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Training and Guidance plan REDD+ Assistants Collective 2016

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1. Introduction

The NIMOS REDD+ Readiness project issued a contract with TBI Suriname to:

1. develop a one-year training program for the REDD+ Assistants Collective (RAC), that will support their development in facilitation, including a shortlist of (preferably national) consultants and organizations for the execution; and
2. implement the first training session and guidance program of the REDD+ assistants in engagement and facilitation activities and dialogues, ensuring their involvement in the training and execution of the program, between February and March 2016, under REDD+ readiness.

TBI Suriname will report to the Communications Officer of the PMU and work in collaboration with the REDD+ Readiness Project Staff for the organization and execution of the planning and for the preparation of implementation of the training and guidance plan.

The REDD+ Assistants Collective (RAC, established in 2012), have been trained under the R-PP project (see also Annex 1) in the basics of REDD+ and climate change, engagement and facilitation of meetings. The first part of their role relates to the dissemination of REDD+ information between the project partners and communities. Secondly, they will assist the REDD+ Readiness project to actualize a national approach. This will require them to strengthen the capacity of other community members in the interior and urban and rural areas.

The R+A can play a crucial role in making REDD+ a success in Suriname. Training and effective involvement must therefore be ensured. This training program is expected to equip the RAC with technical REDD+ expertise, as well as engagement skills related to the project objectives. To support this process, the work of an engagement specialist is required. This person can be contracted by the PMU.

TBI Suriname, together with the REDD+ Communications Officer, other Staff of REDD+ Readiness project and key organisations such as SBB, will provide input for the training and guidance plan for the RAC for the year 2016. The training plan includes four training sessions to be determined and organized by the REDD+ Readiness project. The first training has already been implemented by TBI Suriname on 06 and 07 February 2016. The intention is to continue building on the experience and insights gained during the first training session.

The content of the training program will be in concordance with the REDD+ Annual Work Plan (AWP) and closely linked to all relevant REDD+ components and their concrete outputs. It is important to ensure that the R+A understand as much as possible about the different components of REDD+ readiness (e.g. Grievance redress, REDD+ strategy options/policies and measures, National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), etc). This will allow them by the end of 2016 to take complete ownership of their role in the readiness phase and facilitate joint decision-making. The acquired knowledge and skills of the R+A will be closely monitored and tested throughout the implementation of the training program. This will allow them (and the national REDD+ program) to measure their progress.

Key partners such as SBB (Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control) and others are committed to share information about relevant topics, and to provide support in the broadest sense (e.g. illustrative materials) during the training which on itself will be carried out by professional facilitators.

2. Training plan for 2016

2.1. Training sessions

In 2016, the focus of the national REDD+ Readiness project is to develop a national REDD+ strategy and to set up institutional and implementing structures such as a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and a Grievance Redress Mechanism. Specifically, the objectives under the following AWP components are relevant:

- 1a – Feedback and grievance redress mechanism
- 1c – Strengthening capacities of Indigenous and Tribal communities (Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols, Joint mapping, local management plans/ 'plan de vida'),
- 2b – Assessing the Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Barriers to the 'plus activities' (DDFDB+)
- 2c – Formulation of policies and measures as part of a national REDD+ strategy
- 2d – Assessment of Social and environmental risks
- 3b – Setting up a Forest Reference Emission Level/Forest Reference Level (FREL/FRL)
- 3c – Setting up a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS).

From the perspective of communities, the abovementioned technical aspects of REDD+ can be placed in a broader, relatable context of sustainable village/community development. (see figure 1)
That said, the training plan for RAC for 2016 will aim to integrate REDD+ with sustainable village development and complete the train-the-trainer cycle.

