



Proceedings of the workshop on Bangladesh's forest reference level under the UNFCCC framework



Bangladesh Forest Department
31 October – 01 November 2017

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



The UN-REDD Programme, implemented by FAO, UNDP and UNEP, has two components: (i) assisting in developing countries to prepare and implement national REDD strategies and mechanisms; (ii) supporting the development of normative solutions and standardized approaches based on sound science for a REDD instrument linked with the UNFCCC. The programme helps empower countries to manage their REDD processes and will facilitate access to financial and technical assistance tailored to the specific needs of the countries.

The application of UNDP, UNEP and FAO rights-based and participatory approaches will also help ensure the rights of indigenous and forest-dwelling people are protected and the active involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders and institutions in the design and implementation of REDD plans.

The programme is implemented through the UN Joint Programmes modalities, enabling rapid initiation of programme implementation and channelling of funds for REDD efforts, building on the in-country presence of UN agencies as a crucial support structure for countries. The UN-REDD Programme encourage coordinated and collaborative UN support to countries, thus maximizing efficiencies and effectiveness of the organizations' collective input, consistent with the "One UN" approach advocated by UN members.

The UN-REDD Bangladesh National Program is implemented by the Bangladesh Forest Department under the leadership of Ministry of Environment and Forests. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are the two implementing partners.

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Disclaimer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, and sustainable management of forests, REDD+ in short, came into being in accordance with the section III-C of Decision 1/CP.16. In view of this, Bangladesh is currently implementing the UN-REDD National Programme through the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD). One of the objectives of the national programme is to submit the forest reference emission level/forest reference level (FREL/FRL) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As a part of the FREL/FRL report drafting process, a two-day workshop was organized on 31 October – 1 November, 2017, titled as “Bangladesh Forest Reference Level under the UNFCCC.” Nine officials from BFD and two from MoEF as well as five FAO experts participated the workshop (13 male and 3 female).

The objectives of the workshop were to

- Share and discuss about the first draft FREL report with seniors officials/policy makers of the BFD and representatives from the MoEF, and
- Determine the subsequent steps for the finalization of draft of the FREL/FRL report and its submission to the UNFCCC.

During the first day of the workshop, the BFD and MoEF officials, with the facilitation of FAO experts, went through the FREL/FRL report chapter by chapter, and made comments and suggestions for improvement. The comments and suggestions were non-technical and largely editorial in nature. All participants from BFD and MoEF agreed with the proposed FREL/FRL and the methodology applied for constructing it. In the end of the first day, the participants coming from BFD and MoEF divided themselves into three groups. Each group took a few chapters of the FREL/FRL report to improve based on the comments and suggestions made. On the second day, the groups worked on revising the chapters with the support of the FAO experts who participated the workshop.

In the end of the workshop, the second draft of the FREL/FRL report was prepared. The participants agreed to meet on 6 November at Bana Bhaban, Dhaka to present the draft to the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), and finalize the draft afterwards. They also agreed to arrange the national consultation on proposed FREL/FRL in the first week of December 2017.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Contents	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Bangladesh Context	5
3. Objectives.....	6
4. Summary of the Workshop	7
4.1 General structure.....	7
4.2 Day 1: Discussion, comments and suggestions on FREL/FRL chapters	7
5. next steps.....	10
Appendix 1. Agenda	11
Appendix 2. Participant List	12
Appendix 3. Evaluation	13

1. INTRODUCTION

The decisions¹ of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) encourage developing countries to contribute to climate change mitigation by voluntarily undertaking activities to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as well as conserve and enhance carbon stocks in the forest sector. Such contribution is known as REDD+² that covers:

- (a) reducing emissions from deforestation,
- (b) reducing emissions from forest degradation,
- (c) conservation of forest carbon stocks,
- (d) sustainable management of forests, and
- (e) enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

A national Forest Reference Emission Levels or Forest Reference levels (FREL/FRLs) in terms of tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year is determined for a nationally agreed reference period covering the five REDD+ activities. In short, FREL/FRLs are benchmarks to assess a country performance for implementing REDD+ activities³, and against this benchmark, performance of country in terms of difference between reference levels and actual emissions will be compared for results based payment (RBP) during result period.

