

**Minutes V0.1**  
**GFOI PLENARY MEETING**  
New World Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
11-12 April 2017

*Day one*

**1. Welcome and opening address – Dr. Nguyen Van Ha (Deputy Director General of VNFOREST, Vietnam) and Anthony Bennie (Chair, GFOI Leads Group)**

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Dr. Nguyen and Mr. Bennie set the scene for the Plenary, emphasising the importance of MRV for REDD+ and broader land sector mitigation actions in support of the Paris Agreement. Mr. Bennie explored the achievements and challenges faced by the GFOI going forward, and introduced the GFOI Phase 2 concept.

**2. REDD+ Update – Maria Sanz Sanchez**

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Maria explored the history of the land sector and REDD+ in UNFCCC negotiations, providing an overview of forests and their role as a major carbon sink in climate change mitigation. Maria outlined where countries are in relation to REDD+, with most countries undergoing readiness actions, and many countries becoming involved in bilateral and multilateral results-based payment initiatives.

Maria posed key questions for REDD+ and its ongoing role in achieving climate change mitigation and broader sustainable development goals. These included how REDD+ could be used to increase the global level of ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement, and whether REDD+ investments by donors were being adequately allocated to the capacity of countries to effectively absorb such finances. Maria concluded her address with an endorsement of the GFOI, saying that the Initiative will be key in the technical improvements required for successful land sector abatement in support of the Paris Agreement.

**3. Panel: Country perspectives – Nguyen Van Ha, Diego Ramirez (Ecuador), Sophyra Sar (Cambodia), Hewson Kabugi (Kenya), Rawle Lewis (Guyana) and Renato Timane (Mozambique) – moderated by Maria Sanz Sanchez**

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Each panelist outlined the progress of REDD+ in their countries, including national priorities, achievements and challenges faced. The countries represented are at various stages of REDD+ readiness and implementation, with Maria reflecting on the role that national circumstances (such as domestic development priorities, geography and political expectations) play in shaping REDD+ in each country.

Drawing on her professional experiences, Maria interpreted the panel discussion as a testament to the importance of harmonising top-down global objectives with the bottom-up objectives of countries looking to implement REDD+ activities. Importantly, she noted that GFOI can act as a vehicle for these bottom-up interests to be communicated by countries. Drawing commonality between the panelists' experiences, the Leads noted that GFOI is positioned to provide tailored, country-specific capacity building support for all stages of the design and implementation of an MRV system for REDD+.

**4. GFOI Successes and Opportunities – Jim Baker and Anthony Bennie**

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Jim presented the findings of the 2016 Review of the GFOI, which aimed to assess the progress of the Initiative to date and inform its strategic direction from 2017 onwards. The key Review findings were that that GFOI had been successful as unique forum for building technical capacity for MRV systems in accordance with IPCC requirements. The Review identified a number of challenges faced by the GFOI, including difficulties in the immediate measurement of long-term capacity building outcomes and the current gap between enhanced access to data and the capacity of countries to use it.

The Review concluded that the GFOI is now well-situated to support countries in the choice and development of MRV systems that best meet country needs, and that demand for the GFOI's capacity building support will increase as donors for REDD+ increasingly need to see progress. The Review findings formed the basis of GFOI phase 2, which will have a greater focus on coordinated, demand-

driven capacity building in developing countries for REDD+ MRV that is based on the MGD. On behalf of the Leads group, Anthony welcomed the findings and recommendations of the GFOI Review.

**5. GFOI Component Presentations and Q&A – Carly Green (MGD), Sasha Gottlieb and Inge Jonckheere (Capacity Building), Frank Martin Seifert (SDCG), Martin Herold (R&D) and Rama Chandra Reddy (World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility) – moderated by Tom Harvey**

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Each speaker provided updates on the recent and planned activities of the GFOI components that they represent. Mr. Reddy delivered a presentation on the *Training the Trainer* workshop series that has been delivered in collaboration with GOFI-GOLD and the GFOI's Capacity Building and MGD Components. This was followed by a Q&A panel on the GFOI's components. In this session, the speakers reiterated the benefits of coordination between the components, the need to involve countries in the articulation of their own MRV capacity needs, and the importance of ensuring complementarity with countries' domestic priorities and existing capacity development work.

**6. Breakout Groups: Key Themes from REDDcompass – Moderated by Carly Green; Groups facilitated by Carly Green, Inge Jonckheere, Nikki Fitzgerald and Sylvia Wilson.**

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Plenary participants were randomly assigned to breakout groups based on the four key themes from REDDcompass: (i) Institutional Arrangements (ii) Design Decisions (iii) Measurement and Estimation (iv) Reporting and Verification. The four breakout groups discussed the actions and concepts under their assigned REDDcompass theme, with each group member's input based on their own country's experience and national circumstances. Results from the breakout groups to follow.

