

## Article

# Does REDD+ Ensure Sectoral Coordination and Stakeholder Participation? A Comparative Analysis of REDD+ National Governance Structures in Countries of Asia-Pacific Region

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**Abstract:** Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+) requires harmonizing different policy sectors and interests that have impacts on forests. However, these elements have not been well-operationalized in environmental policy-making processes of most developing countries. Drawing on five cases—Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam, this article aims to determine whether emerging governance arrangements help REDD+ development by delivering participatory mechanisms for policy coordination. Building upon literature on environmental governance and stakeholder participation, the article examines national governance structures for REDD+ and identifies who participates where, and what decision-making powers they have. Despite structural differences between the countries, our analysis illustrates that REDD+ potentially encourages a new form of environmental governance promoting a cross-sectoral approach and stakeholder participation. Cohesiveness of the structures within a broader governance system is key to defining the capacity of REDD+ governance. The result also poses a question as to the inclusiveness of the state actors involved in order to tackle the different pressure on forests. Considering structural inequalities, the analysis further suggests a need of policy support for those who are affected by REDD+ to ensure that their voices could be heard in decision-making processes.

**Keywords:** REDD+; national governance structures; cross-sectoral coordination; stakeholder participation; Cambodia; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Papua New Guinea and Vietnam

## 1. Introduction

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+) is an emerging policy instrument in climate negotiations, and represents a next-generation mechanism in encouraging the sustainable management of forests as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the Asia-Pacific region, 20 countries have been engaged in preparing to be ready for implementing REDD+ at country-level (referred to REDD+ Readiness), with support from multilateral initiatives,

including the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank and/or UN-REDD Programme [1,2]. To move REDD+ Readiness forward, these countries have designed and developed institutional frameworks for REDD+, whose objectives include ensuring overall responsibilities and coordination for REDD+, developing strategy, action plan and programs, channeling international funding, and monitoring and reporting REDD+ actions [3].

Because such framework introduced for REDD+ Readiness defines policy actors, their roles and capacity, as well as interactions among them [3–5], it has critical significance in decision-making processes, accommodating different interests and ideas, and operationalizing policy decisions on managing forest resources and combatting climate change. Accordingly, REDD+ can be considered as a new form of environmental governance that frames problems of forest management and land use in the context of climate change and sets up new rules and norms aligning specific stakeholders and vision, while marginalizing others [4,6]. This notion of governance poses important concerns about the practice of institutional arrangements for REDD+ at country-level: What do they look like, who participates where, and what decision-making powers they have (or do not have) within the frameworks?

A number of publications have reviewed the progress of national REDD+ Readiness of particular countries, covering diverse aspects of REDD+ [7–18]. In addition, Minang et al. [19] present an assessment framework for REDD+ Readiness to compare countries. Yet, little has been done to analyze structural settings to explain the ways that governments address ambitious objectives of REDD+. More attention is needed on the structural challenges for REDD+ institutional arrangements [8]. In particular, challenges associated with sector coordination and participation of stakeholders have been among the most prominent governance issues shared by countries developing REDD+, and evidenced in their national strategic documents for preparing REDD+, such as Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PP) submitted to the FCPF, and have received particular attention in the literature [3,7,19–24].

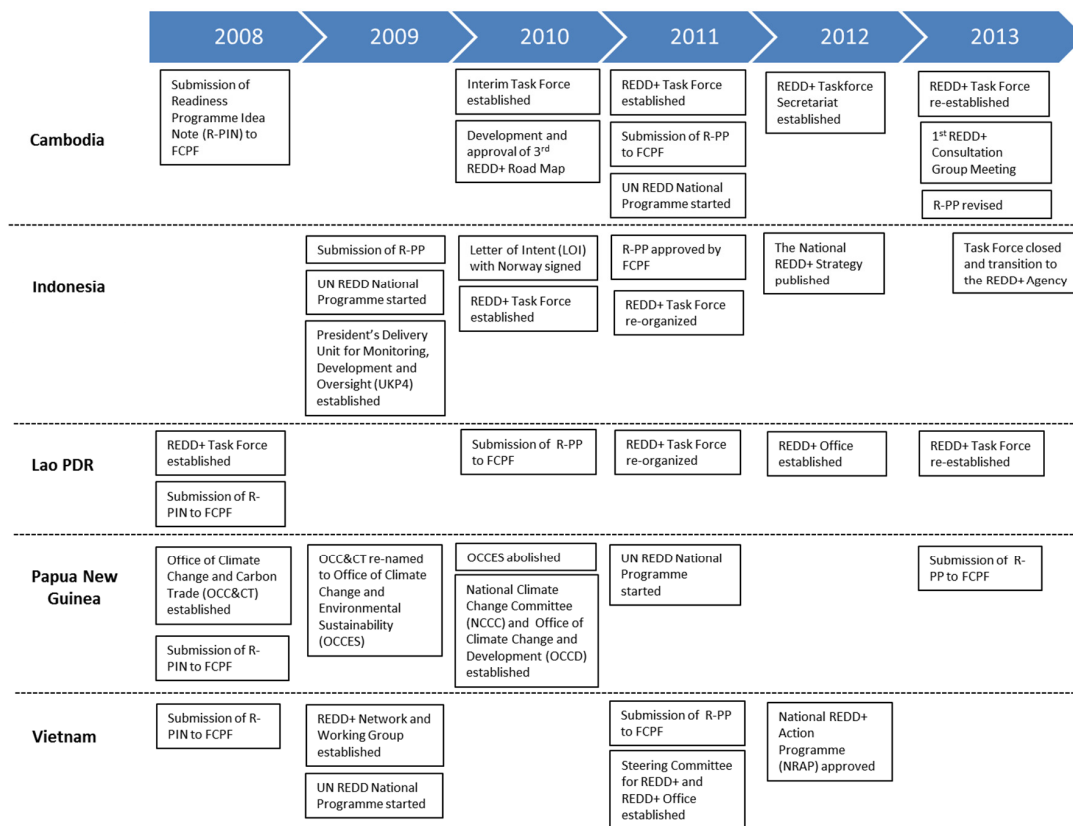
Drawing on five cases—Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam, this article aims to determine whether and how emerging institution arrangements help or hinder REDD+ Readiness, delivering participatory mechanisms to harmonize different policy sectors and interests that have an impact on the forests. The multiple cases of these countries provide structural elements to understand the nature of REDD+ governance, especially how issues of sectoral coordination and stakeholder participation are addressed. The article is organized as follows: The first part provides the analytical approach adopted and the research methods used. The second part describes a theoretical focus on governance and stakeholder participation that guides the analysis of REDD+ frameworks. The third section describes the case studies selected, followed by discussion on the identified structures and actors involved in the institutional arrangements. Finally, the article comments on the findings, and identifies the structural challenges confronting REDD+ as a policy instrument for combatting climate change into the future.