Therefore, FREL/FRL depicts the level of emissions in the absence of implementation of REDD+ activities. Besides, according to UNFCCC decisions, eligibility for RBP require an assessed FREL/FRLs⁴. Thus, FREL/FRLs are required for countries that wish to access to RBP based on measured, reported, verified (MRV) emission reductions⁵. The construction and submission of FREL/FRLs to the UNFCCC is a process that requires transparent, complete, consistent, comparable, and accurate information.

2. BANGLADESH CONTEXT

Given the technical and procedural complexity involved in its implementation, the Parties of UNFCCC agreed that REDD+ should be done in three phases⁶: readiness, implementation and result period. The choice of a starting phase depends on the specific national circumstances, capacities and capabilities of each developing country Party and the level of support received⁷. Bangladesh is currently in the readiness phase, and hence the country is working to develop national REDD+ strategies or actions plans, policies and measures (PAMs), and built capacity to contribute to climate

¹ All REDD+ related decisions can be accessed through this link: <http://unfccc.int/6917>

² UNFCCC, Decision 1/CP.16, par. 70

³ UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, par. 7

⁴ UNFCCC, Decision 9/CP.19, par. 3 and Decision 13/CP.19, par. 2

⁵ UNFCCC, Decisions 11/CP.19/par. 3

⁶ Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73

⁷ Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 74

change mitigation through forest-based actions. The country is under the process of constructing FREL/FRL for REDD+ with the aim to assess the effectiveness of REDD+ activities and potentially receive RBP.

The FREL/FRL should be consistent and coherent with national REDD+ strategy. To construct FREL/FRLs, Bangladesh must reflect and make methodological choices on key elements like scale, scope, forest definition, selection of historical data and analysis, stratification, selection of construction methodology, and reference period. As a part of the capacity development and data generation, FAO through the UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme organized several events as demonstrated by the Figure 1.

