

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



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Validation Workshop Report On Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Bangladesh

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Bangabandhu International Conference Center
Bangladesh

**Programme Management Unit (PMU)
UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme
Bangladesh Forest Department**

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME



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Executive Summary

The depletion of forest resources is a major environmental issue especially in the developing countries. Identification of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation is critical and mandatory to formulate effective and meaningful national strategies to save forest resources across the country. The UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme of Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) amassed a team of international and national consultants to identify the direct and indirect drivers that are deemed responsible for deforestation and forest degradation (D&D) in the country. The team is composed of Dr. Ian Thompson - an international consultant with expertise in REDD+, Dr. Mohammed Jashimuddin as Governance Specialist, Dr. Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman as a Natural Resource Economist, and Mr. Saiful Islam Khan as a GIS expert.

Apart from the methodology validation workshop in Dhaka, the D&D study team has completed nine workshops at eight different administrative divisions of the country plus one at the Rangamati Hill District. The summary findings were presented in the final validation workshop at the Bangabandhu National Conference Center (BNCC), Bangladesh on 12 January, 2017. This report is a brief summary of the final validation workshop.

The workshop was started with the welcome address by Mr. Rakibul Hasan Mukul, the Project Director, UN-REDD National Program, Bangladesh. The workshop was chaired by Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, the Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF). Among other, Mr. Muhammad Ziaur Rahman, Additional Secretary, MoEF and Mr. Goutam Dewan, Ex-Chairman, Rangamati Hill District Council were present as special guests in the workshop. The technical session was initiated with a detailed background on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (D&D) study by Dr. Ian Thompson, the team leader of the D&D study team. The GIS and land-use change scenarios were presented by Mr. Saiful Islam Khan. The methodological section on ranking the drivers of D&D and the results of socioeconomic analysis of the study were presented by Dr. Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman. Then, Dr. Thompson again took over and finished the total findings of the study except leaving the conclusion and recommendation sections presented by Professor Dr. Mohammed Jashimuddin.

The technical session was followed by a lively open discussion where participants actively took part to express their opinions and comments on the study done. While most of the speakers praised the methods and findings of the study, they also raised added some issues / drivers which they thought can be considered as drivers. These are governance issues, policy making strategy, coordination among government agencies, rights of indigenous communities to forest resources, political commitments, and climate change.

The study team clarified that all the issues raised are registered as drivers of deforestation and forest degradation with variable importance assigned by stakeholders differing from forest types to forest types. Some drivers are important for one forest type and some are less in other forest type. The report details out drivers by forest type i.e., hill, central, mangrove and coastal forests. The drivers at the national level resulted from cumulative importance assigned by stakeholders during workshop, key informant interview, survey questionnaire and literature review. Some drives were grouped into broader category for better understanding. For clarification, a glossary of terms will be annexed in the final version of the report. Based on the comments and/or suggestion obtained, it is clear that the study registered all drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

1. UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme

1.1 Background

In August of 2010, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh became a partner country of the UN-REDD Programme. The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative programme on reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation. The program assists developing countries like Bangladesh to build capacity to reduce emissions and to participate in a future REDD+ mechanism.

In subsequent years, Bangladesh took several key steps i.e., established the National REDD+ Steering Committee; the REDD+ Preparation Proposal (R-PP) was approved in end of 2013 by UN-REDD Policy Board. The UN-REDD National Programme Document was approved by national counterparts & participating UN organization in 2015. Finally, the government approved the UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme in 19 June 2016.

The Forest Department (FD) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is the lead Implementing Partner for the UN-REDD National Programme, headed by a National Project Director (NPD), supported by Programme Management Unit (PMU). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are the two co-implementing partners helping the PMU. The duration of the NP is from July 2015 to June 2018.

The UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme has the objective to support the Government of Bangladesh in initiating the implementation of its REDD+ Readiness Roadmap (i.e., R-PP) by establishing necessary REDD+ management processes, identifying strategic readiness options for completing its National REDD+ strategy, and developing the capacities required to begin implementation of REDD+.

1.2 Scope of the Report

The primary aim of this report is to document the final outcomes of all the nine consultation workshop, FGDs, and KIIs conducted across the country to capture the major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Bangladesh held on 12 January, 2017 organized by the UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme.

1.3 Organization of the Report

Section 1 introduces the Background of UN-REDD programme; Section 2 elaborates on the details of the workshops and its outcomes. Annex include list of participants.