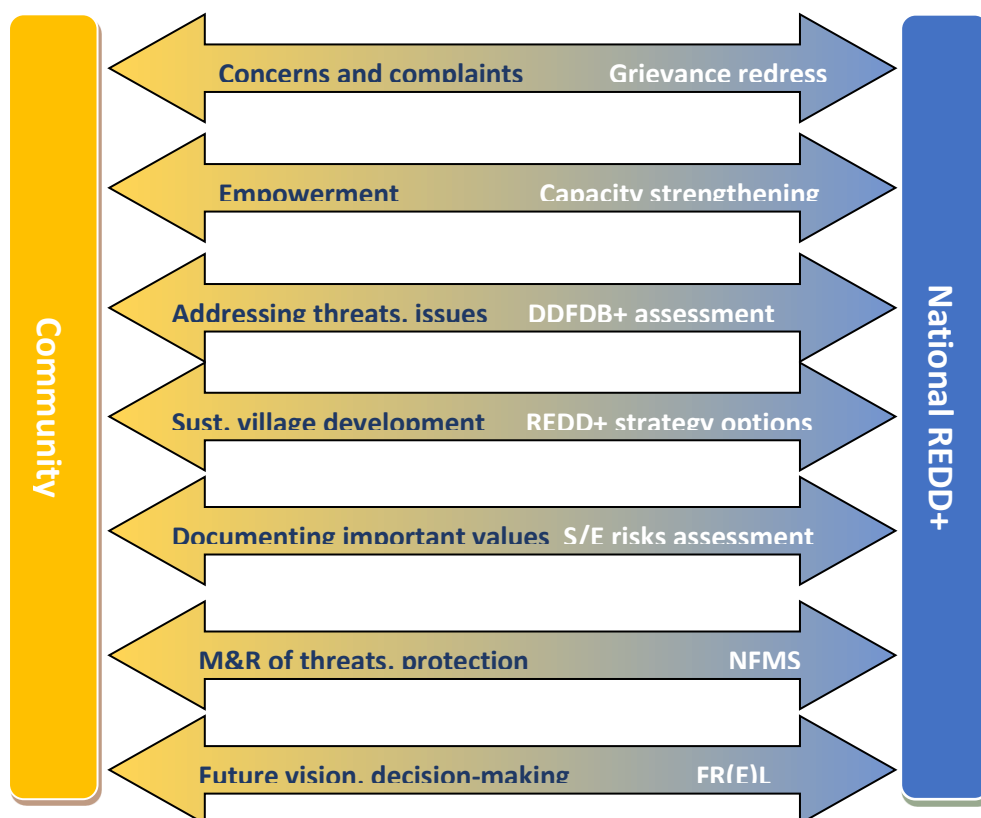


Figure 1. Linking REDD+ readiness to sustainable community development
From practical experience, the R+A, forming a bridge between national REDD+ readiness and the local communities, will automatically be involved in (informal) grievance redress by voicing and documenting concerns and issues from the communities in different settings.

In terms of capacity strengthening, R+A will play a vital role, possibly as ambassadors for mainstreaming the use of FPIC protocols, long-term development thinking and awareness raising. The R+A will be actively involved in the development of national consensus of the DDFDB+. This can be done in coherence with their involvement in the development of the REDD+ Strategy and assessment of social and environmental risks (see also section 2.4). One concrete way could be to use participatory approaches such as P3DM, and develop surveys in the local languages to get an in-depth understanding of the perceptions on the local processes. Furthermore, R+A can contribute to the development of an NFMS and FR(E)L by respectively gathering information on the objections and opportunities with CMRV, gaining insights in and passing on relevant MRV skills, and initiate thinking on the future state of the communities' forests.

2.2. Planning and preparation

The REDD+ Readiness Project Management Unit (PMU) has indicated that they want to organize three additional (2-day) training sessions throughout the year 2016. The location and the period, as well as the selection of the trainers, will be determined by the national REDD+ Readiness project. It is advisable to organize at least one of the trainings within or close to a village and to combine theoretical sessions with practical. A location can be for example the Community Development Centre Brokopondo, district of Brokopondo. Development of engagement and facilitation skills will be a crosscutting subject in the training.

The training sessions are part of the REDD+ process and it is important that the PMU creates a timeline where the RAC and others can visualize the planning and the activities already accomplished.

It is also advisable to visualize the different locations in the country covered by the RAC. This can be done with a map with the districts, rivers and main villages, pinpointing the work residence of each of the R+A.

Lastly, a profile of each (new) REDD+ assistant can be created to include their picture, names, village, tribe, languages, education level, period of involvement with REDD+, and other information deemed relevant.

2.3. Visual and culturally appropriate material

For the year 2016 it is important that the REDD+ Readiness project develops information material which can be used by the REDD+ Assistants (R+A) in their field work. Visual material explaining the REDD+ program (based on the project document) and structures in Sranantongo will be of great help, since the national REDD+ Readiness project aims for a long term initiative which must be clear to everyone. For example, this would help to explain why some R+A participate in the Project Board meetings and some not.