## 2. Method of the Study

Using an analysis based on the evaluation of the institutional arrangements, what follows is a comparative study of the five countries chosen to identify the structural and institutional elements necessary for explaining governance arrangements for developing REDD+.

These five countries in the Asia-Pacific Region were selected because of their policy commitment and creation of institutional frameworks for REDD+ Readiness as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, as well as their presentation of official policy documents to REDD+ design, which have enabled the assessment in this study. Engaged with the international initiatives to support developing countries, namely FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme, the five countries have formulated the key national strategic documents for preparing REDD+, such as R-PP for FCPF and Joint Programme Document (JPD) for UN-REDD Programme, where they present the design of institutional frameworks to move REDD+ Readiness forward. In addition, these countries have issued legal decisions, such as ministerial decisions and presidential decrees, to establish and implement such frameworks. Analysis was based

on surveying those policy documents and other relevant to national REDD+ strategies, combined with key informant interviews with government officials, donor agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on national level REDD+ in each country in order to confirm the frameworks and understand interactions among actors. The government officials interviewed were from the main management body of REDD+ (Table 1), and ministry departments and/or agencies responsible for forestry, environment and climate change in each country (24 in total: 5 in Cambodia, 7 in Indonesia, 4 in Lao PDR, 4 in Papua New Guinea, and 4 in Vietnam).



**Figure 1.** REDD+ timeline in the five countries 2008–2013 (Institutional frameworks and strategic documents). Sources: [11,12,14–17,25–30].

**Table 1.** Institutional arrangements for REDD+ Readiness in the five countries in 2013.

Country	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Papua New Guinea	Vietnam
Higher political level	National Climate Change Committee (2006) [30]	Delivery Unit of the President (UKP4) (2009–2014) [11,31]	National Environmental Council (NEC) (2002) [27,32]	National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) (2011) [9,28]	Steering Committee for REDD+ (2011) [18,29,33]
Main management body	REDD+ Taskforce (2010, 2013) [30,34]	National REDD+ Task Force (2010–2013) [7,11,31]	REDD+ Task Force (2008, 2011, 2013) [10,14,25,27]	Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) (2010). The REDD+ and Mitigation Division within OCCD [9,28]	Steering Committee for REDD+ (2011) and REDD+ Network (2009) [18,29,33]
Administrative matter	Taskforce Secretariat (2012) [30,34]		REDD+ Office (2012) [14,25]		REDD+ Office (2011) [29,33]
REDD+ Technical matters	Technical Teams [30,34]	Working Groups under the Task Force [11,35]	Working Groups [14,25,27]	REDD+ Technical Working Group [9,17,28]	Technical Working Groups [29,33]

(year) is when the organization was established.

It is important to note that REDD+ institutions seem to be evolving rapidly at different stages in the five countries. However, as the analysis focuses on the Readiness phase, in which national governments prepare for REDD+, the paper has selected the period of 2013 for comparison purposes.

### 3. Theoretical Focus of the Study: Sector Coordination and Stakeholder Participation

As widely recognized, deforestation and forest degradation cannot be framed as simply forestry problems [5,36]. In addition to commercial timber exploitation, industrial agricultural development, shifting cultivation, and infrastructure expansion all play a significant role in current levels of deforestation and forest degradation [23,37]. Furthermore, it is not possible to discuss improved forest and land use without addressing social, environmental and economic aspects, such as rural poverty, land tenure, environmental services, and financial and market issues. Consequently, REDD+ requires a cross-sectoral response and the consideration of all relevant factors inside and outside forests. From this viewpoint, representation and interaction of actors across sector boundaries and diverse knowledge and values are necessary features for REDD+ institutional arrangements to respond to the wider scope of the problems to be solved.

