

1. Introduction

The *Guidelines for Site Selection and Tree Planting in Cambodia* supports the policy formulation process for the tree seed sector in Cambodia. The development of the *Guidelines* adopted a consultative approach, and was led by the Forestry Administration (FA) and the Cambodia Tree Seed Project (CTSP), with funding from the Royal Danish Embassy in Phnom Penh.

The ongoing forestry reforms within the country give high priority to tree planting activities. In preparation, the Forestry Administration, through the Cambodia Tree Seed Project, has identified and established a number of tree seed sources throughout the country, in order to ensure the availability of good quality seed for use in successful tree planting programmes. The next step is the identification of appropriate planting sites to meet the stated objectives of poverty alleviation, economic development, and environmental protection.

The present document is intended to assist the Forestry Administration to prepare plans for tree planting activities by providing guidance for the selection of priority areas. Based upon a preliminary selection of sites using a series of maps, predefined criteria can be assessed against a range of indicators, in order to identify those sites best suited to tree planting objectives, whilst contributing to the achievement of local development plans. However, enabling policy, legal and economic frameworks remain weak, and require development and implementation by appropriate levels of government.

The procedures are presented in two parts, and this document forms Part I:

- I. Site Selection
- II. Implementation of Tree Planting

2. Purpose and Scope of the Guidelines

The *Guidelines for Site Selection*, subsequently referred to as ‘the *Guidelines*’, aim to improve the scope for sustainable forest establishment and management, by providing a consistent approach to site identification that includes participation of a diverse range of stakeholders. They are relevant for all types of tree planting activities including rehabilitation of secondary and degraded forests, community based plantings, the establishment of planted forests, and farm forestry. The *Guidelines* are intended to assist the Forestry Administration, at all levels, to formulate plans for tree planting in order to direct potential investors and donors to appropriate sites. The adoption of such an approach will enable funding to focus on areas viewed as high priority both within the development objectives of the Royal Government of Cambodia and of donors, funding agencies and investors.

The steps outlined within this document are designed for use by a range of actors within the forestry sector. However, a number of issues remain outside its scope, yet are highly critical to the success of tree planting programmes, and need to be addressed by appropriate governmental agencies. They concern such factors as:

- delineation, classification, and demarcation of protection, production and conversion forest areas
- security of land tenure/forest access, and resource use
- supportive legislation/development plan
- recognition of the true value of NTFPs, forest goods and services, and their contribution to the national economy

- economic framework (budget allocation, tax rebates, exemptions, subsidies)
- extension services (technical advice including market value of species, and seed)
- infrastructure (farm to market roads, transport, wood markets - domestic and export, and credit assistance)
- research studies (demand for forest products and environmental protection, capacity of existing forest estate to provide goods and services, extent of planted forest needed to supplement existing forest)
- political commitment

3. Experiences of Tree Planting

Traditionally, forest policy has been determined according to the “national interest”. Such interests have included national economic development, funding for independence movements or post-war reconstruction, liberalisation of the market economy, and national security of timber supplies. Each objective has promoted exploitation of forest resources, leading to forest loss and degradation, and conflicts between national interests and local needs.

More recent recognition of the environmental impacts of deforestation has led to a changing policy focus towards forest conservation and rehabilitation. Many countries have established and implemented tree planting programmes in a number of forms, with varying degrees of success, that indicate lessons to be learned and situations to be avoided in Cambodia. Trends indicate an increasing emphasis on the environmental service functions of forests and meeting the needs of forest dependent communities, whilst forest goods are increasingly produced in non-forest areas.

A desk-based study of available literature, presented in Annex 1, provides examples of tree planting approaches, illustrating their impacts on local communities and environments. They highlight the need for consideration of:

- current land use patterns and practices
- level of public participation
- needs of peoples’ livelihoods in terms of species and products
- best land use options for the local conditions
- costs of national programmes

Experiences suggest that large scale industrial plantations have separated people from the forest, that monocultures are high risk, reliant on a high level of inputs, whilst having few potential uses for local communities, and providing few environmental services, and that national tree planting programmes have been implemented with little local participation. In moving away from large-scale plantation approaches, community and farm forests are well placed to maximise their resources to satisfy social and market demands for forest products.

Site selection for successful tree planting and management, therefore, clearly depends on a mix of social, economic, political and environmental factors, in order to harmonise the different interests of diverse stakeholders.