PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE OF REDD+: AN ANALYSIS OF 32 REDD+ COUNTRY READINESS PROPOSALS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing countries are receiving new financial and technical support to design and implement programs that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (referred to as REDD+). Reducing emissions from forest cover change requires transparent, accountable, inclusive, and coordinated systems and institutions to govern REDD+ programs. Two multilateral initiatives— the World Bank-administered Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries (UN-REDD Programme)—are supporting REDD+ countries to become "ready" for REDD+ by preparing initial strategy proposals, developing institutions to manage REDD+ programs, and building capacity to implement REDD+ activities.

This paper reviews 32 REDD+ readiness proposals submitted to these initiatives to understand overall trends in how eight elements of readiness (referred to in this paper as *readiness needs*) are being understood and prioritized globally. Specifically, we assess whether the readiness proposals (i) identify the eight readiness needs as relevant for REDD+, (ii) discuss challenges and options for addressing each need, and (iii) identify next steps to be implemented in relation to each need. Our analysis found that the readiness proposals make important commitments to developing effective, equitable, and well-governed REDD+ programs. However, in many of the proposals these general statements have not yet been translated into clear next steps.

CONTENTS

Key findings:

- Discussions of stakeholder participation, non-carbon monitoring, and cross-sectoral coordination are the strongest in terms of the number of readiness proposals that identify issues as relevant for REDD+, discuss key challenges and options, and propose clear next steps (e.g., studies, processes, institutional support costs).

- Few REDD+ countries consider specific design options or challenges related to REDD+ benefit sharing, conflict resolution, or revenue management systems, although most include plans to address these issues as readiness activities move forward.

- Relatively few readiness proposals identify specific next steps to address land tenure challenges or establish mechanisms to coordinate with local institutions during REDD+ planning and implementation.

- Cross-cutting issues such as vertical coordination of REDD+ programs and coherence of proposed new REDD+ bodies with existing forest sector institutions have not been explicitly considered in most readiness proposals to date.

Delivering on the commitments made in the readiness proposals will be crucial to building stakeholder confidence and scaling up financial support for REDD+ programs. We make three recommendations that can help countries make short-term progress on REDD+ objectives and ultimately develop effective and equitable REDD+ programs:

- REDD+ countries, donors, and civil society stakeholders should consider gaps identified by our analysis and work to ensure that readiness activities promote comprehensive and integrated approaches to designing REDD+ strategies, systems, and institutions.

- REDD+ countries should improve efforts to prioritize and sequence readiness activities to enhance transparency on how readiness financing is allocated to different readiness needs.

- REDD+ countries should develop transparent and accountable domestic systems for tracking progress on readiness activities to ensure that readiness proposal commitments to well-governed REDD+ programs are carried out in practice.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2008, international donors have pledged an estimated US$7.2 billion in support for tropical forest nations to develop programs to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, sustainably manage forests, and conserve or enhance carbon stocks (collectively known as REDD+).[1] REDD+ has generated increased financial support and political will to address the social, economic, and institutional factors that contribute to forest loss. These factors often include governance challenges such as weak law enforcement capacity, poor coordination across sectors, and low levels of transparency and participation in forest sector decision-making.[2] Many REDD+ stakeholders—including donor countries, REDD+ country governments, and forest-dependent communities—have emphasized that achieving REDD+ goals will require addressing these challenges and promoting transparent, inclusive, accountable and coordinated governance of emerging REDD+ programs.[3]

Two multilateral initiatives—the World Bank-administered Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Fund[4] and the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries (UN-REDD Programme)—are currently supporting REDD+ countries to prepare strategies and build capacity for REDD+ implementation. These preparatory efforts are widely known as REDD+ *readiness activities*. In order to access readiness financing, REDD+ countries submit proposals that outline studies, stakeholder consultations, and capacity-building activities they will undertake to become "ready" for REDD+. These proposals should also describe how readiness activities will promote good governance of REDD+ programs and address governance challenges that contribute to deforestation and forest degradation.

In this paper, we review 32 REDD+ country readiness proposals submitted to these programs to date. To conduct our analysis, we identified eight core readiness needs that are critical to ensuring that REDD+ programs are equitably and effectively governed.[5] Although our list of readiness needs is not exhaustive, it provides a simple and comparable framework for analysis.

1. Full and effective stakeholder participation and consultation processes

2. Clear and secure land and forest tenure rights

3. Equitable REDD+ benefit distribution mechanisms

4. Effective conflict resolution mechanisms

5. Transparent and accountable systems to manage REDD+ revenues

6. Transparent and comprehensive systems for non-carbon monitoring

7. Institutional coordination and policy coherence across sectors that affect forests

8. Institutional coordination across levels of government that manage forests

The following sections of this paper provide context on REDD+ readiness, present detailed data on each readiness need, discuss cross-cutting issues identified by our analysis and present recommendations to guide donor and REDD+ country priorities for continued readiness preparation.

CONTEXT

Overview of REDD+ and Readiness Programs

In 2007, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to develop policy approaches and positive incentives for implementation of REDD+ programs as part of a new global climate agreement.[6] The FCPF Readiness Fund and UN-REDD Programme were launched in 2008 to help developing countries prepare strategies and build capacity to pilot results-based payments[7] for REDD+ actions, and eventually implement national scale REDD+ programs. Countries seeking access to FCPF or UN-REDD Programme funding must submit a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) or National Programme Document[8] (NPD henceforth referred to as *readiness proposals*) describing the results of initial stakeholder consultations and studies as well as the future actions they will take to become ready for REDD+. The FCPF disburses readiness grants of US$3.6 million, and UN-REDD Programme funding allocations vary from US$3-7 million. Both programs have broad membership from REDD+ countries seeking financial support, technical guidance, and knowledge-sharing opportunities (Table 1).

Both the FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme have played a key role in shaping international understanding of what it means to be "ready" for REDD+. The R-PP template identifies five components of readiness and provides guidance on key activities needed to prepare each component (Table 2). The UN-REDD Programme's guidance for developing NPDs calls for designing interventions around the same readiness components.[11]

Table 1 | **Status of FCPF and UN-REDD Programme**

	PARTNER / OBSERVER COUNTRIES*	PLEDGED DONOR COMMITMENTS (US$ M)	READINESS PROPOSALS SUBMITTED**	READINESS FUNDING ALLOCATED (US$ M)	COUNTRIES WITH SIGNED READINESS GRANTS***
FCPF Readiness Fund[9]	36	240	26	92	9
UN-REDD Programme[10]	46	118.9	16	67.5	16

* 28 Countries belong to both initiatives
**Figures do not include draft Readiness-Preparation Proposals submitted for informal review and feedback
***Four countries are currently implementing grants under both programs

Table 2 | **Overview of Readiness Components**[12]

COMPONENTS OF READINESS	RELATED READINESS PREPARATION ACTIVITIES	OVERARCHING READINESS PREPARATION ACTIVITIES
1. REDD+ Strategy	■ Develop strategy options to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation ■ Consider the legal/institutional frameworks necessary to implement REDD+ and manage related revenues	
2. Assessment of land use, forest law, policy and governance	■ Assess the situation with respect to deforestation, forest degradation, conservation and sustainable management of forests and relevant governance issues ■ Identify priority social and environmental issues associated with drivers of deforestation and forest degradation	■ Define institutional roles and responsibilities for managing and coordinating REDD+ activities ■ Establish a process for stakeholder participation and consultation in all aspects of readiness preparation
3. Reference emission level and/or forest reference level	■ Review historical data on forest cover change and greenhouse gas emissions and removals, including national circumstances and forward-looking projections	

4. Monitoring System	■ Design a system to measure, report, and verify:
	  ☐ Greenhouse gas emissions
	  ☐ Multiple benefits of REDD+
	  ☐ Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation
	  ☐ Other aspects of REDD+ implementation	

5. Social and environmental impacts	■ Assess social and environmental risks and potential impacts of REDD+ strategy options and implementation framework ■ Prepare an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to manage risks and impacts	

The importance of good governance for REDD+

REDD+ country governments, international donors, and civil society stakeholders have identified good governance as fundamental for achieving REDD+ goals.[13] When building REDD+ programs, governments must designate existing or create new institutions and systems to implement REDD+ activities (e.g., monitoring, benefit distribution, conflict resolution, revenue management). Ensuring that these institutions and systems are well-governed – particularly in terms of their transparency, accountability to stakeholders, and inclusiveness of decision-making – is an important part of the readiness phase.