#### 3.1. Cross-Sectoral Coordination

Drawing on Cadman [20] and Hogl [38], it is understood that cross-sectoral coordination is enabled through collaboration of different policy actors, notably via their participation in decision-making processes. Sectoral interests are represented by not only state government bodies, but also by a range of non-state actors and networks. However, it is the responsibility of states and their agencies to prepare and implement sectoral policies at national scale by exercising authority and actual implementation practice. Within this perspective, it should be also understood that the state government is conceived not as a single-unity but as a network of different ministries and agencies [39], which have different objectives and roles with different areas of knowledge, resources and constituencies.

Representation of state actors from different policy sectors alone does not necessarily ensure improved policy coordination as embedded political interests, power relations, and historical institutional path dependencies could undermine the effectiveness of institutional arrangements in policy outcomes [40,41]. Well-facilitated participatory processes that cross policy sector boundaries support communication and ensure that decisions are accountable, are necessary characteristics to promote integration across policy sectors [41,42]. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that state actors from different policy sectors are involved in REDD+ institutional arrangements. Drawing on the quality of the policy coordination proposed by Metcalfe [39], the interaction of ministries and state agencies can be understood by identifying how and where they are engaged, and their roles and responsibilities in decision-making processes. Following the typologies based on different degrees of participation [43–46], the engagement of policy sectors are organized as follows: leading role (i.e., lead decision-making and coordination); interactive participation (i.e., involvement in analysis and development of strategies and plans); functional participation (i.e., provision of technical knowledge and guidance); and consultative function (i.e., provision of information and comments upon request).

#### 3.2. Stakeholder Participation

Significant roles for stakeholder participation are increasingly recognized in REDD+ debates. But the term “REDD+ stakeholder” is too generally used to be easily understood. While a range of typologies have been developed to understand stakeholder participation in different contexts [43,46], the common meaning of “stakeholder” refers to those who are affected by or can affect a decision [47]. Bearing this in mind, this paper focuses on non-state actors affected by and/or directly involved in REDD+ and forest management, following the categories identified by Brockhaus et al. (2014) [40]: multilateral and/or bilateral donor; international NGOs, academic and/or research entity; civil organization and/or domestic NGO; private sector (business); and indigenous group and/or local community.

In the literature on contemporary environmental governance, there are mainly two views about the purpose and role of stakeholder participation. First, looking the matter through the perspectives of justice and equity, participation is understood as procedural justice [48]. Since indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities are often vulnerable to external political and economic interests [49] and are considered as most affected by the implementation of REDD+ [5], their participation needs specific attention. In addition, the *pragmatic value* of stakeholder participation has also been stressed. By building consensus among different groups and having more comprehensive information inputs through stakeholder participation, the quality and implementation of decisions are likely to be greater [50–52].

Consequently, an investigation into which actors are/are not involved in REDD+, the roles they are/are not afforded in related processes, can help to determine the nature of stakeholder participation in the institutional frameworks, as explored below.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Overview of Institutional Arrangements for REDD+ Readiness in the Five Countries

The five countries share similarities in terms of hierarchy structures composed of basically three or four strata in the institutional arrangements for REDD+ Readiness. Table 1 gives a profile of how national REDD+ framework are organized in terms of administrative levels, functions and roles.

As a higher political forum for guiding strategic decision for REDD+ Readiness and promoting sectoral coordination, each country has formed or appointed a governmental body at the uppermost level of the arrangement. In the cases of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam, this body takes the form of a committee or council, chaired by the ministerial or secretary general level, and involving representatives from other relevant ministries. In the case of Indonesia, along with the co-operation with the Norway Government (Letter of Intent: LOI), overall responsibility for developing REDD+ Readiness was mandated under the authority of the President's Delivery Unit for Monitoring, Development and Oversight (UKP4) (while the analysis for Indonesia's REDD+ focuses on the REDD+ governance arrangement under the UKP4, it should be noted that the UKP4 was dissolved in December 2014 according to the government's reform led by Indonesia's new president, President Joko Widodo. Since 2015, the newly established Ministry of Environment and Forestry is taking a lead in REDD+ by Presidential Decree No. 16, 2015) established within the President Office in 2009, the intention of which is to improve inter-ministerial coordination [53,54].

As the main management and coordination body to develop REDD+ Readiness, a special government unit or management office was set up in each of the five countries: REDD+ Taskforce in Cambodia (2010–now), National REDD+ Task Force in Indonesia (2010–2013), REDD+ Task Force in Lao PDR (2008–now), and the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) in Papua New Guinea (2010–now). In Vietnam, the REDD+ Steering Committee (2011–now) supported by the National Network (2009–now) is viewed equivalent to this operating level (detailed discussion is given below). These organizations are considered as the main government instrument for REDD+ Readiness in each country, as they are directly responsible for the formulation of national strategy, managing overall development of REDD+ activities, and taking the lead in coordinating measures over stakeholders. To provide support in terms of administrative operations, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam set up secretarial offices. National REDD+ Task Force in Indonesia and the OCCD in Papua New Guinea are provided with the necessary administrative capacities.