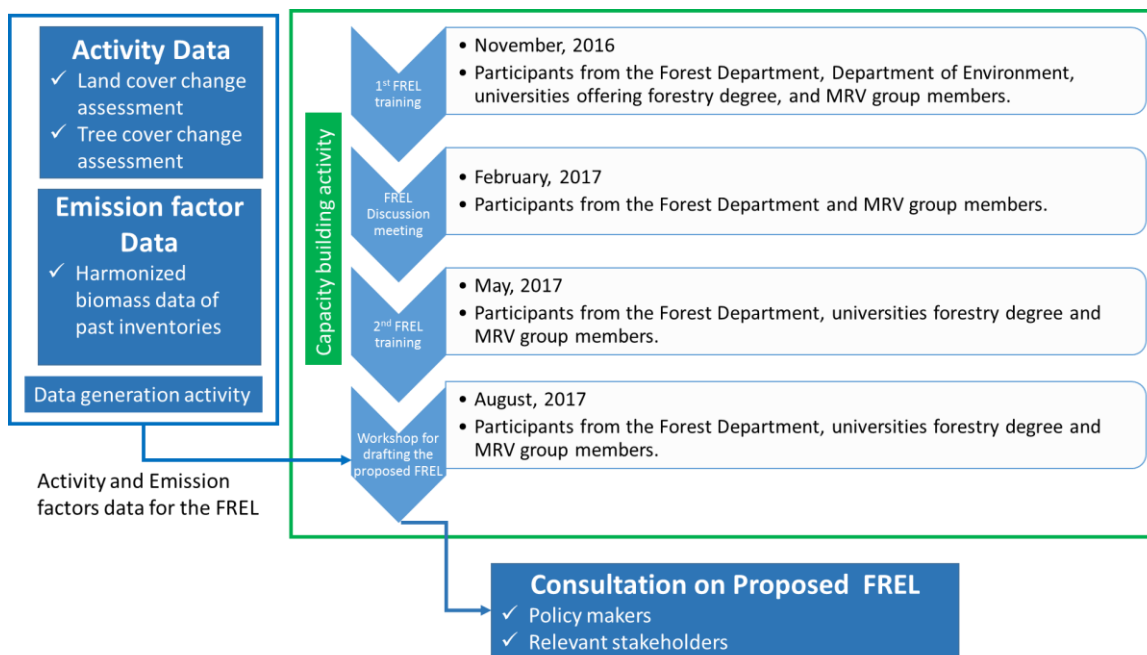


Figure 1: FREL/FRL development process in Bangladesh

The UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme is supporting the BFD to develop FREL/FRL for submission to the UNFCCC in January 2018. The FREL/FRL workshop organized on 31 October – 1 November, 2017 was focused on revising the first draft of FREL/FRL report with the guidance from experienced resource persons from BFD and MoEF.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To share and discuss about the draft FREL/FRL report with seniors officials/policy makers of the BFD and representative from MoEF ; and
- To determine the subsequent steps for the submission of the proposed national FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC.

4. SUMMARY OF THE WORKSHOP

4.1 General structure

The workshop was for two days. The first day, i.e. 31st October, started with the welcome speech by Mr. Rakibul Hasan Mukul, Project Director, UN-REDD National Programme Bangladesh and Conservator of Forests (CF), BFD. He also explained the objectives of the workshop to the participants in his speech. After this, Mr Hossain Mohammad Nisad, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), BFD explained the basic concept of FREL/FRL. During the rest of first day of workshop, the BFD and MoEF officials reviewed and discussed the first draft of the FREL/FRL document chapter by chapter, and provided comments and suggestions for improvement. All comments and suggestions were compiled in the report by the FAO experts.

On the second day of workshop, 1st November, the participants revised the FREL/FRL report based on the comments and suggestions received.

4.2 Day 1: Discussion, comments and suggestions on FREL/FRL chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

The participants agreed that this chapter was fine. They did not provide any further comments or suggestions on this.

Chapter 2: National context

Section 2.1: Forest governance and management based on the Forest Act of Bangladesh

The participants agreed that

- there was need to give a bit more emphasis on tree outside forests in this section, and
- providing a list of legislation and policies of the GoB that deals with the definition of forest land would improve the report. While providing citation for these legislations and policies, the participants agreed to cite government agencies that originally published them.

Section 2.2: Zones, land cover and tree cover

The participants reached a consensus that this section could be improved further by providing more information on

- soil type, precipitation, and dominant vegetation for each zone, and
- tree cover maps, particularly focusing on what data are covered, who supported the project and what the general methodology was for preparing the map in question.

Section 2.3: Trees outside forest, and Section 2.4: Forest trends in Bangladesh

Some minor edits in the text were suggested and agreed upon. Adding some citations were also suggested.

Chapter 3: Elements of FREL/FRL

Section 3.1: Forest definition, and Section 3.2: Pools and gases

Some minor edits in the text were suggested and agreed upon. Adding some citations were also suggested.

Section 3.3 REDD+ Activities

The participants took part in a long discussion on the REDD+ activities included for the construction of Bangladesh’s national FREL/FRL. They all reached a consensus that the three activities included (listed below) were well justified. However, they thought that it was necessary to simply the relevant text in such a way that it clearly states the proposed FREL/FRL included the following three activities:


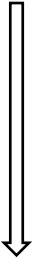
1. Reducing emissions from deforestation,
2. Reducing emissions from forest degradation, and
3. Enhancement of forest carbon stocks

In the first draft FREL/FRL document, the third activity was broken down into two sub-activities, (i) enhancement of forest carbon stocks from afforestation and reforestation, and (ii) enhancement of forest carbon stocks from forest restoration. These, according to the participants, gave an impression that the proposed FREL/FRL of Bangladesh included four activities, instead of three.

Also, in the first draft, the activities were defined as they were introduced. The participant suggested moving the definitions in a separate section after the activities were introduced and their inclusion was justified.

Moreover, the participants proposed to simplify the matrix of REDD+ activities in Bangladesh as illustrated by Tables 1 and 2. They thought the old matrix (Table 1) was confusing and counter logic, while the proposed matrix (Table 2) is self-explanatory.