Developing effective REDD+ programs will also require countries to tackle existing governance weaknesses. Forest governance in many REDD+ countries is characterized by poor institutional coordination, lack of decision-maker accountability to affected stakeholders, lack of public access to information about the use of natural resources, and limited opportunities for public participation in forest management. These governance weaknesses often contribute to forest conversion, illegal forest activity, and inequitable distribution of forest resources. Understanding current challenges and developing measures to address them—including through reforms to existing institutions, processes, and laws—will also be a critical component of the readiness phase.

Both the FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme identify strengthening forest governance and ensuring good governance of REDD+ programs as important objectives for readiness preparation. The FCPF's R-PP template, for example, includes guidance on promoting transparency, participation, and coordination in the design and implementation of REDD+ programs, as well as on monitoring key governance factors pertinent to REDD+ implementation. The UN-REDD Programme has created several tools and approaches for developing "effective and inclusive national governance systems" for REDD+.[14] For example, it is currently supporting Participatory Governance Assessments in four[15] pilot countries to help identify governance gaps and needs through a multi-stakeholder process.

METHODS

The following analysis explores eight fundamental readiness needs that we believe, if effectively addressed, will significantly contribute to improving forest governance and promoting transparent, inclusive, accountable, and coordinated REDD+ programs. While not exhaustive of all REDD+ readiness needs, they reflect common issues that have been identified by REDD+ stakeholders, including REDD+ countries, as key priorities.

To conduct our analysis, we reviewed 32 readiness proposals—26 R-PPs and 6 NPDs—submitted to the FCPF or UN-REDD Programme between 2009 and August 2012 (Table 3). If a REDD+ country submitted readiness proposals to both the FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme during that time, we reviewed only the R-PP to avoid double counting of proposals. Our analysis therefore excludes seven NPDs from Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Panama, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Vietnam. We also excluded NPDs that were not available in English or were submitted as Initial rather than Full National Programmes.

We reviewed each proposal in order to document the types of key issues and options being raised by REDD+ countries in relation to each readiness need. Specifically, we assessed:

- The number of readiness proposals that identified each readiness need as relevant for REDD+

- The number of readiness proposals that discussed key challenges, institutional options, or key criteria in relation to each readiness need

- The number of readiness proposals that included budgeted next steps (e.g., studies, consultations) in relation to each readiness need

The results of our analysis are presented in the following section. We provide data on the types of issues, challenges, and next steps that REDD+ countries identified as important, as well as the overall percentage of readiness proposals that discussed each of these topics. It is important to note that, as planning documents, the readiness proposals reflect preliminary thinking on REDD+ systems and strategies. Nonetheless, they provide a comparable reference point that allows interested stakeholders to scrutinize stated objectives and track progress towards readiness proposal commitments over time. Taken as a whole, the proposals can also indicate broader trends across countries, particularly in terms of the ways in which different readiness needs are being understood and prioritized globally.

Table 3 | **Readiness Proposals Reviewed by this Paper**

	REGION		
	AFRICA	**ASIA-PACIFIC**	**LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN**
R-PPs	Central African Republic	Cambodia	Argentina
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Indonesia	Colombia
	Ethiopia	Lao P.D.R.	Costa Rica
	Ghana	Nepal	Guatemala
	Kenya	Vietnam	Guyana
	Liberia		Mexico
	Madagascar		Nicaragua
	Mozambique		Panama
	Republic of Congo		Peru
	Tanzania		Suriname
	Uganda		
NPDs	Nigeria	Papua New Guinea	Ecuador
	Zambia	Sri Lanka	Paraguay
Total	**13**	**7**	**12**

Box 1 | **About the Data**

In this paper, we aim to present data from the 32 readiness proposals in a systematic and consistent manner. In conducting this analysis, we identified several challenges and limitations of the data that should be kept in mind.

- **Extent of data considered.** While we limited our review to the readiness proposals, we recognize that many REDD+ countries have additional sources of readiness financing. The extent to which these other activities were identified and discussed in the readiness proposals varied considerably, but was often limited to a brief mention. As a result, where our analysis identifies gaps in how certain readiness needs are considered, these activities may be described in other documents not considered by our study. This may be particularly true for REDD+ countries that were among the earliest to submit readiness proposals in 2009.

- **Identification of next steps.** The readiness proposals include many broad commitments and general statements about key needs for REDD+; yet, in many cases it is difficult to distinguish between general commitments and priority actions that will be supported by the readiness grant. We therefore focused our analysis of "next steps" on the activities that were clearly funded in the budgets or results frameworks of the readiness proposals. Given that the level of detail provided by REDD+ countries in budget tables differed significantly, this method may have led to underreporting of next steps where budget formats provided a summary rather than detailed breakdowns of budgeted activities.

- **Clarity and consistency of terminology.** Many of the terms used in the readiness proposals are not explained in detail, or different terms were used to discuss similar concepts across the proposals. In some cases, the lack of clear definitions and consistent terminology created challenges for compiling data and conducting comparative analysis.

ANALYSIS OF READINESS NEEDS

Readiness Need 1: Full and Effective Stakeholder Participation and Consultation Processes
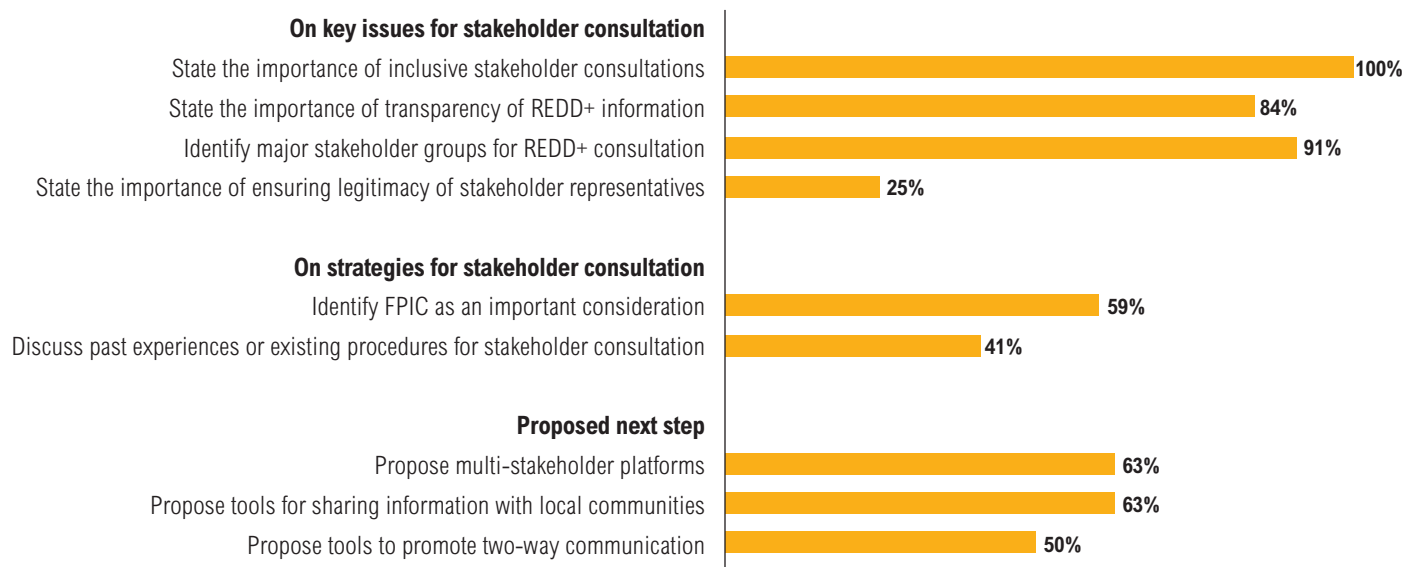
REDD+ donors and civil society stakeholders have emphasized the need for the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders—particularly forest communities and indigenous peoples—in REDD+ planning and implementation.[16] Nearly all of the readiness proposals outline broad commitments to transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in stakeholder consultation processes, including engagement of indigenous peoples, forest communities and women. Many of the readiness proposals propose strategies for achieving these commitments, such as developing multi-stakeholder platforms, feedback mechanisms for stakeholder input, or procedures to ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)[17] of affected communities. While this is a positive trend, there is still relatively little detail provided on how consultation strategies such as promoting FPIC or developing feedback mechanisms will function in practice. Civil society organizations in several REDD+ countries have highlighted on the ground challenges for operationalizing these types of strategies; for example, they have raised the need for additional efforts to tailor consultation strategies to needs of local stakeholders and to ensure two-way dialogue on REDD+ strategy development (Box 2).

