

- **REDD+ policy-making** – Over the past three years progress in the capacity of local and national organizations to contribute to REDD+ policy making has been made, although international consultancies and NGOs are still dominant in providing capacity building services for policy formation.

The percentage of organizations providing capacity-building services for policy making varies considerably. For example, in Viet Nam 77% of the service providers reviewed were engaged in capacity building for REDD+ policy making, although in Cambodia this number was much lower at 36%. Capacity building efforts have allowed a greater range of organizations to take part and contribute to REDD+ consultations and planning but this increase has been slower than it should be for indigenous and local community groups.

- **Environmental safeguards** – slightly more than half of organizations reviewed are focusing on the development and implementation of environmental safeguards. This may be partly explained by the high level of activity from large conservation NGOs in REDD+. There may be an opportunity being missed here where the knowledge being built on environmental safeguards in the conservation sector is not being transmitted to the wider community of local service providers and the private sector.









### 3. Key capacity building service gaps

The assessment reveals numerous capacity-building themes where service provision is lowest and potentially holding back REDD+ readiness progress.

- Insufficient attention to awareness raising in the media and in local or tribal languages** – The impact of awareness raising efforts is being undermined by a lack of information in languages spoken by local communities and indigenous peoples who live in and around forest areas. For instance, out of 24 leading service providers consulted only half delivered services in local or tribal languages. Often REDD+ terminology is not well defined in national, let alone local and tribal languages, which contributes to confusion over what REDD+ means. In some cases, this is exacerbated by poor media understanding of the concept of REDD+ and the proliferation of inaccurate information, especially at the sub-national level. Sometimes false expectations of future flows of finance to local communities and indigenous peoples have been raised or local people were informed that their rights to forest resources would be curtailed.
- Lack of capacity building services to natural resource industries** – Out of 24 short-listed service providers consulted, only six have any form of REDD+ readiness engagement or support for land-use industries. This is a cause for concern given their role as drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and the dominant influence they will have on the eventual success or failure of REDD+.
 

**“Out of 24 short-listed service providers consulted, only six have any form of REDD+ readiness engagement or support for land-use industries.”**
- Inadequate support for REDD+ fund management** – Aside from Viet Nam, REDD+ fund management received little attention. This is in direct contrast to the fact that one of the most common concerns over REDD+ is the poor track record of the forest sector and government finance departments in managing large sums of donor money. This is of particular concern in Indonesia which has received much larger inflows of donor and private REDD+ funds than the other countries, but where only five of the 42 organizations are engaged in capacity building efforts. Competencies in fund management are clearly weak. This is combined with a lack of financial management capacity building services for national or local NGOs that are beginning to receive and manage private REDD+ finance.
- More attention to calculating the costs and benefits of REDD+** – Only few organizations are providing capacity building for calculating the costs and benefits of REDD+, despite estimates providing a vital input for national REDD+ policy making and planning. There are even fewer organizations with experience in going beyond calculating just carbon revenue benefits and examining the important wider potential benefits of REDD+ for forest governance, institutional development, livelihoods, and biodiversity and other ecosystem services.
- Not enough organizations engaged in establishing national REDD+ baselines** – One of the fundamental components of REDD+ readiness is the ability to establish and justify a national REDD+ baseline (often referred to as a national reference scenario). For example, only four service providers have experience in establishing REDD+ baselines in Cambodia compared to 21 involved in awareness raising. This should be a wake-up call for policy makers.
- A lack of adequate capacity building support for ‘training of trainers’ at a local and provincial level** – There are not yet sufficient ‘training of trainer’ services for local government and national NGOs to offer capacity building for local NGOs and community groups in technical and analytical REDD+ skills. These skills include socio-economic research and analysis, forest biomass, biodiversity and ecosystem service inventories, MRV and GIS skills and organizational management. Without addressing this gap REDD+ initiatives will continue to be led from the top, which may limit the wider growth of REDD+.

## 4. Recommendations to address these gaps

The following actions for policy makers, development partners and service providers are recommended to strengthen capacity building:

Capacity building gap	Recommended actions
<b>Insufficient attention to awareness raising with the media and in local and tribal languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase support to translate REDD+ awareness raising materials and terms from English and national languages into local and tribal languages.</li> <li>• Create simplified 'press friendly' information materials, design training for key journalists and engage the local media in capacity building.</li> <li>• Engage actively with the media, as in areas of low literacy an effective way of transmitting information is through radio and television programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of capacity building services to natural resource industries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage natural resource sector companies with a targeted REDD+ awareness campaign through industry roundtables, groups and companies that already show leadership on REDD+.</li> <li>• Encourage natural resource sector companies to participate at a greater scale in national REDD+ planning processes.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance to industry to help them take REDD+ into account in land-use planning. This may be through demonstrating potential REDD+ opportunities or the financial, social and environmental risks they may face if they continue operating in a business as usual fashion.</li> </ul>
<b>Inadequate support for REDD+ fund management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support departments of finance and REDD+ committees to review possible trust fund models for REDD+, including a review of similar arrangements used in other sectors, where state revenue is managed using a clear and transparent governance structure. These funds could follow existing donor trust fund models, or be in the form of revolving funds to allow for investment returns from carbon credit revenue<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Further financial management capacity support for national and local NGOs who may be required to receive and manage private REDD+ finance from the voluntary carbon market (and possibly in the future from compliance markets).</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> See the Conservation Finance Alliance & PwC 2010 report 'National REDD+ funding frameworks and achieving REDD+ readiness' for more information on REDD+ trust fund models.



Capacity building gap	Recommended actions
<b>Not enough organizations engaged in establishing national REDD+ baselines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building support to national governments and NGOs in accessing and analyzing remote sensing data for establishing historical deforestation rates.</li> <li>• Train government, national/local NGOs and community trainers in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The 'ground-truthing' of remote sensing data.</li> <li>» Socio-economic analysis to provide reliable business as usual and REDD+ scenarios.</li> <li>» Cross-referencing data from forest bio-carbon inventories, with remote sensing and sample-plot data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>More attention to calculating the costs versus benefits of REDD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage organizations with socio-economic, environmental economic and forest policy expertise to provide capacity building services to national NGOs, government and the private sector in analyzing the costs and benefits of REDD+. This can be carried out in specific pilot project areas and provinces or as part of a wider national program.</li> <li>• These organizations should also be engaged in capacity building for designing appropriate benefit sharing mechanisms at a national and sub-national level.</li> <li>• This capacity building should take into consideration the 'wider benefits' of REDD+ including the potential institutional strengthening it can provide, reforms that can be made to the forestry sector and the livelihood and ecosystem service benefits it can generate.</li> </ul>



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