TABLE 1. OLD MATRIX OF REDD+ ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH (FROM THE FIRST DRAFT OF FREL/FRL REPORT)

		Higher Carbon stocks 				Lower Carbon Stocks		
		Rubber Plantation	Mangrove Forest	Forest Tree Dominated Area (Terrestrial)	Plain Land Forest (Sal forest)	Mangrove Plantation	Tree Dominated Area (Aquatic/Regularly Flooded)	Non-forest land use classes
Higher Carbon stocks 	Rubber Plantation	Degradation	-	-	Degradation	-	-	Reducing emissions from deforestation
	Mangrove Forest	-	Restoration	-	-	Restoration	-	
	Forest Tree Dominated Area (Terrestrial)	Restoration	-	Degradation	Degradation	-	-	
	Plain Land Forest (Sal forest)	Restoration	-	Degradation	Degradation	-	-	

Lower Carbon Stocks	Mangrove Plantation	-	-	Restoration	-	Restoration	-	Including trees outside forests
	Tree Dominated Area (Aquatic/Regularly Flooded)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Non-forest land use classes	Enhancement of forest carbon stocks from afforestation and reforestation						

TABLE 2. PROPOSED MATRIX OF REDD+ ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH FOR THE FREL/FRL REPORT

Area (ha)		2015	
		Forest	Non forest
2000	Forest	DEGRADATION /ENHANCEMENT	DEFORESTATION
	Non forest	ENHANCEMENT	(impact of trees outside forest)

Section 3.4: Scale

The participants agreed that this section was fine. They did not provide any comments or suggestions on this.

Chapter 4: Data and approach for FREL/FRL construction

Section 4.1: Activity Data

After a long and lively discussion, the participants agreed to the following suggestions for further improving the section

- A land use-change matrix should be given for each zone. Moreover, the issue of the conversation coastal plantations to settlements should be explained in a footnote,
- This section should elaborate on harmonization of land cover, land cover classes (LCC) and the approach of measuring the carbon stock in each LCC,
- Tree cover monitoring data was for 2000 – 2014. It should be clearly mentioned in this section that the tree cover data for 2015 was extrapolated from 2000 – 2014 data.
- The section describing the integration between tree cover and land cover maps should be elaborated further. The formula showing the calculation of the percentage of tree cover (weighted average) should also be included.

- All non-vegetated LCCs (e.g. ponds, salt pans, river banks and sand) should be grouped into one class, i.e. non-vegetated LCC while harmonizing the LLC maps of 2000 and 2015.

Section 4.2: Emission factor, Section 4.3: Reference period, and Section 4.4: Construction method

Some minor edits in the text were suggested and agreed upon. Adding some citations were also suggested.

Chapter 5: Proposed FREL/FRL

Some minor edits in the text were suggested and agreed upon. Adding some citations were also suggested.

Chapter 6: Uncertainty

It was agreed to add some text explaining why uncertainties related to FREL/FRL of Bangladesh cannot be calculated at the moment, instead of leaving the chapter completely blank.

Chapter 7: National circumstances

The participants agreed upon the following suggestions:

- Further explanation on forest land tenure, encroachment, boundary conflicts as well as forest extension and other initiatives to increase trees outside forest and customary land right in CHTs and its implications for plantations should be included, and
- The text on infrastructure development and Rohingya issues should be shortened.

Chapter 8: Transparency, consistency and Chapter 8: Future improvement opportunities

Some minor edits in the text were suggested and agreed upon. Adding some citations were also suggested.

5. NEXT STEPS

The participants agreed upon the seven steps for the finalization of the FREL/FRL report and its submission to the UNFCCC

1. FAO experts will review the report and make it more consistent, if necessary, and then send it back the officials of the BFD and MoEF who are the authors of the report.
2. The report will be presented to CCF and other high ranking officials of the BFD on 6 November 2017.
3. Based on the comments and suggestions received from the meeting with CCF, the final draft of FREL/FRL report will be prepared.
4. National consultation on FREL/FRL report will be organized in Dhaka in the first week of December.
5. The final FREL/FRL report will be prepared based on the comments and suggestions received during the national consultation.
6. The report will be submitted to MoEF by the BFD in December 2017.
7. The MoEF will submit the FREL/FRL report to the UNFCCC with the deadline of 8 January 2018.