Box 2 | **Challenges in Early REDD+ Stakeholder Engagement Processes**

The readiness proposals outline commitments to transparent, inclusive, and accountable stakeholder consultation processes, with some REDD+ countries also articulating specific strategies for engaging local groups or ensuring two-way communication. Even where specific approaches for achieving these goals have been outlined on paper, civil society reports on early REDD+ consultations have highlighted the challenges of implementing these strategies in practice. For example:

- **Insufficient engagement of indigenous peoples.** For example, comments from Forest Peoples Programme on consultations in Guyana describe "rapid visits of just a few hours' duration to 27 Amerindian communities (out of a total of more than 130 communities) to present a somewhat technical and abstract PowerPoint presentation on REDD. Each presentation was then followed by a short question and answer session."[18]

- **Lack of emphasis on incorporating stakeholder feedback.** A statement issued by 26 civil society organizations from Central African Republic (CAR) noted that "Recommendations and contributions of civil society made during meetings organized by the government, and contained in civil society statements, have been only marginally taken into account in the document . . . We consider that these have been more information-sharing sessions than consultations."[19]

- **Poor access to information.** Civil society in Vietnam flagged that the initial draft of the R-PP was written in English rather than Vietnamese, which particularly limited effectiveness of early consultations with local actors.[20]

Figure 1 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Stakeholder Participation**

On key issues for stakeholder consultation

State the importance of inclusive stakeholder consultations	100%
State the importance of transparency of REDD+ information	84%
Identify major stakeholder groups for REDD+ consultation	91%
State the importance of ensuring legitimacy of stakeholder representatives	25%

On strategies for stakeholder consultation

Identify FPIC as an important consideration	59%
Discuss past experiences or existing procedures for stakeholder consultation	41%

Proposed next step

Propose multi-stakeholder platforms	63%
Propose tools for sharing information with local communities	63%
Propose tools to promote two-way communication	50%

Readiness Need 2: Clear and Secure Land and Forest Tenure Rights

Strengthening the security of land tenure and property rights in forests and improving the effectiveness of systems to uphold these rights are regarded by many stakeholders as fundamental priorities for REDD+ readiness.[21] The readiness proposals identify a variety of ways in which land tenure systems may impact the success of REDD+ programs. For example, the readiness proposals cite tenure as a potential basis for determining carbon ownership, suggesting that clarity of existing tenure rights may be strongly correlated with the right to benefit from REDD+ programs. Furthermore, the readiness proposals identify a range of tenure challenges that may hinder REDD+ implementation if they are not addressed, such as tenure policies that contribute to forest conversion, weaknesses in land administration, and prevalence of land conflicts. Despite the many tenure challenges identified, only a few readiness proposals outline commitments or actionable next steps for tackling these issues as part of their REDD+ strategies. Given that tenure reform can be costly and time consuming[22] and that long-term sources of readiness financing have not yet been identified in most REDD+ countries, it is perhaps unsurprising that countries have not committed to resolving tenure problems. Nonetheless, land conflicts and deforestation linked to insecure tenure pose significant risks to the success of REDD+ activities, and may require additional emphasis as countries develop national REDD+ strategies.[23]

Readiness Need 3: Equitable REDD+ Benefit Distribution Mechanisms

Equitable systems for delivering REDD+ benefits have been identified by many stakeholders as a central aspect of developing REDD+ programs.[24] While countries are still in early phases of designing benefit distribution approaches, many of the readiness proposals emphasize designing equitable benefit distribution rules and procedures as important outputs of the readiness phase. At this stage, few countries discuss operational aspects of benefit sharing such as how benefit eligibility will be determined, or how the principle of equity will be specifically incorporated into benefit distribution approaches. The latter issue is particularly complex since definitions and perceptions of equity are likely to vary widely across REDD+ stakeholder groups.[25] The majority of the proposals include budgeted plans for further studies, consultations or working groups to define benefit distribution approaches in greater detail. Clarifying the goals of benefit sharing systems, and facilitating stakeholder dialogue around how benefits can be shared equitably, will be important steps for countries as they complete these activities. Lessons from past benefit sharing experiences and from emerging REDD+ pilots may also provide useful insights for the design of REDD+ systems (Box 3).

Figure 2 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Land Tenure**
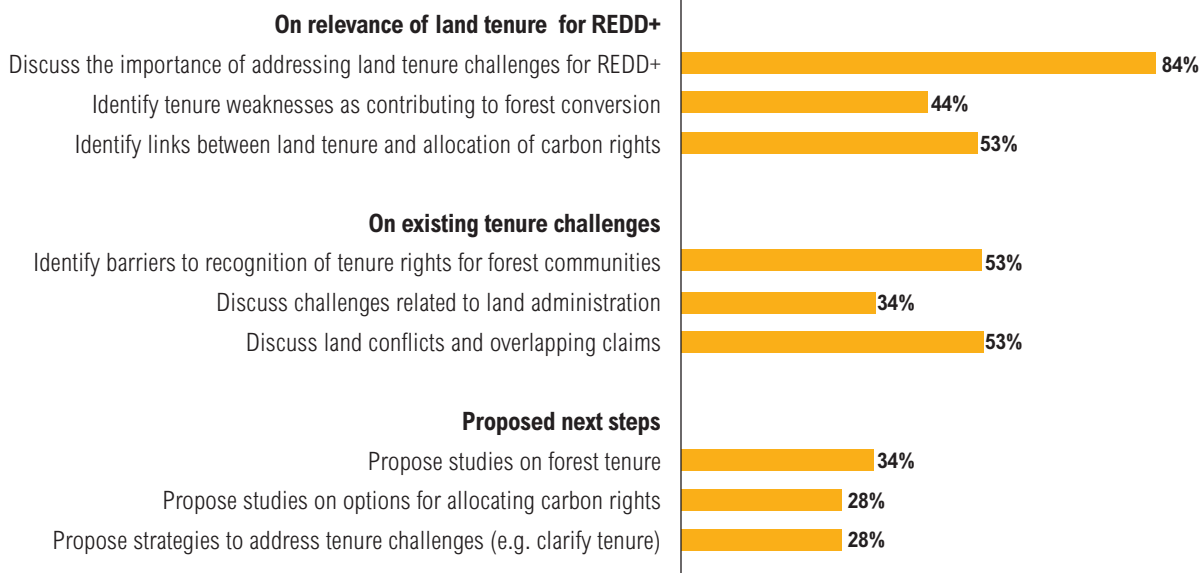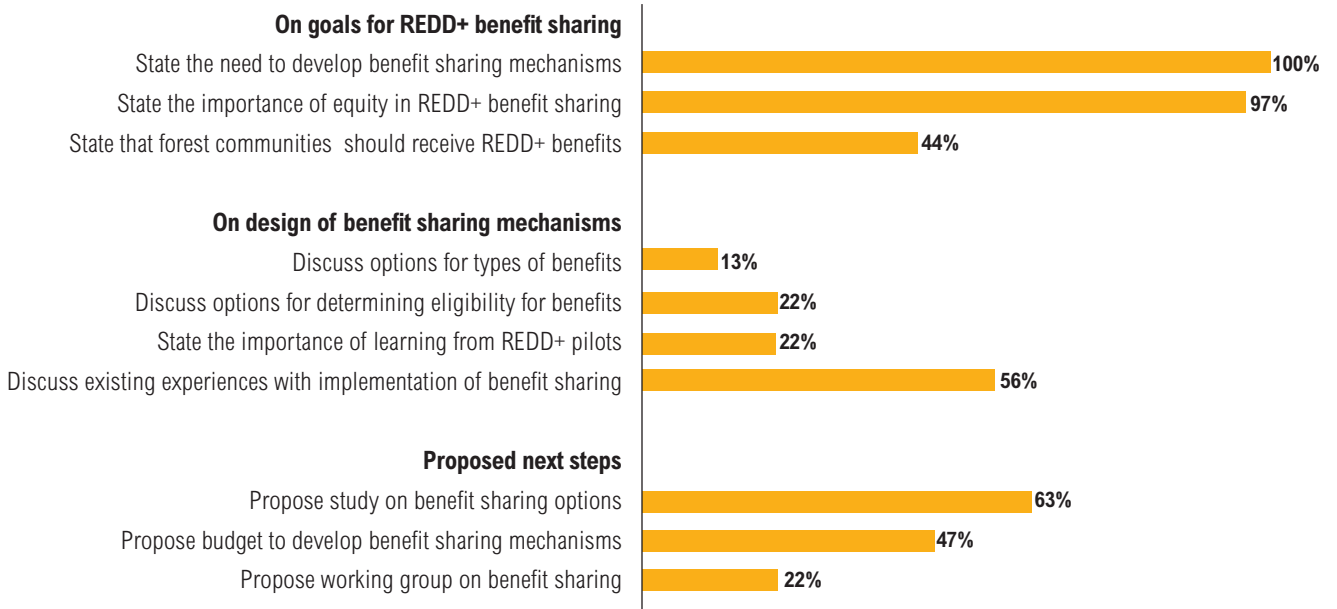
On relevance of land tenure for REDD+