*Day two*

**7. IPCC: 2019 Refinement of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines – Andrej Kranjc and Sekai Ngarize (IPCC)**

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Andrej and Sekai provided a background to 2019 Refinement of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines. In light of the abundant new scientific and empirical knowledge published since 2006, the Refinement is being undertaken to update, supplement and elaborate the Guidelines which provide the scientific basis for supporting the preparation and continuous improvement of national GHG inventories. The Refinement will involve approximately 200 authors worldwide and is expected to be completed in May 2019.

Of particular interest to GFOI partners is a chapter in the 2019 Refinement on consistent representation of land, which will present guidance on how remotely sensed data, ground based data and ancillary data can be integrated and used to derive consistent time series estimates of land use and land use change. The IPCC recognises the importance of the MGD as a syllabus for robust land sector measurement and reporting; MGD authors will be heavily involved in the 2019 Refinement, effectively putting the MGD and REDDcompass at the cutting edge of best practice guidance for land sector MRV

**8. Country FREL Presentations – Nguyen Dinh Hung (Vietnam), Edersson Cabrera (Colombia) and Budiharto (Indonesia) – moderated by Sylvia Wilson**

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Presentations were given by representatives of three countries that have submitted either a Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) or Forest Reference Level (FRL). Presenters shared the challenges, successes and lessons learned in preparing, and submitting their Reference Level. Q&A following the presentations focused on the gaps identified by UNFCCC Technical Assessments of their submissions, and how countries can address these technical gaps with the support of GFOI tools and guidance. Many questions asked of the presenters were from developing country participants, exemplifying the South-South cooperation and country-driven lesson sharing that will be promoted in GFOI Phase 2.

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**9. Panel Discussion on Forest Monitoring Needs of REDD+ Countries – Vo Quang Hien (Vietnam), Akosita Lewai (Fiji), Haruni Krisnawati (Indonesia), Mohamed Yakubu (Ghana), Adalberto Lopez (Guatemala) and Deepak Kumar Kharal (Nepal) – moderated by Martin Herold**

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Each panelist presented on the current forest monitoring needs for the successful implementation of REDD+ activities in their countries. The identified capacity gaps in each country included data storage and utilisation, coordinating R&D activities and ensuring consistency between national GHG inventories and REDD+ submissions. Martin reflected on how the breadth of forest monitoring needs identified by the panelists across the six countries was addressed by the holistic nature of the GFOI and its package of MRV capacity building support.

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**10. Information Stations: Rolling Demonstrations on GFOI and Partners' Products**

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Parallel information stations were set up for the forest MRV and capacity building products developed by the GFOI partners. The stations demonstrations included: REDDcompass, Global Forest Watch, Data cube, OpenForis and SEPAL, GOF-C-GOLD training materials and the integration of existing tools & methods by SilvaCarbon.

The sessions were a great opportunity for participants to ask questions and directly engage with the developers on how they could make the most effective use of the various products being demonstrated. For the GFOI Partners, the sessions provided an opportunity to receive valuable country user feedback on their products. Throughout the demonstrations, the GFOI partners advocated the common theme that developing countries are free to choose the methods, tools and approaches that suit their needs and national circumstances; the GFOI empowers countries to take ownership of their MRV capacity development.

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**11. Leads Panel and Discussion Forum: GFOI Reflections – Anthony Bennie (Chair – Australia), Anssi Pekkarinen (FAO), Evan Notman (US), Henrik Fliflet (Norway), Stephen Ward (CEOS) and Sylvia Wilson (US) – moderated by Tom Harvey**

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Based on the week's discussions, the Leads group discussed the GFOI's progress to date, major priorities and next steps. The Leads reflected on the successes of the GFOI in establishing a community for all MRV stakeholders to collaborate, share lessons and harmonise their efforts in support of climate change mitigation. Reflecting on the findings of the 2016 GFOI Review, the Leads acknowledged the importance of making forest MRV capacity building processes as easy and accessible to developing country partners as possible. The GFOI has a promising outlook for Phase 2, with the Initiative having demonstrated the ability to adapt and capitalise on relevant global developments such as the Paris Agreement.

The Leads committed to the continuous improvement of the GFOI, emphasising that in Phase 2, the GFOI will look to increase its engagement with developing countries by seeking their ongoing input, participation and governance in the Initiative. Doing so will ensure that the GFOI's capacity building work is effective, demand-driven and empowering for developing country partners.

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**12. Wrap up & closing remarks – Anthony Bennie and Nguyen Van Ha**

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Mr. Bennie and Dr. Nguyen acknowledged the work of the GFOI Office and Vietnamese Government in organising the 2017 Plenary and thanked all participants for their contributions to the sessions.

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**13. Next meeting**

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The next Plenary will be held in Colombia in March-April 2018.

*Meeting closed.*

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