



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Sustainable Natural Resource Management Project (SNRM)

**A GUIDE FOR
PROVINCIAL REDD+ ACTION PLAN (PRAP) MONITORING**

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1. Introduction

A province implementing PRAP is required to **annually monitor and report** the progress of implementation to the Provincial Steering Committee of National Target Program for Sustainable Forestry Development (NTP-SFD) as required in Chapter IV of the PRAP. The contents of monitoring are: a) progress of implementation based on the Results Framework; b) impacts (benefits and risks) associated to the implementation based on Environmental and Social Benefits and Risks Assessment Framework; and c) financial expenditure and other notable issues to be reported.

This Guide aims to facilitate the Northwest provinces (Hoa Binh, Son La, Dien Bien and Lai Chau) on PRAP monitoring, with particular focus on monitoring based on Results Framework, and Environmental and Social Benefits and Risks Assessment Framework.

For the Results Framework, **the focus is on monitoring of Solution Package level (outcome level)** as these are the outcomes which PRAP wants to achieve in the end. Monitoring of Solution level (output level) should be also monitored as activity monitoring, however, is not the coverage of this Guide.

For the Environmental and Social Benefits and Risks Assessment Framework, **the focus is on monitoring the ‘risks’ and associated negative impacts**. This is because ‘risks’ are the critical issues which need to be captured and addressed as to safeguard the society and environment. On the other hand, the ‘benefits’ are the long-term impacts which the PRAP wants to enhance, therefore it is not necessarily suitable to be monitored in short-term (annually).

Finally, the Guide summarizes some lessons from the PRAP monitoring in the four Northwest provinces supported by JICA SNRM Project which can be considered on improving the monitoring in the future.

2. Steps for PRAP monitoring

Suggested steps of PRAP monitoring is describe as below. The following sections provides details of the action to be undertaken in each step.

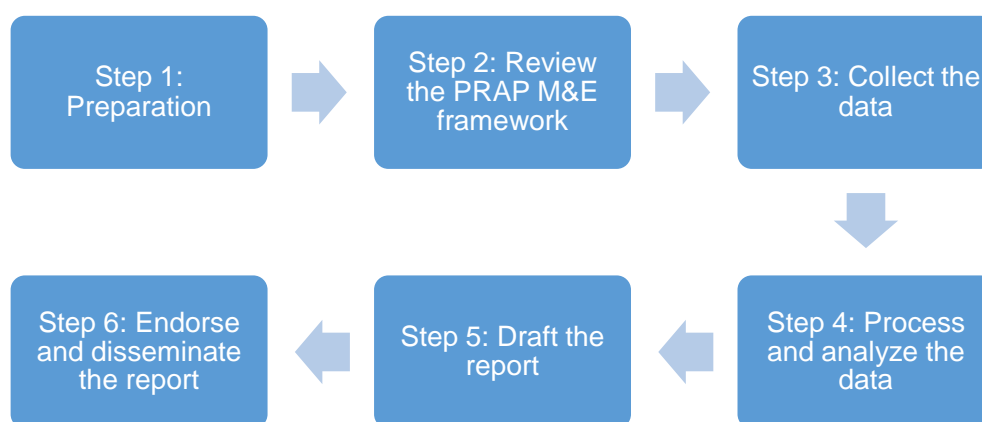


Figure 01. Steps on PRAP monitoring report development

2.1. Step 1: Preparation

This is a step to become ready for starting PRAP monitoring. The actions are listed as below:

- Establish a team responsible for PRAP monitoring (PRAP Monitoring Team). DARD shall take the overall leading responsibility and issue a decision for to establish the PRAP Monitoring Team (PRAP MT), if necessary.
- Develop a work plan for PRAP monitoring. Agree on WHO does WHAT by WHEN. A template is given in below Table 01 as a sample work plan.