More specifically we talk about:

- Translated and simplified (visual) material based on the ProDoc/workplan to help explain the 3-year program, to anticipate on upcoming activities and help build capacity.
- Translated and simplified (visual) material based on elements of the Sustainable Village Development manual developed by TBI Suriname and Van Hall Larenstein University.
- A REDD+ assistants' toolkit which can be used by the R+A when interacting with their communities. This toolkit can contain existing materials such as the translated version (Sranantongo) of the TBI REDD+ manual, material developed by the VIDS in this context and existing flyers and posters previously produced under the national REDD+ programme.

Depending on the need and available funding, the translations can also be in other languages spoken by the communities.

This material can be designed in collaboration with the engagement specialist and a graphic designer.

2.4. Competencies and skills

The four important tasks of the R+A are:

- i) Organizing meetings in their communities,
- ii) Facilitating the exchange of information in the context of REDD+ readiness,
- iii) Maintaining contact with REDD+ Readiness PMU, and
- iv) Train other trainers (to be confirmed).

In terms of competencies and skills, special emphasis must be given to:

- The role of R+A as (semi) objective facilitators.
- Sharing of information from and with communities (skills: communication, engagement).
- Different approaches of gathering information from communities (skills: participatory research, and engagement).
- Clear understanding of and being able to translate/explain the different relevant REDD+ readiness components to community perspective (see figure 1).
- Being able to facilitate a community diagnostic relevant to REDD+ (including e.g. inventoring different types of capital, determining status and trend of important forest resources, including threats and causes, discussion future development, simplified problem-root cause analysis).
- Understanding of existing national structures of REDD+ readiness and how to best make use of them.
- Making a budget for local events and administration of receipts.
- Methods for providing information on the principles of REDD+ and the way how this will be structured in Suriname to the local people and collecting information from the region assigned to the R+A.

The contact between the REDD+ Readiness project and the R+A should be well structured and documented. Every R+A should maintain a notebook with mentioning of dates and actions. Additional to this the REDD+ Readiness project plans to provide each R+A with a hand-held device. It is very important to also make notes on paper. The hand-held device is an additional tool but the R+A should always maintain their hand written notebook.

The collection of information should be in a culturally appropriate, yet uniform way so that information between regions and/or villages can be compared. For example, every R+A must make an inventory of the village(s) under his/her responsibility, including information on the history of the village, population dynamics, and the presence of services, such as schools, government offices, and shops.

All the information gathered by the R+A during the meetings with local villagers can serve as an input for the REDD+ Readiness project as related to the AWP objectives. The methodologies to be used for gathering, sharing and documenting information can be further specified once the training plan has been approved.

Since some of the R+A have participated in sessions of the WISE REDD+ project (Widening Informed Stakeholder Engagement), this training material has to be revisited in order to put the rest of the RAC up-to-date.

2.5. Facilitation skills

The role of the R+A is to function as an intermediate between the local communities and the National REDD+ Readiness project. The R+A should have a clear understanding of the contents and the aims of the National REDD+ Readiness project, and at the same time good knowledge of the local communities. In order to effectively interact with the people from the local community in an objective manner, the R+A will need to be trained in facilitation skills (i.e. communication and facilitation techniques and principles).

The facilitator must plan, guide and manage a group event to ensure that the group's objectives are met effectively, with clear thinking, good participation and full buy-in from everyone who is involved. For the purposes of the group process, the facilitator needs to take a neutral stance, step back from the detailed content and his/her personal views, and focus purely on the group process. (The "group process" is the approach used to manage discussions, get the best from all members, and bring the REDD+ meetings in the community through to a successful conclusion.

The key responsibility of the facilitator is to create the group process and an environment in which it can flourish, and so help the group reach a successful decision, solution or conclusion.

For this topic, special expertise may be required. Simultaneously with the RAC, the REDD+ Readiness project team will have to be trained since the R+A will depend on back-stopping of the Community Liaison Officer, the Communication Officer and the Engagement Specialist.