In order to address technical issues related to REDD+, such as monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system, forest reference emission levels (RELs), and social and environmental safeguards, several technical team/working groups are under development within the REDD+ institutional frameworks in each country.



#### 4.2. REDD+ Intuitional Arrangements in Relation with Existing Forest Institutions

Each of the five countries has established governance structures for REDD+ Readiness, which may provide vertical linkages from higher political level to administrative and technical matters associated with REDD+. While the frameworks present common features as shown in Table 1, two types of governance arrangement are found in relation to existing forest institutions: based on the present forest administration (the arrangements of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam); and creation of new institutions for REDD+ Readiness instead of the present government body for forest administration (the arrangements of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea).

In the former type of arrangement, the forest administration body officially plays a central role in leading REDD+ Readiness and serves as the national focal point. For example, in Cambodia, the Forestry Administration (FA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE) chair REDD+ Taskforce and take the lead on REDD+ [30]. In Vietnam, the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) acts as a national focal point, hosting the REDD+ Office to support REDD+ Steering Committee and organize REDD+ Network activities [29].

In contrast, new organizations were appointed or created with authority to lead REDD+ Readiness in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea outside the existing forest institution. In Indonesia, even though the preparation for REDD+ had been originally conducted by the Ministry of Forestry with the collaboration of BAPPENAS (The Ministry of National Development and Planning) [11], coordination in formulating the REDD+ National Strategy and lead preparation for REDD+ shifted to the National REDD+ Task Force, which was independently established under the authority of the UKP4. In Papua New Guinea, the OCCD was created by National Executive Council (NEC) decision 54/2010 and appointed to develop and manage REDD+ Readiness, while the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority (PNGFA) is a government body with regulatory and administrative responsibility for managing the forest sector [55,56].

#### 4.3. Involvement of Ministries and Agencies in the Inner-Ministerial Coordination Body in the Arrangements

In the five countries, main coordinating structures between different policy sectors have been established at the management level of the governance arrangements for REDD+ Readiness. Table 2 shows policy sectors involved in the inter-ministerial body through participation of responsible ministries and agencies of the five countries.

**Table 2.** Cross-sectoral dimension in key REDD+ management bodies in the five countries in 2013.

Country	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Papua New Guinea	Vietnam
Cross-sectoral coordination structure	REDD+ Taskforce	REDD+ Task Force	REDD+ Taskforce	Technical Working Group	REDD+ Steering Committee
Forestry	†	***	***	*	†
Environment/ Climate change	***	***	†	*	***
Agriculture	-	***	***	*	-
Finance	***	***	***	*	***
Land use planning	***	***	***	*	***
Energy and mining	***	***	***	*	-
Indigenous rights and social welfare	§	-	§	§	***
Other	***	***	***	*	***

†, leading role; \*\*\*, interactive participation; \*\*, functional participation; \*, consultative function; §, not clear; -, not involved. Source: [7,11,16–18,25–29,33–35,57].

In Cambodia, the need for sectoral coordination for REDD+ was primarily answered by the creation of REDD+ Task Force (the inter-ministry REDD+ Taskforce was first established in January 2010 as an interim measure and then re-established in February 2013 by Decision No. 87 of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on Establishment of Cambodian REDD+ Taskforce), which is the main REDD+ management body with mandates to oversee and coordinate processes to formulate national REDD+ strategy and relevant actions to REDD+. This arrangement was created in 2010, and since then, the number of state actors participating in the Task Force has increased to ten members, consisting of senior officials from the forest, environment, land use planning, finance, rural development, and mining ministries. The Task Force was given the role of high-level cross sectoral coordination and policy guidance from the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), which is chaired by the Prime Minister and involves representatives from 20 ministries and three government agencies [58]. However, since the Committee addresses all aspects of climate change including both mitigation and adaptation, the Task Force serves as the most powerful instrument to provide sectoral coordination on REDD+ decision-making in Cambodia.

A similar mechanism is found in Lao PDR, where sectoral coordination is primarily introduced at the same level of government organization as Cambodia's REDD+ Task Force. The inter-ministerial REDD+ Task Force was originally established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in 2008 via Ministerial Decree No. 1313 to oversee and to provide coordination over REDD+ [27]. Following the establishment of the new ministry (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: MONRE), the responsibility of REDD+ was transfer from the MAF and the Task Force was re-established by Department of Forest Resources Management (DFRM) under MONRE in October 2013 via MONRE decision No. 7176. Following this reform, the number of members comprising the Task Force was increased from 15 to 24. The Task Force comprises members at director general/deputy director general level from ministries and other agencies related to forestry and agriculture, energy and mining, development planning and industry sectors. In addition, the R-PP of Lao PDR suggests high-level cross sectoral coordination to be provided from the National Environment Council (NEC), which consists of ministers and vice ministers from 14 key agencies [27]. The Council was established in 2002 to provide advice to the government regarding environmental issues [32], however it has not functioned effectively and its linkage with the Task Force remains unclear.