2. Workshop on Drivers of Deforestation & Degradation

2.1 Background of the Drivers of Deforestation & Degradation Study

Bangladesh is a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC has taken a number of decisions in recent years to encourage developing country Parties to take climate change mitigation actions in forestry sector. The role of forests and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) have been fully recognised and enshrined in the Paris Agreements.

As part of the country's long-term strategy to reduce GHG emissions, largely described in its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), the Government of Bangladesh has taken initial steps to contribute to this global effort to address climate change, and one of such steps is to develop its capacity to implement REDD+. The Government of Bangladesh prepared and endorsed its REDD+ Readiness Roadmap in 2012.

To support this effort, the UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme was established to provide technical capacity development assistance to the Government of Bangladesh in designing and implementing its National REDD+ Strategy and in meeting the international requirements under the UNFCCC Warsaw Framework to receive REDD+ results-based finance.

One of the key components of the REDD+ readiness process is to identify public policy approaches and interventions, including incentive mechanisms to effectively address key drivers and causes of deforestation and forest degradation (D&D). In order to identify such approaches, a clear understanding of drivers and causes of D&D in Bangladesh must first be developed.

To develop such an understanding, UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme amassed a team comprised of international and national consultants. The team accordingly developed a methodology and conducted nine regional workshops distributed across the country. The main task of this assignment was to identify the major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Bangladesh.

2.2 Organization of the Workshop

The primary objective of the workshop was to present the final outcomes of the study to the stakeholders. The workshop was participated by about 40 individuals from different organizations like universities, forest department, department of environment, civil society, independent research organizations, and printing and electronic media. The participants list is given in the annex.

The National Project Director welcome participants to the workshop. The technical session was initiated with a detailed background on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (D&D) study by Dr. Ian Thompson, the team leader of the D&D study team. The GIS and land-use change scenarios were presented by Mr. Saiful Islam Khan. The methodological section on ranking the drivers of D&D and the results of socioeconomic analysis of the study were presented by Dr. Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman. Then, Dr. Thompson again took over and finished the total findings of the study except leaving the conclusion and recommendation sections presented by Professor Dr. Mohammed Jashimuddin.

After the presentation, the floor was open for an open discussion on study results. Finally, the workshop concluded by speech from Mr. Goutam Dewan, Ex-Chair Rangamati Hill District Council and Member Programme Executive Board, Mr. Muhammad Ziaur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, and Member Programme Executive Board, and Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests, Bangladesh Forest Department.

Time	Activity	Presenter / Facilitator
10.00 hrs.- 10.30 hrs.	Registration	
10.30 hrs.-10.40 hrs.	Welcome address	Mr. Md. Rakibul Hasan Mukul, National Project Director, UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme
10.40 hrs.-11.20 hrs.	Presentation on the Results of the study of Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation	Ian Thomson, International Consultant - Team Leader of the study team
11.20 hrs. -12.30 hrs.	Open Discussion	Facilitated by Mr. Md. Rakibul Hasan Mukul
12.30 hrs.-12.35 hrs.	Remarks by Special Guest	Mr. Goutam Dewan, Ex-Chair Rangamati Hill District Council.
12.35 hrs.-12.50 hrs.	Remarks by Special Guest	Mr. Muhammad Ziaur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests.
12. 50 hrs.-13.00 hrs.	Remarks by Chair	Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests.
13.00 hr.-14.00 hrs.	Lunch & Prayer	

2.3. Summary of Discussion

The participants were actively expressing their opinions on the D&D study done. The following issues were raised and clarified:

Sl.	Issues Raised	Clarification Given
A	On Drivers	
1.	The definitions of forest has to be clear and comprehensive	The study team agrees, but setting definition of forests is beyond TOR of the team.
2.	Technology is a major driver for D&D which has not been addressed in the study	This has not been mentioned by any stakeholders.
3.	The link between salinity and D&D is debatable from an academic point of view – while many claim that it is a cause of D&D, many again are not convinced about it	The study team used the term degradation based on views like production function, biodiversity, carbon stored, socio-economic and protective function. There are studies that raised the issue of salinity which is increasing in Sundarbans. There are composition difference as per salinity regime. The higher score assigned based on peer reviewed journals has led to higher ranking of salinity as driver in Sundarbans.