2.6. Information management

A crucial element of the REDD+ Readiness project is information management. One of the main tasks of the R+A is to collect information. This would be facilitated if they dispose of tablets with internet connection (e.g. in the case of using surveys). This would require additional training in how to use the devices and a management system provided by the REDD+ Readiness project or an associated partner. Given the fact that the devices can among others be used to gather information on drivers of deforestation, drivers of forest degradation and barriers for REDD+ (a study in the AWP that SBB is responsible for), it is advisable that SBB manages the system. An additional advantage would be that SBB can create access to its Geoportal which is planned to be available by the end of 2016, so that the R+A can use geographic information and/or add and verify details. During the training in the hand-held devices it will become clear if all R+A meet the standards to use the devices. In future selection of R+A a minimum level of formal education should be taken into consideration.

An approach for management and analysis of information needs to be further elaborated in collaboration with the PMU.

2.7. Provisional outline for the content of the three training sessions

The exact periods of the training sessions and their duration have to be determined by the REDD+ Readiness project. The contents should be synchronized as much as possible with the ongoing activities of REDD+ related projects. Ideally, the providers of the training will be a consortium that can be recruited from the different national organizations such as TBI Suriname, Attune Development, ACT, the VIDS, and others. Given the level of specialization it is also likeable that the training sessions

are coordinated by one organization and provided by several affiliated or individual experts. It is also important to include people with on-field experience for the practical sessions. It may be necessary to include more than two days in one or more of the training sessions, especially if practical exercises are needed. After each training, R+A can be challenged to test their acquired knowledge and skills. This will allow them (and the national REDD+ program) to measure their progress and fulfill their monthly tasks equivalent to ten workdays.

Training session 1 has been provided on 06 and 07 February 2016. Based on sub-chapters 2.1 until 2.6, an outline for content of the three following training sessions 2, 3 and 4 is given, respectively, in subchapters 2.7.1, 2.7.2 and 2.7.3.

2.7.1. Training session 2.

- Recap of planning, budgeting and organizing meetings: fill in a planning for the next 6 months
- Detailed elaboration of the scope of R+A work (linked to AWP objectives)
- Detailed elaboration of REDD+ institutional structures and mandates
 - Optional: visit, meet & greet with REDD+ management partners (connect faces to the names behind decisions, procedures, topics)
- Introduction to community characterization and diagnostic
 - This includes a stakeholder's analysis which is specific for the different regions and tribes
- Introduction of the hand-held devices.
- First tasks to be completed
 - If the questionnaires on DDFDB+ are ready they can be included in the exercise.
 - Otherwise complete community characterization (which is normally done before field visits, where the diagnostic takes place).

2.7.2. Training session 3.

- Revision of the use of the hand-held devices and reporting with the hand-held devices
 - This includes conduction of simple questionnaires.
- Problem analysis (DDFDB+) and sustainable village development (Strategy options): prepare field visits for diagnostic.
- Refresh facilitation skills which were provided to the REDD+ Assistants in 2012 and 2013: Facilitating of meetings and discussions.

- NFMS elaboration in the field: Based on an explanation of the main concepts of the NFMS in the field, the following topics will be included: 1) the role their community wants to play in the implementation of the NFMS, 2) the information that will/will not be shared, 3) ownership of the information, 4) participation in decision-making regarding forest management. The aim is that the R+A gain a better understanding and can help their communities make an informed decision on these topics. Options related to this, depending on what communities want, are within others:
 - They could be part of the National Forest Inventory and collect information in the National Sampling Units in the vicinity of their villages.
 - They can access the national NFMS-geoportal and consult the information produced on the national level.
 - They could upload “alerts” of unexpected activities in the forest close to their villages.
 - They could complete the national maps with local information.
 - CMRV around the village could be embedded in the NFMS.
 - Other roles to be defined together with the R+A.

2.7.3. Training session 4.

- Evaluation and elaboration of community diagnostic and previous field activities (including transparency in information management: what happens with collected information?)
- Capacity strengthening: FPIC protocols and Planning for the future (in Amazon countries known as ‘plan de vida’) in relation to REDD+
- The R+A need to understand the concept of CMRV, which will allow them to make choices on how to support (or not) the development of CMRV for their communities. One very good idea to build capacity on this, is to show examples of other countries (e.g. Guyana- the Rupununi area). This could be done remotely (videos) but eventually the R+A can also go to visit these projects (exchange activities). It is also important that the CMRV is related to the NFMS.
- Inspiration & learning to move forward: Examples/cases from other countries, optional: exchange visit
- Fill in planning for next 6 months.