Discuss the importance of addressing land tenure challenges for REDD+	84%
Identify tenure weaknesses as contributing to forest conversion	44%
Identify links between land tenure and allocation of carbon rights	53%

On existing tenure challenges

Identify barriers to recognition of tenure rights for forest communities	53%
Discuss challenges related to land administration	34%
Discuss land conflicts and overlapping claims	53%

Proposed next steps

Propose studies on forest tenure	34%
Propose studies on options for allocating carbon rights	28%
Propose strategies to address tenure challenges (e.g. clarify tenure)	28%

Figure 3 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Benefit Sharing**

On goals for REDD+ benefit sharing

State the need to develop benefit sharing mechanisms	100%
State the importance of equity in REDD+ benefit sharing	97%
State that forest communities should receive REDD+ benefits	44%

On design of benefit sharing mechanisms

Discuss options for types of benefits	13%
Discuss options for determining eligibility for benefits	22%
State the importance of learning from REDD+ pilots	22%
Discuss existing experiences with implementation of benefit sharing	56%

Proposed next steps

Propose study on benefit sharing options	63%
Propose budget to develop benefit sharing mechanisms	47%
Propose working group on benefit sharing	22%

Box 3 | Benefit Sharing in Nepal's Forest Carbon Trust Fund (FCTF)

Nepal's Forest Carbon Trust Fund (FCTF) is piloting benefit distribution approaches for REDD+ activities using a seed grant from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The institutional design and operational procedures of the FCTF demonstrate how principles of transparency, accountability and equity can be incorporated into benefit distribution approaches.[26] For example:
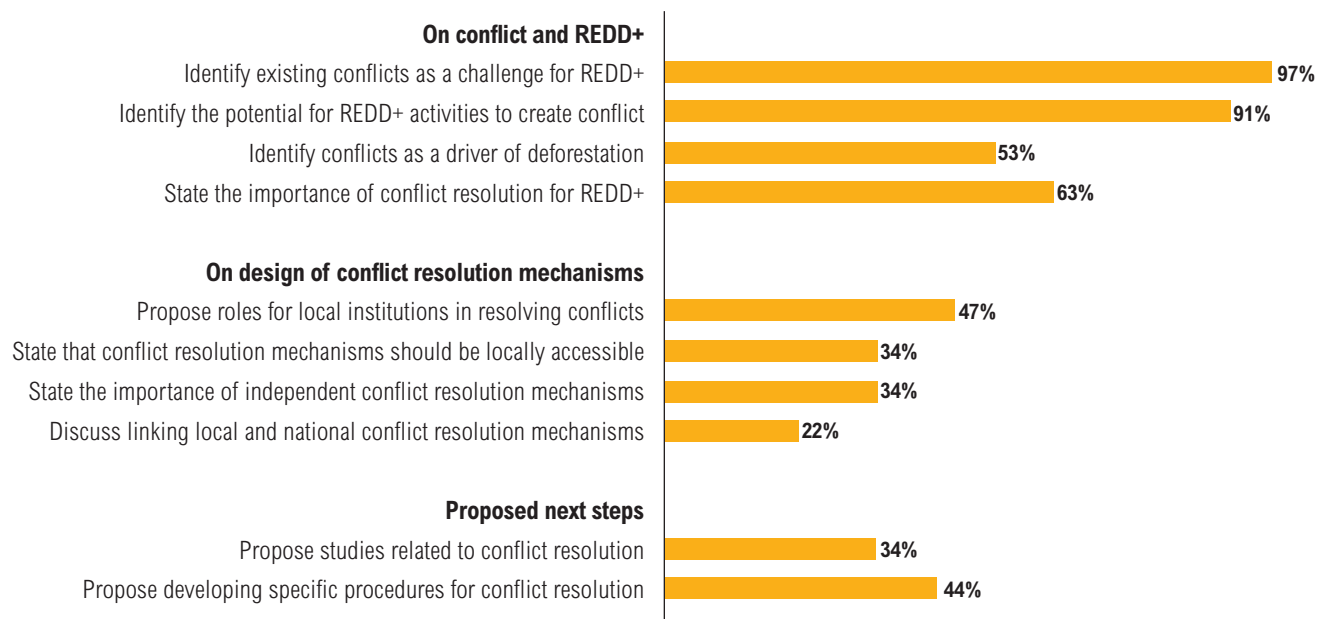
- Rules, procedures and institutional structures to manage the fund were developed through a participatory design process

- An independent multi-stakeholder advisory committee (including representation of women and marginalized groups) is tasked with overall governance, oversight and dispute resolution

- The project coordinates across scales by identifying clear roles and responsibilities between oversight committees, watershed level structures and local level Community Forest User Groups

- Rules for calculating performance-based payments include gender- and poverty-sensitive criteria

- Clear procedures exist for monitoring benefit distribution, auditing of financial flows and reporting to relevant oversight bodies

The FCTF is currently operating in 3 pilot sites covering 10,000ha of forest area.[27] To date, project activities in the three pilot watershed areas have generated $95,000 in payments, calculated on the basis of carbon sequestered above an established baseline.[28]

Readiness Need 4: Effective Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Domestic systems for conflict resolution or grievance redress[29] (henceforth referred to as conflict resolution mechanisms) have been proposed as an important tool for handling potential conflicts, complaints and unintended harm caused by REDD+ programs.[30] In the readiness proposals, REDD+ countries recognize the potential for REDD+ activities to exacerbate existing conflicts or generate new disputes over land use, benefit sharing, or resource rights. Despite this recognition, less than half of the readiness proposals identify specific, budgeted next steps for setting up conflict resolution mechanisms or conducting further analysis of how to address REDD+-related conflicts. The majority of the readiness proposals that do propose next steps on conflict resolution still provide relatively little detail on what will be done. For example, few readiness proposals discuss institutional and capacity needs for addressing conflict, the potential role of existing courts or administrative systems for resolving conflict, or the types of conflicts that might occur (Box 4).

