

District REDD+ Action Plan (DRAP):

A tool for implementing Nepal's national REDD+ strategy



What is REDD+?

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is a global initiative to tackle climate change by compensating developing countries for the cost of reducing forest-linked carbon emissions through various policies and measures. It aims to lower the rate of deforestation and forest degradation as well as to sequester carbon by planting trees, restoring forest landscapes, and improving forest management. The main difference between REDD+ and previous initiatives for sustainable forest management and conservation is that countries must now demonstrate improvements through a reduction in the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This involves comparing actual forest carbon emissions and removal with baseline emission levels (the forest reference level), with payments made based on the results. At the same time, REDD+ must protect other vital environmental and social benefits of forests. In that regard, the initiative needs to satisfy the social and environmental safeguards identified by various UN conferences on climate change.

What is a DRAP and why is it needed?

A district REDD+ action plan (DRAP) is a plan developed in collaboration with key district- and local-level stakeholders with the aim of implementing a national REDD strategy at the subnational level. Having a national REDD+ strategy is vital for many reasons, including the fact that a significant share of loss in forests is due to national policy and governance drivers. However, national strategies can also be ineffective in countries like Nepal because of large regional differences in forest ecosystems as well as drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Therefore, policies and measures must be designed for the district level in order to take into account such regional nuances. Moreover, in Nepal, the implementation of any national forestry programme or plan has to go through district forest offices. Finally, district-level planning allows local stakeholders to be involved in the planning process, which increases ownership and sustainability. In other words, DRAPs provide the most efficient way of operationalizing the national REDD strategy.



Table 1: Intervention packages in the Chitwan DRAP

Key challenges	Drivers and barriers	Intervention packages
Deforestation	Forest encroachment from farming and illegal settlement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of agroforestry 2. Delineation of boundaries between forests and private lands 3. Diversification of livelihoods
Forest degradation	Unsustainable supply of timber and fuelwood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of alternative, efficient sources of energy 2. Community-based sustainable forest management
Barriers to forest biomass enhancement	Economic, social, institutional, and technological barriers to improved forest management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Payments for ecosystem services (cross-cutting component: linkages between research and extension)

How to develop a DRAP?

The proposed DRAP approach is based on planning methods that draw on international good practices from various contexts and countries. In 2015, these methods were adapted for creating provincial REDD+ action plans in Vietnam. This approach was also tested in Nepal during the same year with the creation of a DRAP for Chitwan District. The DRAP process involves:

- Two to three multiple-stakeholder workshops over the course of a day or two, with 25 to 30 participants, to prioritize and analyse the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation as well as barriers to enhancing forest biomass; identify hotspots; list potential policies and measures; and analyse the social risks associated with those measures.
- Ground-truth visits to the proposed hotspot areas to make the policies, measures, and intervention packages more specific.
- Smaller technical meetings with planners and key informants, involving six to ten people, to conduct feasibility analyses of possible policy measures, develop detailed intervention packages (including specific outputs, targets, and activities), undertake environmental risk assessment, identify social and environmental measures for risk mitigation, develop a monitoring plan, and estimate the budget required.
- Negotiation of REDD+ implementation agreements with local stakeholders in the hotspots based on a 'free, prior and informed consent' process.

Case study: The Chitwan DRAP

The Chitwan DRAP was the first attempt to develop a plan of this type in Nepal. It involved two multiple-stakeholder workshops and several technical workshops. Table 1 shows the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation as well as intervention packages identified during those workshops. Currently, there are no funds for financing the Chitwan DRAP. Implementing it will involve identifying and negotiating with potential donors for each intervention package.

Conclusion

The Chitwan DRAP provides a potential model that additional districts can copy or adapt. Other countries might also find this approach useful; Sri Lanka is already testing it. Some strengths and benefits of the DRAP approach are:

- It is cost-effective and uses relatively simple methods.
- The emphasis is on the participation and ownership of stakeholders as well as transparency. Stakeholder participation is especially important for meeting the REDD+ social safeguards.
- It complements more technical methods used in planning such as GIS and remote sensing.
- This approach leads to effective monitoring plans, which is important for potential donors.
- It builds up national capacity through the use of a generic planning method that can be applied to any natural resource management or conservation scenario.
- It can be utilised for any REDD+ financial purpose such as developing an energy reduction programme document for the forest carbon partnership facility.



For further information

Mohan Prasad Poudel
 Bhaskar Singh Karky
 Nabin Bhattarai

mohanprasadpoudel@gmail.com
 Bhaskar.Karky@icimod.org
 Nabin.Bhattarai@icimod.org

Photos: Rabindra Roy and Krishna Bahadur Luintel

ICIMOD gratefully acknowledges the support of its core donors: the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

© ICIMOD 2016

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
 GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel +977-1-5003222 Email info@icimod.org Web www.icimod.org

Designed by ICIMOD Publications Unit, May 2016