

3. Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Forestry in Cambodia

3.1 Institutional Framework

Responsibility for forest management lies with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF), and the Ministry of Environment (MoE). Protected area management is under the jurisdiction of MoE, and other forest areas under MAFF/Forestry Administration (FA). MAFF/Department of Fisheries manages flooded forests.

The forestry administration is undergoing reform to establish a direct organisational line of command from central to local levels by returning forest management responsibility to the relevant authorities. Such reforms require a comprehensive review of the roles and responsibilities of all levels of FA, lines of communication, and interactions with other government departments to ensure effective ground level implementation.

3.2 Regulatory Framework

The RGC acknowledges international issues, processes and commitments following UNCED in 1992. Therefore, consistent with IPF/IFF guidelines, a national forest programme will be developed as a basis for forest policy implementation and strategy development. Currently in its initial stages, activities to date have consisted of capacity building to familiarise FA staff and advisors with the elements and structures of the national forest programme.

3.2.1 Forest Policy Statement

In 2002, the Royal Government of Cambodia issued a Statement on National Forest Policy. It directs the management of forest resources towards the national goals of environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, economic development and good governance.

3.2.2 Forestry Sectoral Plan

In line with national development plans defined by RGC, the forestry sector will manage the forest resources to maximise economic benefits whilst ensuring ecological sustainability, community benefits and habitat protection for native fauna and flora. The sectoral plan notes that the government promotes nursery establishment, selection of appropriate tree species, and expansion of reforestation schemes and community forestry (FA, 2001).

FA (2001) will "establish tree seed banks through the foundation of seed quality selection and maintenance centres, and seed source forest stands in major forested areas throughout the country" in order to "ensure the most effective afforestation in terms of economic benefit, genetic conservation, environmental protection and service"

3.2.3 Forestry Law

According to the Forestry Law (2002a), provision is made for forest gene conservation within protection forest, and within special management areas of forest concessions. Application can be made to RGC by MAFF to designate appropriate areas of the permanent forest reserve as protection forest. Management plans will be prepared, implemented and enforced for these areas

by the Forestry Administration. Within the permanent forest reserve, the Minister of MAFF has the authority to issue permits for the establishment of botanical gardens or experimental stations, and the establishment of forest nurseries to provide seedlings.

The Forestry Law (2002a) emphasises an increasing role for the Forestry Administration, the military and local people in tree planting activities. Annual planting areas and budgets have expanded accordingly.

3.2.4 Forest Concession Sub-Decree

Within forest concession management, areas of important natural biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and important forest services must be conserved and protected through the establishment of special management areas (FA, 1999). Note of this should be made in the strategic management plan at a general level, with further definition following a more detailed inventory for the intermediary plan.

Strategic management plans, submitted by forest concessionaires will be evaluated against a set of criteria that includes seed source conservation.

Box 1 – Terminology

Biological diversity

Variability among living organisms from all sources including *inter alia* terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Conservation of a resource

Measures that assure the continued existence and availability of a resource.

Ecosystem

A dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

In situ conditions

Conditions where genetic resources exist within ecosystems and natural habitats, and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive properties.

Ex situ conservation

The conservation of components of biological diversity outside their natural habitats.

Genetic diversity

Includes inter-population diversity, intra-population diversity, and diversity within an individual expressed by differences between alleles in the two chromosomes of diploid organisms (degree of individual heterozygosity).

Genetic material

Any material of plant, animal, microbial or other origin containing functions of heredity.

Genetic resources

Genetic material of actual or potential value.

Genetic variation

Genetic differences between species and within species.

Value of genetic variation

Can be expressed as an ecological, economical or ethical value.

(Graudal *et al.*, 1997)