Figure 4 | Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Conflict Resolution

Uganda's R-PP is one of the few readiness proposals that discusses conflict resolution mechanisms and needs in some detail. For example, the R-PP identifies three major categories of conflict that may be relevant for REDD+, including:

■ Field level conflicts over: control, use and access to forest resources within protected areas; ownership of carbon credits or tenure of trees; or benefit sharing and participation in REDD+ activities;

■ Institutional level conflicts over: division of roles and responsibilities in R-PP implementation between and among government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector; conflicts over access, use, and interpretation of data and information held by various institutions or whose interpretation may infringe on the credibility of some institutions; and

■ Policy level conflicts over: policy/legal gaps for addressing key REDD-Plus issues (such as tenure and ownership of Carbon in Protected Areas, licensing Carbon Trade, Funds channeling, among others) have been addressed.[31]

In addition, the R-PP notes that existing conflict resolution mechanisms—such as land tribunals and the judicial system—are "inadequate" to address potential REDD+ grievances. In order to develop tailored approaches to dealing with REDD+ conflicts, the R-PP proposes to develop a new Conflict Resolution and Grievances Management Strategy (CRGMS). Key elements of the new system may include an independent multi-stakeholder conflict resolution mechanism, capacity-building activities, and measures to detect, prevent and minimize conflicts. The activity plan in the R-PP includes budget line items for convening a stakeholder validation meeting, public distribution of the final strategy document, and monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the CRGMS.

Readiness Need 5: Transparent and Accountable Systems to Manage REDD+ Revenues

Promoting transparency and accountability in REDD+ revenue management can build trust between stakeholders and donors at both national and international scales that REDD+ funds are being used to achieve stated objectives of REDD+ programs.[32] Overall, just over 60 percent of readiness proposals emphasize the importance of ensuring that REDD+ financial flows are well-governed, but provide little discussion of potential strategies to ensure effective financial management for REDD+. Although readiness financing is already flowing in many countries, few readiness proposals discuss how readiness funds are being managed during the readiness phase, or

discuss the capacity and performance of existing public financial institutions. REDD+ countries participating in the FCPF and UN-REDD Programme have a median score of 2.7 out of 10 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index,[33] suggesting that additional capacity-building efforts are required to ensure that REDD+ financial management systems mitigate corruption risks and are subject to adequate oversight.

Readiness Need 6: Transparent and Comprehensive Systems for Non-carbon Monitoring

Collecting information on non-carbon attributes (e.g., social and environmental impacts, governance) of REDD+ has been recognized by REDD+ donors, countries and civil society stakeholders as an important part of developing comprehensive REDD+ monitoring systems.[34] The readiness proposals identify a broad range of social, environmental, and governance issues related to REDD+ implementation that will be included in REDD+ monitoring systems. Our review indicates that, despite the positive emphasis on monitoring a range of non-carbon attributes, there is a lack of clarity and consistency in how monitoring terminology is used across the readiness proposals. For example, few readiness proposals clearly define what is meant by monitoring of impacts, benefits, safeguards, or implementation, or how approaches to monitoring each of these elements might differ. As REDD+ countries move forward with developing monitoring frameworks and indicators, there is a need for additional clarity on best practices for tracking the progress and results of REDD+ programs.

Readiness Need 7: Institutional Coordination and Policy Coherence Across Sectors that Affect Forests

The readiness proposals widely acknowledge that for REDD+ to succeed, enhanced coordination across government agencies that oversee different land use activities such as agriculture, mining, infrastructure, and energy is essential. The readiness proposals suggest a range of solutions and next steps aimed at assessing policy reform needs, capacity-building for other sectors on REDD+ objectives, and improving implementation of relevant enforcement and land use planning mechanisms. Many of the readiness proposals acknowledge that the effectiveness of cross-sectoral coordination for REDD+ hinges on political will and commitment from sectors outside the forest. Inter-ministerial committees are identified by 63 percent of proposals as an important strategy to enhance coordination between key government actors and generate the support required to achieve meaningful progress on managing land use and resolving potential conflicts.

Figure 5 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Revenue Management**
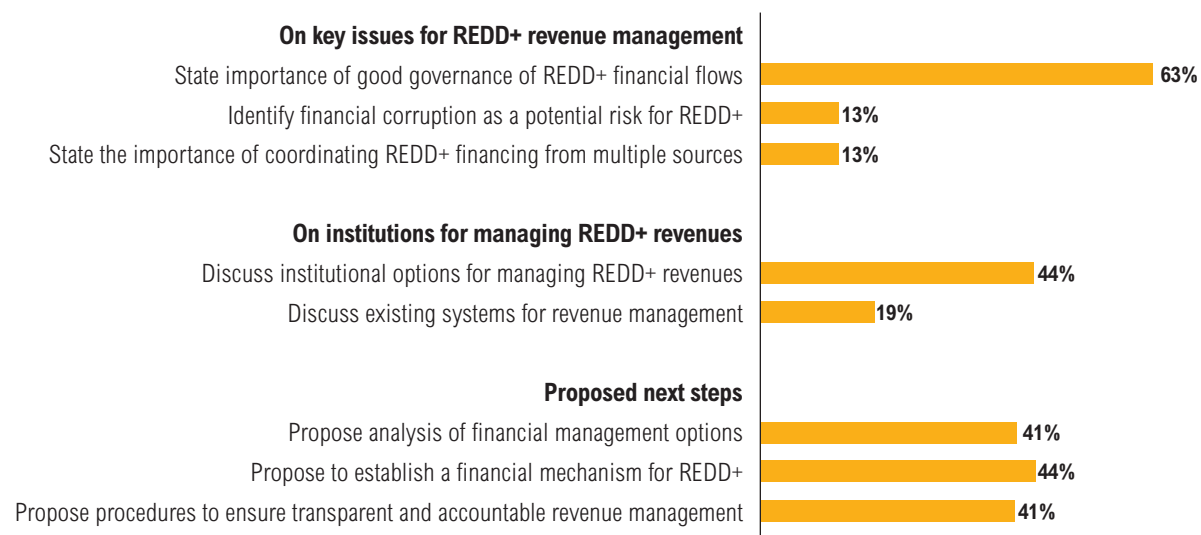
On key issues for REDD+ revenue management

State importance of good governance of REDD+ financial flows — **63%**
Identify financial corruption as a potential risk for REDD+ — **13%**
State the importance of coordinating REDD+ financing from multiple sources — **13%**

On institutions for managing REDD+ revenues

Discuss institutional options for managing REDD+ revenues — **44%**
Discuss existing systems for revenue management — **19%**

Proposed next steps

Propose analysis of financial management options — **41%**
Propose to establish a financial mechanism for REDD+ — **44%**
Propose procedures to ensure transparent and accountable revenue management — **41%**

Figure 6 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Non-Carbon Monitoring**

On the scope of non-carbon monitoring systems

Discuss monitoring the governance of REDD+ programs — **56%**
Discuss monitoring governance weaknesses that contribute to forest loss — **44%**
Discuss monitoring social impacts or benefits of REDD+ — **72%**
Discuss monitoring environmental impacts or benefits of REDD+ — **66%**
Discuss monitoring overall implementation of REDD+ programs — **53%**

On design of monitoring systems

Identify an institution to oversee non-carbon monitoring — **56%**
Discuss the importance of transparent non-carbon monitoring — **53%**
Discuss potential role of local communities in non-carbon monitoring — **47%**
Discuss relevant existing systems that can inform non-carbon monitoring for REDD+ — **34%**