APPENDIX 1. AGENDA

Training workshop on the draft Forest Reference Level (FRL) report under the UN-REDD Bangladesh National Programme		
Tuesday 31 October 2017		
09.00 – 09.15	Welcoming and Workshop's objective	Rakibul Hasan Mukul PD, UN-REDD National Programme
	Introduction of participants	ALL
09.15– 09.45	Brief introduction of the basic concepts of FREL	H. M. Nishad
09.45 – 10.00	Discussion and Comments	
10.00 – 10.30	Tea Break	
10.30 – 11.00	REDD+ activities: Other country experiences	Gael Sola
11.00 – 11.15	Discussion and Comments	
11.15-11.45	Outcome of the previous FREL workshop	Marufa Akhter / Gobinda Roy
11.45-12.00	Discussion and Comments	
12.00-12.30	Activity data and emission factors of Bangladesh	Zaheer Iqbal
12.30-13.00	Comments and solutions	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch	
14.00 – 15.00	FREL of Bangladesh: Construction and results	Rakibul Hasan Mukul / Marufa Akhter/ Gobinda Roy
15.00-15.15	Comments and solutions	Gale sola / Anatoli / Nazmul /Sepul
15.15-15.30	Tea Break	
15.30-17.00	Comments and solutions	Gale sola / Anatoli / Nazmul /Sepul
18.30 – 9.30	Discussion continues	
	Closing of 1 st day	
Wednesday 1st November 2017		
09.00- 10.30	Finalization of the drafted FREL report	All
10.30 -10.45	Tea Break	
10.45-12.00	Presentation on the finalized FREL report	Gobinda Roy
12.00 – 12.15	Closing remarks	
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch	
13.15 -	Return to Dhaka	

APPENDIX 2. PARTICIPANT LIST

ID	Name	Gender	Designation & Organization	Email
1	Md. Rakibul Hasan Mukul	M	CF, Rangamati	lalpiprey@gmail.com
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16	Gael Sola	M	International Consultant, FAO	gael.sola@fao.org

APPENDIX 3. EVALUATION

SL No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	7	86%
	Female	1	14%
2	How often do you participate in training related to forest monitoring?		
	First time	6	86%
	1-3 every year	1	14%
	More than 3 per year	0	0%
	Regularly (approximately one per month)	0	0%
3	I would describe myself as:		
	A professor/academic	2	29%
	A student	0	0%
	Forest Department staff	3	43%
	Government staff (outside Forest Department)	2	29%
	NGO staff	0	0%
	Private consultant	0	0%
	Other	0	0%
4	My professional background relates most closely to:		
	Forester	5	71%
	GIS/RS	0	0%
	Statistics	0	0%
	Social survey/assessment	0	0%
	Economics	0	0%
	Natural Resource Management	1	14%
	Ecology	0	0%
	other	1	14%
5	My years of relevant experience is:		
	1-2 years	1	14%
	3-5 years	1	14%
	5-7 years	0	0%
	8-10 years	2	29%
	More than 10 years	3	43%
6	The training was relevant to my daily work		
	Strongly agree	1	14%
	Agree	5	71%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	1	14%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
7	I had enough previous knowledge to understand the content of the event		
	Strongly agree	2	29%
	Agree	3	43%
	Neutral	1	14%
	Disagree	1	14%

SL No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
8	The training met my expectations in terms of the content and learning outcomes		
	Strongly agree	3	43%
	Agree	4	57%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
9	The learning resources provided were adequate and useful		
	Strongly agree	5	71%
	Agree	2	29%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
10	The resource person presented information in a way that i could understand and was easy to follow		
	Strongly agree	4	57%
	Agree	3	43%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
11	I feel confident to be able to carry out the tasks described in the training without supervision.		
	Strongly agree	0	0%
	Agree	5	71%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	2	29%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
12	I was pleased with the venue/meeting room/snacks etc.		
	Strongly agree	1	14%
	Agree	6	86%
	Neutral	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%
13	Are there other people/agencies/organizations that you think should have been included in the training?		
	No recommendations were given		
14	Any other comments?		
	No comments were made		