Table 01. PRAP monitoring work plan

Steps	By who	By when	Output
Preparation	DARD shall appoint the PRAP MT PRAP MT shall develop the work plan and report outline	November	Work plan, report outline
Review the PRAP M&E framework	PRAP MT together with other stakeholders as appropriate	November	Revised M&E framework, reporting template
Data collection	PRAP MT in cooperation with district-FPDs	December – January	Dataset for analysis
Data processing and analysis	PRAP MT together with other stakeholders as appropriate	December – January	Analyzed data and information
Drafting	PRAP MT	January - February	PRAP monitoring report
Endorsement and dissemination	DARD	February	

- Agreeing on the report outline is an important process, since the outline will define necessary works to be undertaken in PRAP monitoring. A sample outline is proposed in Table 02, however each province can customize the outline depending on their interest and requirement as far as the required contents (i.e. results of monitoring based on the agreed M&E framework) are properly included.

Table 02. PRAP monitoring report outline

Section	Contents to be described	Amount
1. Introduction	Background, purpose of monitoring, general process taken.	1 page
2. Monitoring scope	A map of target areas to show the geographical scope of PRAP monitoring	1 page
3. Methodology	Working structure, steps, data collection and analysis	2 pages

Section	Contents to be described	Amount
	methods.	
4. Results monitoring		
4.1. Result framework		
4.1.1. Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarize the results for each indicator using the reporting template. - Discuss the positive performances and aspects which could be replicated and scaled-up into the future. - Discuss the observed shortcomings and the underlying causes. 	1 page/ indicator (in total 6-8)
4.1.2. Shortcomings and causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarize the shortcomings of each solution package. - Identify the causes of shortcomings. Also describe the causes which are commonly seen across the solution packages. 	2 pages
4.2. Social & Environmental risk monitoring		
4.2.1. Result	See 4.1.1	1 page/ indicator (in total 6-8)
4.2.2. Shortcomings and causes	See. 4.1.2	2 pages
5. Conclusion and recommendation		
5.1. Conclusion	Summarize the key findings	2 pages
5.2. Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss the issues which should be improved for the future PRAP implementation. - Discuss the areas to be improved in the future monitoring work, to make the monitoring more effective, efficient and accurate. 	2 pages
		Total approx. 30 pages
Annex	Result framework; social & environmental benefits and risks monitoring framework; summary of field survey results, etc.	as necessary

2.2. Step 2: Review the PRAP M&E framework

This step is very important to ensure that the monitoring work is truly operational, captures the right information for the subsequent analysis, and be able to draw implications for improved PRAP implementation.

Although depending on the indicators, the PRAP monitoring usually requires collaboration and inputs from other sectors (e.g. agriculture, natural resource, planning and investment) and administration units (e.g. district, commune, forest management board). For each indicators,

you must be confident that such collaboration and inputs can be ensured. Consider holding a pre-monitoring consultation with those sectors and administration units to facilitate good collaboration in PRAP monitoring.

Results Framework

- The Results Framework is a framework for monitoring whether the PRAP is implemented as planned and producing expected outcome. The framework has ‘baseline data’, ‘result indicators’, and ‘means of verification’ for each of the Solution Package (expected outcome to address the drivers and barriers) and Solution (group of actions to realize the Solution).
- The exercise here is to review and recheck the result indicators and means of verification **for the Solution Packages (outcome level)** with focus on following points:
 - Do they clearly represent the expected outcome?
 - Does the province have/can collect complete data with sufficient quality to verify the indicators?
 - Are the indicators verifiable at lowest cost and in simplest manner?
- If any insufficiencies are found through the above exercise, consider to revise the indicators or use proxy indicators (i.e. indirect measure or sign that approximates or represents a phenomenon in the absence of a direct measure or sign).