In Indonesia, REDD+ Task Force (2010–2013) served as the main instrument to implement the LOI with Norway's Government and the most powerful to develop Indonesia's REDD+ Readiness. Its tasks included to create an institutional and legal framework for REDD+ in Indonesia, including formulation of National REDD+ Strategy and establishment of the REDD+ Agency (in 2014, the REDD+ Agency started its operation as a successor to National REDD+ Task Force in order to move REDD+ toward implementation phase. However, REDD+ Agency was closed down in 30 January 2015 following the government's reform led by Indonesia's new president, President Joko Widodo and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry is currently taking a lead in REDD+). Established through the Presidential Decree No. 19/2010, and chaired by the head of UKP4, the Task Force was theoretically able to lead the activities of all other line ministries and agencies regarding REDD+ [53]. In addition, the Task Force involves members of senior officials of relevant ministries and other agencies for "forestry", "environment", "land use", "planning", and "finance" [31]. During the first period of the Task Force (2010–2011), "agriculture" and "mining" sectors were not formally been represented in the REDD+ institutional arrangements, however, in its second period (2011–2013), these two sectoral ministries participated as members, appointed in the Presidential Decree No. 25/2011. Under the Task Force, ten thematic working groups were established, each headed by senior government officials and experts in their field.

In Papua New Guinea, the OCCD acts as the responsible government body for REDD+, while REDD+ sector programs will be implemented by other government departments and agencies in accordance with their mandates [28]. Under the arrangement, a cross-departmental working group, namely Technical Working Group for REDD+, was established in 2010. Chaired by the OCCD,

the Working Group has diverse membership, comprising 21 members from departments of the government, non-government organizations, donors and industry associations [28]. Its main duty is to provide technical guidance for the implementation of REDD+ activities, yet the Working Group seems to function primarily as consulting groups that provide comments on information from the OCCD [17].

In Vietnam, the National REDD+ Steering Committee was created in early 2011 via MARD Decision No.39/QD-BNN-TCCB to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies. The main functions of the Steering Committee is to propose relevant policies relating to REDD+, and direct the formulation of the National REDD+ Programme (NRAP). Chaired by the Minister of MARD, the Committee's members include representatives from seven departments of MARD as well as other ministries and agencies, which are responsible for "environment and climate change", "planning", "finance", "foreign affairs", and "ethnic issue" [29]. In addition, the government established the National REDD Network via MARD Decision No.2614/QD-BNN-LN, together with the National REDD Working Group including several Sub-Technical Working Groups, which actually serve as forums for information sharing and discussions about the design and implementation of all elements of national REDD+ system. Several donor organizations, international NGOs, and many of the forestry institutions of the MARD are engaged as members in the Network and the Working Group [18]. However the participation of other ministries and government agencies is limited at these technical and operational levels. The sectoral coordination for REDD+ is attempted primarily through the National REDD+ Steering Committee.

#### 4.4. Participation of Non-State Actors in the Institutional Arrangements for REDD+ Readiness in the Five Countries

The government documents for designing REDD+, such as R-PP, of the five countries identify a range of non-state actors who would be affected by or would have an impact on the design and implementation of REDD+, including multilateral and bilateral donor organizations, international NGOs, academic and research organizations, civil organizations and domestic NGOs, private sector, indigenous groups, and local communities [26–30]. However, the five countries demonstrate a great variation in engagement and coordination with stakeholders. Table 3 summarizes the non-state actors involved and their given role in the institutional arrangements for REDD+ Readiness of the five countries.

**Table 3.** Participation of non-state actors in REDD+ institutional arrangements in the five countries in 2013.

Country	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Papua New Guinea	Vietnam
Structure for stakeholder participation	REDD+ Consultation Group	REDD+ Working Group	REDD+ Taskforce	Technical Working Group	REDD+ Network and Working Group
Multilateral and/or Bilateral donor	-	***	-	*	**
International NGO	*	***	-	*	**
Academic and/or research entity	*	***	**	*	**
Civil organization and/or domestic NGO	*	***	§	*	-
Private sector	*	***	-	*	-
Indigenous group and/or local community	*	***	-	-	-

\*\*\*, interactive participation; \*\*, functional participation; \*, consultative function; §, not clear; -, not involved.  
Source: [7,9,11,15,17,25,27–30,57,59,60].



In recognition of the importance of stakeholder participation and consultation in developing national REDD+ system, the Royal Government of Cambodia decided to set up the REDD+ Consultation Group within the REDD+ institutional framework. Involving international organizations, academic institutions, civil society, indigenous peoples, forest dependent communities, NGOs, and the private sector, the Consultation Group aims to support the REDD+ Taskforce by providing comments and recommendations, and/or express concerns especially on issues associated to stakeholder engagement and REDD+ safeguards [59,60]. Representing diverse groups of stakeholders, its fundamental role is to introduce an effective consultation process in developing REDD+ in Cambodia.

In contrast to Cambodia's case, stakeholder participation is not easily grasped in the REDD+ framework of Lao PDR. The framework constitutes mostly by the government organizations in accordance with their mandates. As a member of the REDD+ Taskforce, the National University of Laos plays a think-tank role in designing REDD+ elements. A few non-government entities are also involved in the Taskforce, namely Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC), Lao Women's Union (LWU) and Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which are considered to represent views of civil society and particular groups [25]. However, these organizations are considered as inherently political, under the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party. The space for non-state actors to engage with REDD+ decision-making is likely to be limited due to the political history and culture of the country.