Proposed next steps

Propose to develop approaches for monitoring social and environmental impacts — **69%**
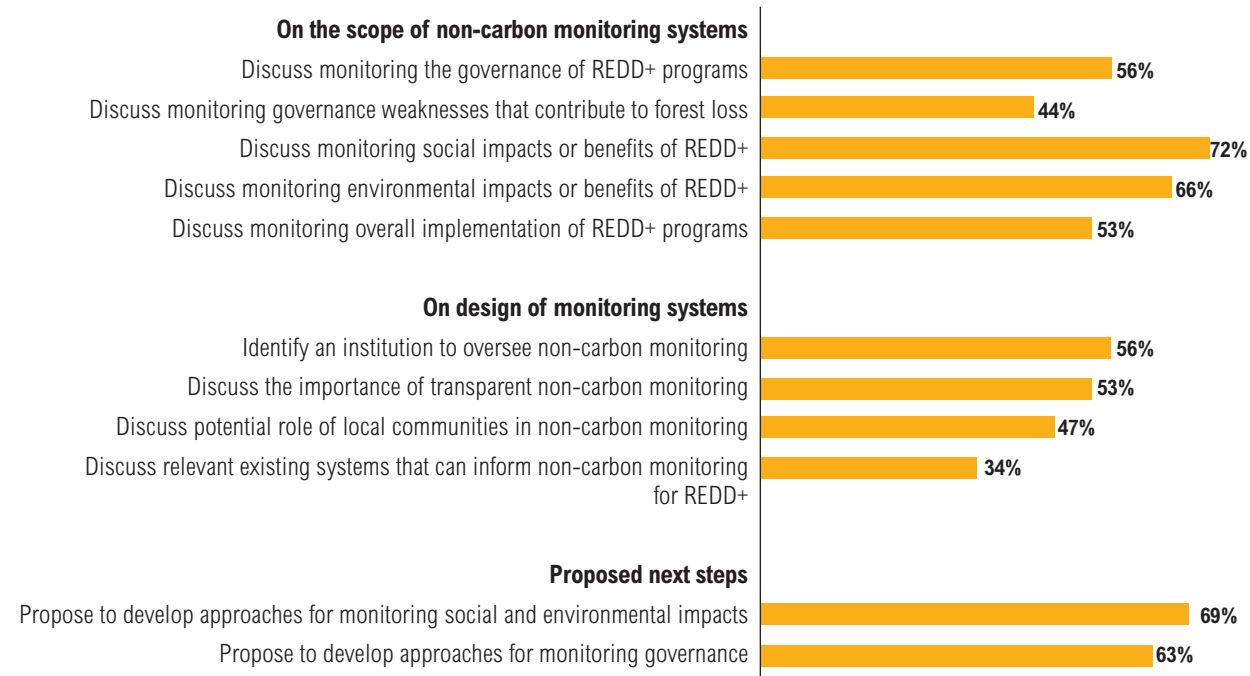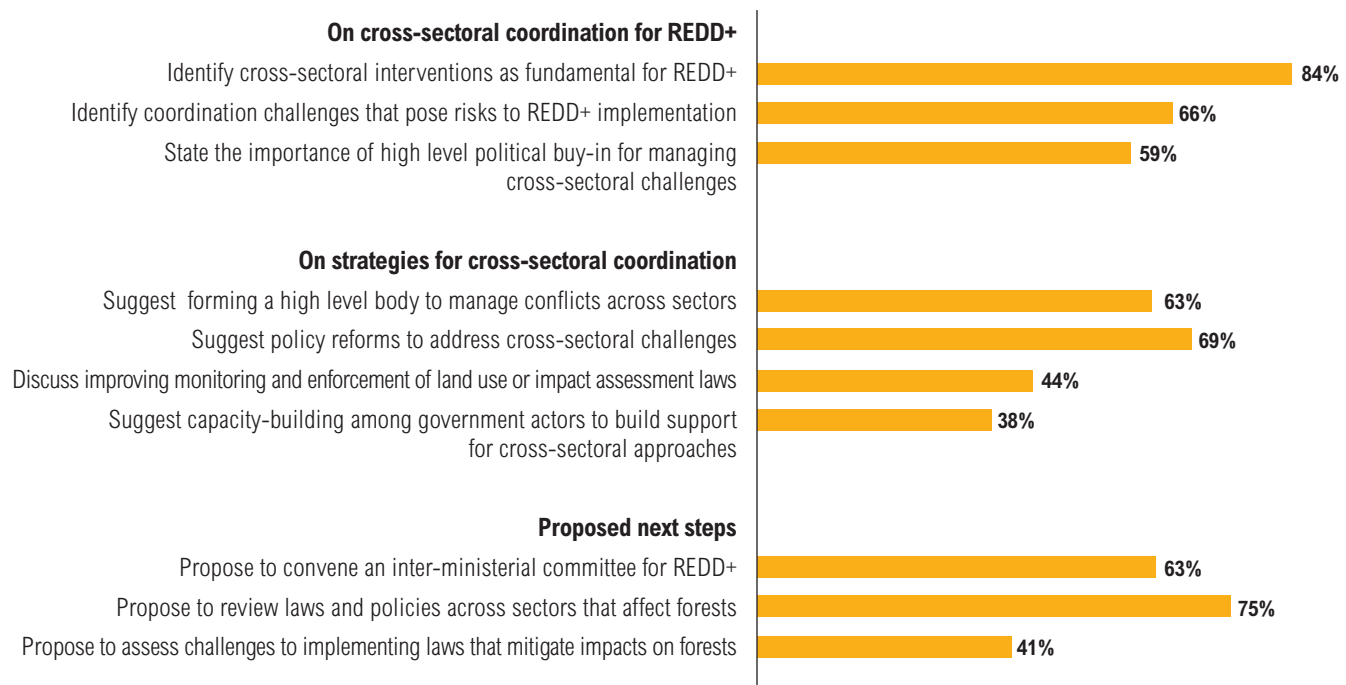Propose to develop approaches for monitoring governance — **63%**

Figure 7 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Cross-Sectoral Coordination**

On cross-sectoral coordination for REDD+
Identify cross-sectoral interventions as fundamental for REDD+ — 84%
Identify coordination challenges that pose risks to REDD+ implementation — 66%
State the importance of high level political buy-in for managing cross-sectoral challenges — 59%

On strategies for cross-sectoral coordination
Suggest forming a high level body to manage conflicts across sectors — 63%
Suggest policy reforms to address cross-sectoral challenges — 69%
Discuss improving monitoring and enforcement of land use or impact assessment laws — 44%
Suggest capacity-building among government actors to build support for cross-sectoral approaches — 38%

Proposed next steps
Propose to convene an inter-ministerial committee for REDD+ — 63%
Propose to review laws and policies across sectors that affect forests — 75%
Propose to assess challenges to implementing laws that mitigate impacts on forests — 41%

Readiness Need 8: Institutional Coordination Across Levels of Government that Manage Forests

Effective implementation of REDD+ programs requires capacity and coordination across levels of government.[35] The reviewed readiness proposals recognize that REDD+ efforts require local implementation and ownership in order to succeed, with almost all of the proposals specifically noting the importance of sub-national coordination. However, these statements have not yet been translated into concrete mechanisms for sub-national coordination in early stages of REDD+ planning. While almost 50 percent of the readiness proposals plan to convene new or use existing sub-national coordination bodies to coordinate REDD+ implementation across scales, less than 20 percent include funding for these entities in readiness proposal budgets. Furthermore, proposed REDD+ management structures are composed almost exclusively of representatives from national level institutions. Sixty-six percent of the readiness proposals note that some forest or revenue management responsibilities have been decentralized to local institutions, although only a few discuss the relevance of these reforms for REDD+ or propose next steps to enhance coordination

with decentralized institutions. The lack of emphasis on sub-national coordination could reinforce concerns that central government oversight of REDD+ programs and finance will reverse progress made in decentralizing forest or revenue management responsibilities.[36]

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Our review assessed how the readiness proposals identify each readiness need as relevant for REDD+, discuss key options or challenges to be considered during readiness preparation, and propose next steps. Table 4 summarizes overall trends in how the readiness proposals consider these questions for each readiness need.