Environmental and Social Benefits and Risk Assessment Framework

- The Environmental and Social Benefits and Risks Assessment Framework is a framework for monitoring whether the PRAP is implemented in environmentally and socially sound manner, and avoids or mitigates any negative affects to the extent possible. The framework is composed of 6 elements, namely: ‘benefits’, ‘(benefit) enhancement measures’, ‘(benefits) monitoring measures’; and ‘risks’, ‘(risks) mitigation measures’, and ‘(risks) monitoring measures’ for each of the Solution Package. As already explained in Section 1, the focus is on monitoring the ‘risks’ and associated negative impacts (therefore, the monitoring framework will be called as ‘Environmental and social risk assessment framework’ from hereafter).
- The exercise here is to review and recheck the type of ‘risks’ and means of monitoring with focus on following points:
 - Do they sufficiently cover the concerned risks?
 - Does the province have/can collect complete data with sufficient quality to monitor the risks and associated impacts?
 - Are the risk monitoring measures operational at lowest cost and in simplest manner?
- If any insufficiencies are found through the above exercise, consider to revise the indicators or use proxy indicators (i.e. indirect measure or sign that approximates or represents a phenomenon in the absence of a direct measure or sign).

- Once the review is complete, prepare a reporting template for each of the monitoring item so that everyone can have the same understanding on how the monitoring data should be collected, analyzed and reported. It is important to note that the template and the data collection methods discussed in Step. 3 are consistent.

2.3. Step 3: Collect the data

After Step 2 is completed, start collecting the data for the two monitoring frameworks, i.e. “Results framework” and “Environmental and social risks assessment framework”. The two frameworks are different in their objectives, and therefore the potential data sources and data collection methods are also different.

Results Framework

- The Forest Resource Monitoring System (FRMS) is a system to support management of forestry data of Vietnam. The desktop application is already installed in the Sub-FPD as a database system to store different kinds of data, and connect to the central server in Hanoi.
- Particularly for forestry data, look into the FRMS and decide how to manipulate the data and summarize them in accordance with the monitoring template. Table 03 below provides some example of data which could be relevant for PRAP monitoring and can be collected from FRMS v2.0.1 (note that the data type listed are examples from the Northwest provinces and not necessarily exhaustive).

Table 03. Data which can be collected from FRMS

Data type	
Forest cover rate form 03	Forest cover change due to re-planning on forestry land _ form 07
Forest type (e.g. rich, poor, plantation,...)_ form 1A	Forest cover change caused by forest fire, illegal upland cultivation, pest insect,..._ form 07
Plantation by specie and age _form 4A	Forest cover change caused by other reasons_ form 07
Forest cover change caused by authorized harvesting _ form 07	Summary of forest cover change plot _form 8A
Forest change due to silviculture activities (afforestation, reforestation, regeneration)_form 07	Forest area change due to authorized conversion of land-use _ form 8c

Note: FRMS has various fixed ‘form’s (usually data export tables) which include different types of data as shown above

- For data which are not in the FRMS, go to individual data source and decide how to use them (the assumption is that through Step 2, you should already know the data source and how to access them). Table 04 below provides some of the monitoring items and their data sources which may be available, although depending on each province.

Table 04. Monitoring item and data source

Monitoring item	Data source.
Forest fire area	Forest fire records of Sub-FPD
Illegal logging area	Illegal logging records of Sub-FPD
Number of illegal logging and volume	Inspection report of Sub-FPD
Harvesting area and volume of tree plantation	Report of Sub-FPD on timber harvesting and revenue from forests
Area of afforestation, reforestation and survival rate	Annual report on af/reforestation by investors submitted to Sub-FPD
Application of the advanced FRMS	Forest change monitoring data managed by Sub-FPD

- When the PRAP Monitoring Team requests Sub-FPD, other sector agencies and administration units (i.e. districts, communes and forest management boards) to provide data, it is recommended to prepare a data request sheet in order to be clear on what kind of data are requested.

Environmental and social risks assessment framework

- From the PRAP monitoring exercised in the Northwest provinces in 2018, the following method is recommend: mobilize the district forest rangers to collect data from each target commune through interviewing relevant commune personnel (e.g. leadership and staff responsible for agriculture and forestry).
- However, it is important that the forest rangers are well trained on the objectives of PRAP monitoring and data collection methods. Questionnaire for data collection should be designed in a simple format by using simplified terms so that the forest rangers and the interviewees will clearly understand what are being questioned. See Table 05 below as an example.