The REDD+ frameworks of Indonesia and Vietnam provide non-state actor with opportunities to participate actively in discussion and analysis for developing REDD+. In Indonesia, there were ten working groups under the REDD+ Task Force. The members of the groups were not only from the governmental organizations, but also included experts from multilateral organizations, NGOs, civil society, private sector and indigenous groups. Each working group, consisting of 4–7 members was responsible for developing elements of REDD+, such as a national strategy, the MRV institution, safeguards system and a financial mechanism. However, participation is not on a voluntary basis; rather it is based on individual expertise to complete the responsibilities of the Task Force.

In Vietnam, non-state actors are allowed to participate in REDD+ institutional framework through the REDD+ Network and a number of Sub-Working Groups. Together with government agencies, ten non-state organizations are listed as members of these groups [57]. However civil society, private sector, indigenous people groups, and local communities are not involved as the members, even though the arrangement takes a form of open-ended participation. Including academic institutions, international development partners, and NGOs, the arrangement is viewed to contribute to generating knowledge for REDD+ and encouraging communication between state and non-state actors. There have been a number of outputs from the Sub-Working Groups on design of REDD+ elements (e.g., MRV framework document, a design document for benefit distribution). However, Stewart et al. [18] pose a question about the actual impacts of the mechanism to facilitate policy inputs from non-state actors, as the government has no obligation to adopt these technical recommendations.

In Papua New Guinea, the Technical Working Group for REDD+ under the OCCD has diverse members including 15 non-government organizations such as NGOs, donors and industry associations [28]. Such a multiple-actors framework is designed to provide overall technical knowledge and guidance for the implementation of REDD+ activities; and to support the OCCD to develop constructive relationships with a variety of different stakeholders [9]. However, the non-state members listed in the R-PP are international and national actors, while local actors such as indigenous communities are not represented. In addition, as pointed out to date, mainly the function has been focused on consultation to provide comments on information from the OCCD and it is less clear how and whether comments would be incorporated or not.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Two Types of Governance Arrangement for REDD+ Readiness

Because REDD+ essentially copes with forests and would be largely consistent with governments' efforts to improve forestry sector such as forest conservation, sustainable management of forests, community forestry and certification of forest products, the forestry administration-led governance arrangement might be the most appropriate (found in the frameworks of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam). This arrangement appears to allow governments to take fullest advantage of existing institutions, resources, capacities and networks of forestry sector. However, the arrangement may limit scope and capacity of REDD+, as evidenced in the Cambodia's R-PP [30], which places the development of the REDD+ strategy within the existing forest policy framework and strategies.

To enable REDD+ to address drivers of deforestation from outside the forestry sector for climate change mitigation, design and implementation of REDD+ would be beyond the mandates of forest institutions. However, the ability of the forest administration body to coordinate with and have influence on decisions of other ministries could be inherently limited due to its capacity articulated within the border governance system. The ministry or agency responsible for managing state's forests is essentially technical administration, and inter-sectoral coordination roles are often given to another ministry or government agency dealing with planning or financial issues. As an operational matter, the compartmentalized administrative structure of forest administration is likely to require complex communication to coordinate with other sectors. In addition, as Luttrell et al. [15] discuss, there remains a concern about embedded economic interests and politically connected networks in the natural resources and forest management in many countries that are engaging in REDD+ Readiness. The weak forest governance may undermine efforts to reduce emissions from forest, and presents a great risk for accountability and transparency in REDD+ decision-making process and for the rights of indigenous groups and local communities.

To respond to the need to tackle these weaknesses and challenges, where reformation of existing forest institutions would be required, new agencies have been created or appointed in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Setting up new institutions for REDD+ separately from the present forest administration should be able to frame and deal with deforestation problems in a broader perspective towards the climate change mitigation objective, and bring about sector coordination. However, new institutions for REDD+ appear to cause political tensions on account of their overlapping roles with the present forest administration bodies and other line ministries, resulting in uncertainty over leadership and the legal force of agreed proposals from the new institution.

For instance, Resosudarmo et al. [53] point out the limited influence of Indonesia's REDD+ Task Force on other ministries over its decisions due to weak institutional capacity. Even though its tasks were clear, the Task Force was on an ad hoc basis taking roles between 2010 and 2013 and not institutionally well-established in relation to the cabinet ministries, which led to confusion and tension in relation with the broader governance system [15]. Its political instability is evidenced in legal recognition of the National REDD+ Strategy finalized by the REDD+ Task Force in 2012. Without obtaining strong support from line ministries, the Strategy was issued through the Chairman's Decree of the REDD+ Task Force without a relatively stable center of authority, such as presidential recognition. Accordingly, there remains an uncertainty regarding the legal binding of the strategy and its influence on the sectoral policies. Political confusion is also found around REDD+ in Papua New Guinea, where the OCCD has struggled to show strong leadership in developing national REDD+ Readiness [9]. Tension was especially found between the OCCD and the Forestry Authority [17]. Even though new institutions are built to introduce cross-sectoral approach for REDD+ Readiness, their effectiveness remains questionable due to institutional uncertainty and/or rival relations generated with regard to the present government administrations.