Most REDD+ countries discuss the importance of addressing the readiness needs in order to develop effective, equitable, and well-governed REDD+ programs. However, many of the commitments made in the readiness proposals have not yet been translated from general statements into specific strategies and budgeted next steps in their work plans and budgets. In particular, we note the following:

Figure 8 | **Percentage of Readiness Proposals Discussing Key Topics for Coordination Across Scales of Government that Manage Forests**
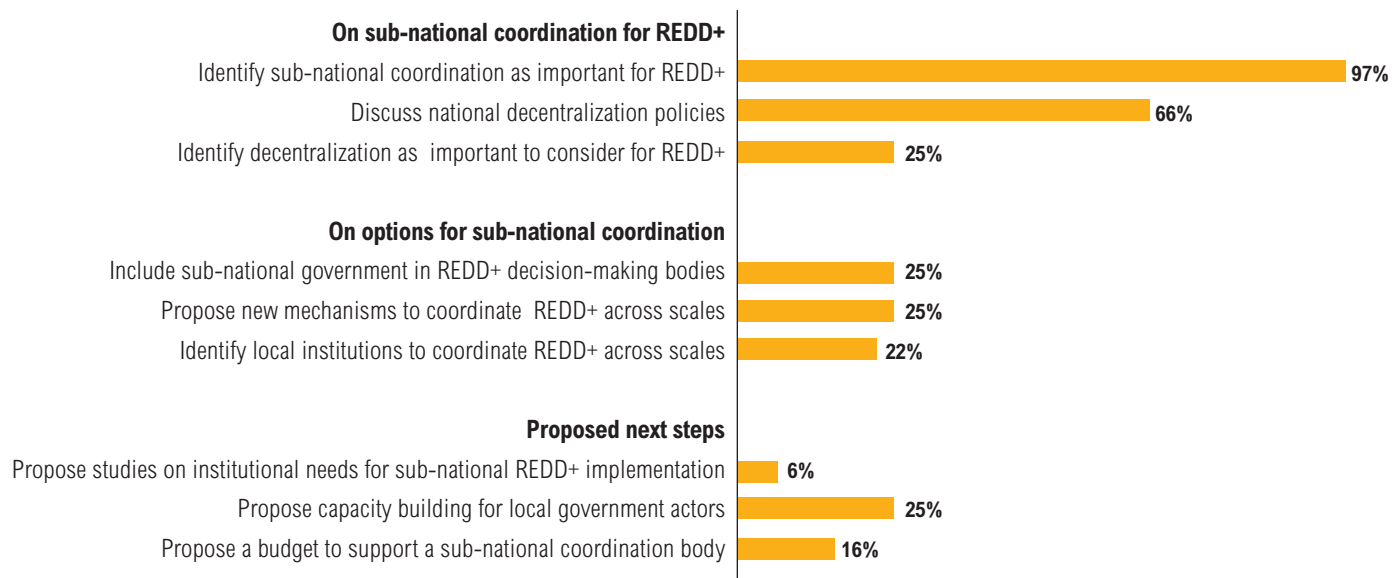
On sub-national coordination for REDD+

Identify sub-national coordination as important for REDD+	97%
Discuss national decentralization policies	66%
Identify decentralization as important to consider for REDD+	25%

On options for sub-national coordination

Include sub-national government in REDD+ decision-making bodies	25%
Propose new mechanisms to coordinate REDD+ across scales	25%
Identify local institutions to coordinate REDD+ across scales	22%

Proposed next steps

Propose studies on institutional needs for sub-national REDD+ implementation	6%
Propose capacity building for local government actors	25%
Propose a budget to support a sub-national coordination body	16%

Table 4 | **Trends in the Number of Readiness Proposals Considering Key Readiness Needs***

READINESS NEED	IDENTIFY AS RELEVANT FOR REDD+	DISCUSS KEY CHALLENGES OR OPTIONS	PROPOSE NEXT STEPS
Full and effective stakeholder participation and consultation processes	High	Medium	Medium
Clear and secure land tenure and property rights	High	Medium	Low
Equitable benefit sharing mechanisms	High	Low	Medium
Effective conflict resolution mechanisms	High	Low	Medium
Transparent and accountable systems to manage REDD+ revenues	Medium	Low	Medium
Transparent and comprehensive systems for non-carbon monitoring	High	Medium	High
Institutional coordination and policy coherence across sectors that affect forests	High	Medium	Medium
Institutional coordination across levels of government that manage forests	High	Low	Low

*High: An average of > 20 proposals discussed each data point
Medium: An average of 11-20 proposals discussed each data point
Low: An average of <11 proposals discussed each data point

- Discussions of stakeholder participation, non-carbon monitoring, and cross-sectoral coordination are the strongest in terms of the number of readiness proposals identifying the issue as relevant for REDD+, discussing key challenges and options, and proposing next steps (e.g., studies, processes, institutional support costs). The emphasis on stakeholder participation and monitoring is unsurprising given the level of international attention devoted to providing guidance to REDD+ countries on these issues.

- More readiness proposals identify next steps related to benefit sharing, conflict resolution, and revenue management for REDD+ than discuss specific design options or challenges to developing these systems. This finding may simply reflect the fact that readiness proposals are preliminary planning documents, but may also indicate a need for more research, field testing, and knowledge sharing to help REDD+ countries and stakeholders think through design options for REDD+ systems and institutions and adapt them to local contexts.

- Relatively few readiness proposals identify specific next steps to address land tenure challenges or establish mechanisms to coordinate with local institutions during REDD+ planning and implementation. The lack of emphasis on tenure issues—which has also been highlighted by civil society organizations and forest communities[37]—is particularly surprising given the extent of ongoing research and outreach on how tenure challenges can be addressed in the context of REDD+ programs.[38]

ANALYSIS OF CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

While most of the readiness needs were at least briefly addressed across the readiness proposals, cross-cutting issues related to the design and implementation of REDD+ programs received less emphasis. In this section, we highlight these gaps to identify where linkages between readiness needs or overarching program design issues require further consideration as countries implement readiness grants and finalize national REDD+ strategies.

Tenure Systems, Carbon Rights, and Benefit Sharing

Lessons from existing benefit sharing schemes in natural resource sectors and initial REDD+ pilot projects have highlighted the importance of clear and secure tenure rights for effective and equitable distribution of benefits.[39] REDD+ programs may introduce new carbon rights that determine who is eligible to participate in and benefit from REDD+ programs. These carbon rights could be based on existing rights to forest land and resources, or allocated independently of current tenure systems. Regardless of the approach adopted, carbon rights have the potential to exacerbate land conflicts and overlapping claims in many REDD+ countries.[40] Therefore, REDD+ countries will need to carefully consider the potential risks and impacts of different approaches for defining carbon rights and determining eligibility to receive REDD+ benefits. In addition, they will need to consider how tenure laws may restrict eligibility of certain actors to access REDD+ benefits, as well as how weaknesses in tenure systems may limit the effectiveness of REDD+ programs if not addressed.

While readiness proposals start to identify links between these issues (Figure 9), few examine the potential implications of current tenure systems for decisions over carbon rights or benefit sharing.

Figure 9 | **Readiness Proposal Discussions of Tenure Rights, Carbon Rights, and Benefit Sharing**

Discuss potential links between tenure and carbon rights	53%
Discuss potential links between carbon rights and benefit sharing	38%
Discuss potential links between tenure rights and benefit sharing	22%

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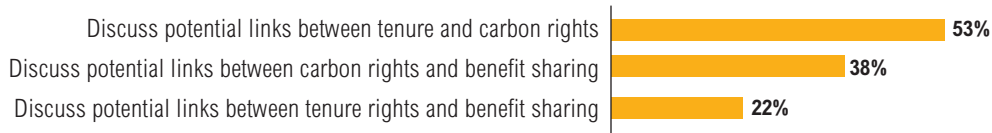
The relatively limited discussion suggests that the relationship between these issues is not yet well understood.[41] Proposed studies and consultations on developing benefit sharing systems and defining carbon rights provide an opportunity for REDD+ countries to address this gap and ensure that readiness efforts also tackle relevant tenure weaknesses. For example, further analysis and multi-stakeholder dialogue on the relationship between these issues may help REDD+ countries develop innovative approaches to addressing tenure insecurity and promote equitable distribution of REDD+ benefits.

Vertical integration of REDD+ programs

The readiness proposals acknowledge the importance of local ownership and engagement of local institutions in implementation of REDD+ programs; however, further discussion of key local institutions to carry out REDD+ functions and processes is limited (Figure 10). All of the proposals recognize an important role for local institutions in engaging local stakeholders, with approximately half also proposing to involve local institutions in monitoring activities and conflict resolution. Relatively few suggest using existing local institutions to help coordinate REDD+ across local scales. There is no discussion of which local institutions might play a role in key REDD+ activities such as revenue management, benefit sharing, or cross-sector coordination. Even where potential roles for local actors are identified, these discussions often do not distinguish between whether local institutions will be engaged as participants or as key implementers with defined roles for executing REDD+ activities.