Sl.	Issues Raised	Clarification Given
4.	Forest fire should be replaced with arsons	Agrees, both terms have been used interchangeably. The report will make sure that it means deliberate setting of fire.
5.	Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation has not be identified as drivers of deforestation in hill tract area.	It has been identified and mentioned several times in the document, and is grouped into as agricultural expansion.
6.	Co-management is not fully functional-someday, it might appear as a driver of D&D in future.	This has not been raised by stakeholders. Drivers changes with time. Future study may capture it.
7.	Lack of interdepartmental coordination is leading to encroachment and D&D.	This has been reflected by many stakeholders and is also mentioned in the report. However, lack of interdepartmental coordination and such issues have been grouped into “Poor Governance”.
8.	The maps produced from MODIS data might mislead the readers since they can hardly be used in capturing the D&D scenarios – especially degradation.	<p>The study team sought help from FAO with respect to GIS/RS support for the study. However, as FAO was developing the methodology for historical assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, the team used MODIS data which is free and available to show forest cover change. The objective was to provoke discussion on drives rather than provide statistics of cover changes. Doing spatial analysis for drivers was not part of the study.</p> <p>The stakeholders must have to rely on FAO data which may be available in near future.</p> <p>The team will highlight in the report that the GIS analysis was not meant for generating statistics, to avoid confusion.</p>
9.	Political commitment is important to fight the D&D situation in the country.	Valid suggestion and has been suggested in various regional level workshops conducted during the study. It has also been mentioned in the report.
10.	While only 8% people in the CHTs are dependent on jhum, identifying jhum as a D&D driver cannot be justified.	The team acknowledges that comparative statistics of jhum as drivers is not available. However, this has been mentioned by many stakeholders, therefore could not be fully omitted. It has also been mentioned by various stakeholders including Indigenous People that intensification of Jhum cycle due to unavailability of land is the main reason rather than Jhum itself.
11.	Tobacco cultivation and curing of tobacco are causing serious destruction to forest land and resources- to process the tobacco produced in a ha of land requires 500 mounds wood.	It has been mentioned in the report.
12.	For forest conservation, wildlife-vegetation-culture link must be considered.	While there are numerous established links between wildlife – vegetation – culture on forest conservation, the study team sought suggestions on how to reduce deforestation and degradation.

Sl.	Issues Raised	Clarification Given
13.	Recommending a non-bail able clause for forest act could be colliding with the constitution, rather a fast-track forest offence resolution process could be a better recommendation.	Suggestion is well accepted. Will bring changes accordingly.
B	<i>On Suggestions to reduce drivers</i>	
14.	Forest policy should be inclusive-grassroots level people should be included in policy making process.	No objection.
15.	Without a due consideration for people's livelihoods, no policy is likely to work.	Due consultation will be given during PAMs development.
16.	Transboundary management of hills and rivers is important for healthy ecosystem across the region.	Agrees, but may be beyond jurisdiction of the report.
17.	The improving livelihood suggestion is weak.	The report / stakeholders / consultants stressed that the livelihoods of the people surrounding forested area needs improvement as they depend on natural resources. Expert suggestion on how to do it is beyond the capacity of the team.
18.	AIGAs and ICS are some ideas that can reduce pressure on existing forest resources.	Valid suggestion and is already mentioned in the report.
19.	Mass tourism might risk the forestry situation if not controlled and monitored - ecotourism should be in place of mass tourism.	This will be an issue during PAMs development.
20.	Ecosystem services from forests should be recognized.	
21.	Switching to green energy could be a better solution to reduce the demand for biomass fuel.	Can be a valuable suggestion during PAMs development.

The team reiterated that a lot of drivers mentioned during the discussion are already mentioned in the report. The presentation only focused on key national level drivers and/or some important regional drivers. The team also grouped some of the drivers into broader category for better understanding and depiction. The team will provide a glossary of terms at the end of the report to elaborate what has been incorporated and/or meant in the report. The team will also incorporate relevant comments to the report.



Picture 1: Special Guests, Chair and Project Director



Picture 2: Dr. Fazle Rabbi Sadeque, Director, BCCT, MOEF sharing his view.



Picture 3: Mr. Goutam Dewan, Special Guests of the occasion sharing his views.



Picture 4: Mr. Muhammad Ziaur Rahman, Additional Secretray, Ministry of Environment & Forests, as Special Guest sharing his point of views.

3. Conclusions

The final validation meeting shared the first draft of the Identification of Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation study carried out under UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme. The study findings were widely discussed in the workshop. While some of the issues raised in the workshop were responded by the study team, the rest were carefully recorded for subsequent adjustments in the final version of the report.

Annex – 1: List of Participants

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