However, the overlap and/or tension within the government structure over forests and REDD+ are also found in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam, where REDD+ institutional arrangements are based

on the present forest administration. In Cambodia and Lao PDR, responsibility over forest resources is not mandated to a single government agency, but distributed to plural organizations at ministerial level. For instance, most state forest areas in Cambodia are managed by the Forestry Administration (FA) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE) according to the management objectives of forests [61]. There exists competition over mandates and rival relations in managing the natural resources [62]. In Lao PDR, the government created the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in 2011, which took overall responsibility for conservation and protection of forests from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), which has led to uncertainty and confusion over leadership and coordination for REDD+ [14].

Even though forestry institutions generally control all state forest areas, other institutions, especially those responsible for environmental issue also deal with forest resources in certain respects [36]. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has overall responsibility for the forest lands, while the environmental ministry has a mandate for management of state lands. This overlap mandate is often perceived as a drawback in the administrative process for decision-making over forest land in Vietnam [12,16,63].

The five countries illustrate two types of arrangements to govern REDD+ Readiness, which highlight differences in what each country considers to develop REDD+. However, both arrangements also demonstrate challenges to ensure the adequate capacity of REDD+ institutions to achieve the sectoral coordination.

## 5.2. Understanding Cross-Sectoral Coordination Mechanisms in REDD+ Governance Structures

In both arrangements, the attempt for cross-sectoral coordination is found through the creation of inter-ministerial bodies where ministries and agencies formally participate as members. Participating ministries and agencies are embedded in the formal decision-making processes for REDD+, which theoretically stimulates inter-ministerial communication and allows sectoral perspectives and interests to be integrated into REDD+ direction.

The policy sectors commonly involved in the five countries are “forestry”, “environment”, “finance”, and “land use planning”. However, the “agriculture” sector, which has a critical influence on land use change, is missing in Cambodia and Vietnam. The difference is also found in the participation of the responsible ministry or agency regarding the rights of indigenous people and social welfare. In Vietnam, the REDD+ Steering Committee involves the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs, which is a ministry-level agency that exercises the functions of state management of ethnic minority affairs nationwide [64]. In Cambodia, however, the Department of Ethnic Minorities Development under the Ministry of Rural Development is not involved in the REDD+ Task Force, while the Department of Rural Water Supply from the same ministry, which is tasked to develop water supplies for rural areas [65] and Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior are listed in the REDD+ Taskforce [34]. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Social Affairs, which deals with Indigenous Peoples’ issues [66] and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights were not involved in the Task Force. The cases of Lao PDR and Papua New Guinea present less certainty in terms of representativeness of this sector within the government. Notably, issues related to rights, rural development and social welfare are in general not coordinated by a single ministry; rather different ministries and agencies are working on the issues from different aspects such as land rights, health care, infrastructure and education.

It is also important to understand what roles and responsibilities are given to the participating ministries and agencies within the coordination body. In four of the five countries, the member ministries and agencies are given a position to participate in the discussion and analysis for design, implement and monitor REDD+ development. With such interactive participation of different policy sectors, REDD+ decision-making processes may lead towards a better recognition of diverse sectoral interests and their collaboration. However, Papua New Guinea shows less significance of participation of line ministries and agencies, where they participate through the REDD+ Technical Working Group. While 19 government departments and agencies are involved in the Group [28], their function seems

primarily to be as consultative groups to provide comments and/or technical recommendation to the OCCD's ideas and plans for REDD+ [17].

REDD+ institutional arrangements in the five countries demonstrate that the range of state actors participating in REDD+ decision-making processes has gone beyond the forestry sector with inter-ministerial participation. Notably, the number of state actors participating in the inter-ministerial bodies has increased in the case of Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR, which implies growing attention from different policy sectors to REDD+ as a potential to achieve their own policy goals. On the other hand, the countries also show variations especially in terms of the policy sectors involved. The result poses a question as to whether the state actors involved have enough authority and roles to tackle the different pressure on forests from, for example, the agriculture sector. It also suggests a challenge to coordinate the issues related to indigenous groups, local communities and peoples' welfares from a structural point of view. These are the cases that need to be analyzed country by country. Nevertheless, the REDD+ strategic documents such as R-PP are unlikely to explain the criteria to be used in selecting government bodies to be involved in the structure for REDD+ decision making.

### *5.3. Different Approaches to Stakeholder Participation*

There are significant differences in terms of non-state actors involved and ways of their engagement across the five countries, but overall opportunities to participate in REDD+ decision making structures can be viewed as unevenly distributed between different types of stakeholders. Most of the non-state actors involved in the structure in the five countries are multilateral and/or bilateral donor organizations and international environmental NGOs, which have expertise on elements of REDD+, or resources to support government efforts. On the other hand, civil society, private sector, indigenous groups and forest dependent communities are likely to be provided less opportunity to participate in REDD+ decision-making structures. This implication is critical especially for indigenous groups and forest dependent communities as they would be mostly affected by the implementation of REDD, but their social values and interests associated with forests are not always the main concern of national administrations [67–69].

In addition to the types of stakeholder, it is also crucial to identify the purposes and functions of stakeholder participation. In Indonesia, the non-government actors were involved in the decision-making process to design and develop elements of REDD+. However, it should be noted that the participation is not open-ended, but based on expertise of each actor. Accordingly, it is viewed that the participation is pragmatic rather than normative following Reed (2008) [46], as it centers on technical concerns rather than representing the full range of relevant stakeholders.