While REDD+ countries are still in the process of developing institutional frameworks, more work may be required to ensure that REDD+ planning processes integrate local institutions and build their capacity to perform REDD+ tasks. In particular, REDD+ programs could be used as an opportunity to advance decentralization reforms or otherwise strengthen the capacity of local institutions while establishing stronger collaborations

between local and national actors. For this to happen, clear roles and responsibilities for REDD+ tasks must be established across local, regional and national level institutions. In addition, capacity-building and enhanced engagement of local authorities may help increase local ownership and support for REDD+ strategies.

Coherence of REDD+ Institutional Design with Existing Institutions

Many stakeholders regard new technical support and financing for REDD+ as an opportunity to strengthen institutional capacity for forest and land management.[42] In the readiness proposals, REDD+ countries are often proposing new institutions to manage and oversee REDD+ activities, rather than building on existing ones. There are potential trade-offs to this choice. For example, creation of new REDD+ institutions could exacerbate well-documented forest sector challenges by creating new capacity constraints, using resources inefficiently, undermining accountability relationships between existing institutions, or creating new coordination challenges. On the other hand, new REDD+ institutions could also create better checks and balances or empower marginalized actors, such as through development of new multi-stakeholder oversight bodies.

The readiness proposals reflect relatively little consideration of these trade-offs to date. Existing institutions and approaches are mentioned across most of the eight readiness needs (Figure 11). However, there is limited analysis of how the strengths and weaknesses of existing institutions can inform the design of REDD+ institutional frameworks. Proposed studies on institutional options present an opportunity for countries to more thoroughly assess the effectiveness of current institutions, consider potential impacts of developing new institutions, and identify capacity-building needs. Such an approach can ensure that REDD+ programs strengthen existing institutions, consider accountability relationships within the forest sector, and allocate resources efficiently.

Figure 10 | **Readiness Proposals Identifying Potential Roles for Sub-National Actors and Institutions**
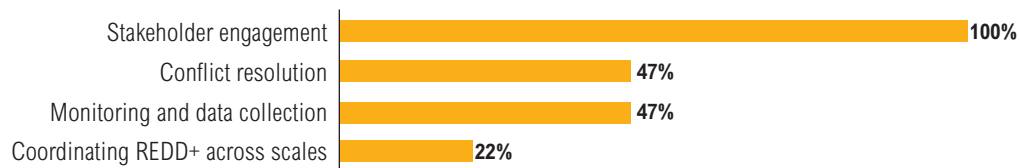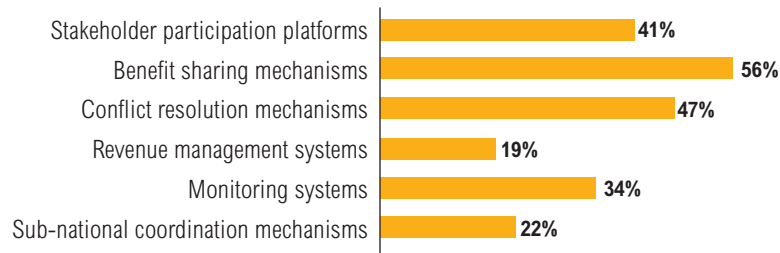
Stakeholder engagement	100%
Conflict resolution	47%
Monitoring and data collection	47%
Coordinating REDD+ across scales	22%

Stakeholder participation platforms	41%
Benefit sharing mechanisms	56%
Conflict resolution mechanisms	47%
Revenue management systems	19%
Monitoring systems	34%
Sub-national coordination mechanisms	22%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our analysis of the readiness proposals, we make three recommendations that we believe can assist REDD+ countries in making short-term progress on REDD+ objectives and ultimately developing effective and equitable REDD+ programs.

Recommendation 1: Consider Gaps Identified by our Review of Readiness Needs

In this paper, we identify gaps where readiness proposals have not yet explored design issues, suggested concrete strategies to address identified challenges, or proposed detailed next steps related to each readiness need. In addition, we highlight cross-cutting issues such as vertical integration of REDD+ programs and coherence of institutional frameworks that have not been explicitly considered in most readiness proposals to date. While our focus is on identifying overall trends, this information is an important starting point for more targeted, contextual analysis of readiness needs and cross-cutting issues within REDD+ countries. While specific needs will vary across contexts, it is nonetheless useful for REDD+ countries, donors, and civil society stakeholders to consider potential gaps identified by our analysis and work to ensure that readiness activities promote comprehensive and integrated approaches to designing REDD+ strategies, systems, and institutions.

Recommendation 2: Develop Processes to Identify REDD+ Readiness Priorities

In the readiness proposals, it is often unclear how REDD+ countries are prioritizing readiness activities, particularly in terms of which activities have dedicated funding. A recent study commissioned by the UN-REDD Programme also highlighted this issue, noting that REDD+ countries

that responded to their survey "express needs in virtually all REDD+ components, and often without any clear separation of priority needs from other."[43] Lack of a clear process to prioritize readiness activities raises risks that readiness financing will be too overstretched to achieve results or that REDD+ countries may overlook certain readiness needs. Proposed studies and stakeholder consultations provide an opportunity for REDD+ countries to think through how to prioritize, sequence, and finance readiness activities in an intentional, transparent manner. Several REDD+ countries have also attempted to bridge funding shortfalls by focusing REDD+ efforts in pilot districts and provinces, with plans for future scaling. Prioritization and piloting activities can therefore help ensure that readiness financing is targeted, reflects domestic stakeholder priorities, and helps achieve objectives of REDD+ programs.

Recommendation 3: Develop Transparent Approaches for Tracking Progress on Readiness

In their readiness proposals, REDD+ countries make positive statements and commitments to develop well-governed REDD+ programs. Since many REDD+ countries have already attempted to strengthen forest governance and reduce deforestation through past reforms, some stakeholders question whether REDD+ can really bring new solutions to old problems.[44] Developing transparent and accountable domestic systems for tracking progress on readiness activities can be a useful tool for quickly diagnosing and correcting implementation challenges that arise and building stakeholder confidence in emerging REDD+ programs. Several tools—such as the Readiness-Package Assessment Framework[45] being developed by the FCPF or the UN-REDD/Chatham House draft Guidance for the Provision of Information on REDD+ Governance[46]—could aid REDD+ countries in documenting

progress as well as helping REDD+ donors link funding priorities to identified country needs. In addition to government-led efforts to track progress, independent reviews by civil society, forest communities, and other relevant stakeholders with specific knowledge of country readiness processes should be encouraged as a critical tool for holding REDD+ governments accountable for commitments made in readiness proposals.

* * *

Delivering on the commitments made in the readiness proposals will require significant resources and sustained political will over many years. Given that readiness grants from the FCPF and UN-REDD Programme will not cover all of a country's readiness needs, it is clear that many REDD+ countries face the challenge of developing new REDD+ systems and addressing longstanding governance challenges in the absence of predictable, long-term financing. However, if REDD+ countries can demonstrate that they have developed comprehensive work plans, allocated their initial readiness grants effectively, and achieved measurable progress towards the objectives outlined in their readiness proposals, these successes may inspire scaled up investments in REDD+ in the future.

ENDNOTES

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5   Our list of readiness needs is derived from the Governance of Forests Initiative Framework of Indicators (www.wri.org/gfi), WRI's Getting Ready with Forest Governance criteria (http://www.wri.org/publication/getting-ready), and key governance elements for REDD+ readiness as set out in the FCPF R-PP template.

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7   REDD+ is envisioned as a "results-based" payment mechanism. In early phases of REDD+, results-based payments may be based on proxy indicators of reduced emissions, carbon sequestered, or results of policies and measures implemented using REDD+ financing. Eventually results-based payments are expected to be made on the basis of measured, reported and verified emissions reductions or carbon sequestered.

8   Countries may use the R-PP template to submit proposals to either the FCPF or the UN-REDD Programme. National Programme Documents (NPDs) are only accepted by the UN-REDD Programme.

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