3. Guidance plan

The guidance plan will include field visits to verify the local conditions in the different regions. The field visits are predominantly made by the Community Liaison Officer. The Communication Officer and the Engagement Specialist will have close ties with the field, and it is advised that the Coordinator, the Technical Officer, Assistant and Administrator continue to make field visits at least once per month, to keep in contact with the reality in the villages. SBB staff could also visit communities to build trust. Consultants from the training team will join in field-training activities. It is important that at least two trainers join the field visits to provide guidance when training elements as included in the training plan are being implemented for the first time or when training is conducted in the field.

During their visits, the consultants always have to be accompanied by at least one of the members of the REDD+ Readiness project team.

The consortium of trainers will guide the R+A primarily by:

1. Leading the training sessions.
2. Designing tasks according to the learning objectives of each training session.
3. Making a format for monitoring and testing the R+A's activities and performance.
4. Making field visits, accompanying the R+A during engagement with the community.
5. Evaluating field visits during the following training session.

Promoting the interaction between the R+A will be motivating and promoting team work. R+A who operate in the same region can perform certain tasks together and participate in the same monitoring visits of the members of the REDD+ Readiness project team. R+A from one region can pay a group visit to another region to experience similarities and or differences. For example, the approach of people in the Upper Suriname River area towards CMRV will be different as compared to the one from the people of Kwamalasemutu. Sharing the experiences between colleagues and / or communities will enhance ownership of the REDD+ process and enable cross-pollination.

Annex 1 Details on R-PP and CMRV

R-PP

The R-PP will be implemented with support of the REDD+ Assistants, representatives of local tribes and selected by their own communities to be trained in conceptual understanding of REDD+. The REDD+ Assistants Collective will be used to effectively involve Indigenous and Tribal People, which include soliciting the ideas and concerns of the stakeholders after they have been informed about the concept of REDD+ and the Government's plans for implementing REDD+ activities.

During R-PP formulation, preparatory work was done towards the establishment of the REDD+ Assistants Collective. The four indigenous tribes and the six Maroon tribes were invited by the Cabinet of the President to send two persons from each tribe to be trained in REDD+ facilitation by a local facilitation consultant. The purpose of the training sessions is to enable them to facilitate the local dialogues, and the consultation and participation sessions, which will be held in the various Tribal communities.

During the training four components were emphasized: 1) understanding of the concepts of climate change and REDD+, 2) communication and communication tools, 3) the facilitation process and facilitation tools and 4) how to train others.

Seventeen REDD+ Assistants completed the training and became a supporting collective in facilitation of the local dialogues during the R-PP formulation phase, and during all the coming activities on REDD+. They will also be helpful to make climate change and REDD+ understandable in the local communities in between REDD+ activities."

CMRV

CMRV, even though the concept was born in the context of REDD+, is not only about monitoring forests in ways that are useful for the government. It is rather monitoring of all aspects of village/community development that matter to the communities themselves. While CMRV can be encouraged and supported by governments, it should never be a top-down process. CMRV should grow from below as a voluntary undertaking by communities who see the relevance of monitoring. As a first step, community members can be trained in what monitoring means and why it can be useful to keep track of changes in their local society. Discussions can be held around the future vision for the community in terms of sustainable development, and they can be introduced to monitoring as a tool for keeping track of changes, to know whether or not they are steering on course towards their vision. The communities themselves should come together and decide which aspects matter to them and which indicators they want to monitor. Indicators can be for example the number of children who learn different aspects of the culture, people's health and food habits, traditional ceremonies, the number of houses built with modern versus traditional materials, or how much fish there is in the river. The government can suggest additional indicators and measurement methods that would be useful for the national reporting and policy making, such as biodiversity and forest carbon indicators. A link between CMRV and the national REDD+ process can successfully be created if communities see the relevance of including these indicators in their CMRV scheme and choose to share their collected data with the government. Communities are usually more willing to participate if they already get something back from the national level, such as analysis of the data they shared and information from the rest of the country.

For more info, see <https://reddguianashield.com/working-groups/community-based-mrv-systems-in-the-guiana-shield/>