The arrangement in Vietnam shows a different approach to stakeholder participation, which is characterized as being organizational and voluntary. The purpose of stakeholder participation is to provide technical knowledge and guidance for developing elements of REDD+. Importantly, it can be understood that the opportunity to participate is likely to be given through existing actor networks, since the participants are international organizations those who can affect rather than those who are affected. The participation is, therefore, viewed as political, technical and resource-oriented. This is also found in the case of Papua New Guinea, although its function is more consultative-oriented. The stakeholder participation in both countries raises a question about criteria and transparency in the process to decide who are involved and who are not.

Cambodia's arrangement demonstrates another approach. With the aim of ensuring stakeholder engagement, the selection process for membership in REDD+ Consultation Group was carefully designed with clear criteria, and a broader range of stakeholders are involved including indigenous group and local community. Compared with other countries, however, the role of non-stakeholders in the group is relatively limited, which is viewed as "consultative" rather than "functional" following Farrington [44].

As one of the agreements at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), countries developing

REDD+ are requested to ensure “the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities” [70]. Because values of forest vary depending on stakeholders [67], in theory, involving stakeholders could contribute to higher quality and durability of decisions [36,51]. Stakeholder participation is also discussed in view of representing the full range of groups that would be affected by REDD+ (e.g., Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness [71]). However, the institutional frameworks of the five countries demonstrate differences in governments’ interpretations and responses. In addition to viewing this only from the representativeness of different groups, stakeholder participation in REDD+ as an institutional arrangement is likely to be understood through broader operational objectives for which participation and the capacity of stakeholders is used to meet such objectives.

## 6. Conclusions

REDD+ requires national governments to address cross-sectoral coordination and ensure inclusive and meaningful participation of stakeholders. However, these elements have not been well-operationalized in the forest and environmental policy-making processes of most developing countries [36,67].

By examining the institutional arrangements for REDD+ Readiness in the five countries, this empirical study has identified the approaches taken to organize the structures (i.e., either organizing it based on an existing forest administration, or creating a new one) and demonstrated that REDD+ potentially encourages new forms of environmental governance that seeks a cross-sectoral approach and the participation of non-state actors. Despite variations found between the countries, state actors from different policy sectors directly participate in the decision-making processes to develop REDD+ including formulation of national strategy. It should be also highlighted that the institutional arrangements provide formal spaces for non-state actors to engage in developing national REDD+ systems.

However, the legitimacy and ability of the institutional arrangements are being influenced by existing governance arrangements and inter-ministerial relationships over forest resources. REDD+ governance needs to be institutionally well-established within the broader national governance system. In addition, it is crucial not to overlook the questions of appropriate government bodies and their roles structured in the frameworks. Certainly, further analysis is required for each of the countries studied here in order to fully understand the complexity of deforestation drivers as well as social, environmental and economic aspects of REDD+ inside outside forests. Yet, from a structural view, our study has questioned inclusiveness and has assumed the absence of criteria to select state actors in order to address diverse drivers of deforestation and relevant factors to REDD+, especially issues of indigenous rights and social welfare. Furthermore, the study of these five countries has demonstrated that the argument on sectoral coordination is not straightforward. In policy practice, there may be competence and tension among ministries and agencies for influence over REDD+. The incumbent government bodies, particularly those dealing with forests and climate change are likely aiming to use REDD+ to advance their own interests and policy agenda. There might also be an institutional risk as more state actors are involved from different policy sectors of conflicting political interests with the ability to decide; REDD+ decision-making would require more complex communication processes and policy deliberations.

Participation of non-state actors is generally found in the institutional structures in the five countries, whereas the approaches differ by country. The result suggests that stakeholder participation is objectively defined, addressing not only representation of interests. Rather, consultative function and provision of technical knowledge seem to be the main purpose of involving non-state actors. Hence, opportunities for participation are distributed according to the capacity of actors to meet such objectives and supported by the political networks and resources that they have. Certainly, it is not only formal governance structures, which provide participation, but non-state actors are likely to be engaged in policy dialogues at multiple levels in both formal and non-formal ways [72,73]. Nevertheless,



considering such structural inequalities, our study assumes that the powers and responsibilities of the local stakeholders who are and will be affected by REDD+ are relatively less significant in REDD+ formal decision-making processes. It also suggests a need for specific policy support, resources and participatory processes for these local actors to ensure that their voices would be heard in REDD+ decision-making processes.

The status of REDD+ is moving forward in these five countries and their institutional arrangements are highly dynamic. In particular the arrangements in Indonesia and Lao PDR have drastically changed following the government's reform. Yet, it is a fundamental feature of REDD+ decision-making processes to deal with a growing set of policy sectors and diverse interests. Focusing on the Readiness phase, in which the state governments seek to build a basis for REDD+, the analysis of the five countries has proved that REDD+ has succeeded in introducing participatory mechanisms to support sectoral coordination and dialogue with stakeholders into a national policy arena over forests for combatting climate change. It is a new but also challenging form of environmental decision-making process. It is thus critical to explore why such mechanisms either work or do not work to achieve policy coordination and strengthen REDD+ governance.

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