Table 05. Data collection questionnaire (Solution package: Improve economic viability of forest plantations)

Commune	Questionnaire	Result	Compared to 2017 (increase, decrease, reason)
	<p>Strict control of timber logging from natural forests may affect the traditional culture of the people (house construction, cooking, etc.):</p> <p>■ Were there any villages affected?</p>		

Commune	Questionnaire	Result	Compared to 2017 (increase, decrease, reason)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If yes, what is the estimated number of people affected? 		
	<p>Strict control of timber logging in natural forests may affect the livelihoods of the people who rely on forest products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Were there any villages affected? ■ If yes, what is the estimated number of people affected? 		
	<p>Strict control of illegal logging and natural forests encroachment may create conflicts between the law enforcement agencies and the local people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Were there any conflicts observed? ■ If yes, what is the estimated number of people involved? 		

2.4. Step 4: Process and analyze the data

The objectives of this step is to create a set of information which correspond to the reporting templates, then analyze in order to assess the degree of progress (results), and identify social and environmental concerns (impacts).

- The pre-defined reporting template will guide you on summarizing the data for final presentation. Example of a template for forest fire control (as one result indicator) is shown below in Table 06.
- For the Results framework, final assessment shall be given against the pre-defined indicators. Similarly for the Environmental and social risks assessment framework, final assessment shall be given against the pre-defined social and environmental risks. Although breaking down the assessments to district level is not the direct aim of the monitoring, they actually provide valuable information to understand further on the progress of PRAP implementation and the consequences.

Table 06. Monitoring of Forest fire control

District	Number of cases of forest fire				Areas damaged by forest fire			
	Cases (case)	increase (+)/decrease (-)	Comparison to outcome indicator		Area (ha)	Increase (+)/decrease (-)	Comparison to outcome indicator	
			Pass	Failure			Pass	Failure

District	Number of cases of forest fire			Areas damaged by forest fire				
	Cases (case)	increase (+)/decrease (-)	Comparison to outcome indicator		Area (ha)	Increase (+)/decrease (-)	Comparison to outcome indicator	
			Pass	Failure			Pass	Failure
Total								

- Environmental and social risks assessment framework is summarized based on the pre-defined risks and assumed level of actual impacts. An example is described below in Table 07.

Table 07. Monitoring of risk impact (Solution package: Improve economic viability of forest plantations)

District	Risk	Area (ha)	Impact level
	Conversion of natural forests to tree plantations		
	conversion of natural forests to tree plantations		
	conversion of natural forests to tree plantations		
	conversion of natural forests to tree plantations		
Total	conversion of natural forests to tree plantations		

- A set of criteria is needed in order to assess the level of impacts. In the case of Northwest provinces the impacts were classified into ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’, based on the analysis of collected data (e.g. 2018) and historical data (e.g. 2015, 2016, 2017) together with expert knowledge. An example is shown below in Table 08.

Table 08. Classification of social and environmental impacts (Solution package: Improve economic viability of forest plantations)

No.	High	Medium	Low
Risk of conversion of natural forests to tree plantations	Natural forests converted to tree plantations >10.0ha	Between 5.0 - 10.0ha	< 5.0ha

- After the data is processed, you can carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis. This is an important exercise, as the objective of PRAP monitoring is to check whether PRAP is being implemented towards the expected direction and likely to produce expected outcomes. Any signals of shortcomings, challenges and negative impacts are hoped to be

captured through this analysis.

- You may consider a participatory analysis process with other stakeholders (e.g. consultations meeting, verbal communication, email communication, field visit) to enrich the analysis, although within the given time and resources.
- The analysis will be then converted into suggestions for taking affirmative actions.

2.5. Step 5: Draft the report

After the necessary data and analysis are ready, start drafting the report. The report can follow the outline provided in Section 1 with modifications as appropriate. The contents should be already summarized through the preceding steps, but once again, make sure that you have sufficient information to support the argument and supplement if necessary. It is also important that any information which relate to the interpretation of the monitoring results should be noted to facilitate the understanding of the readers (e.g. supplementary definition of the terms, possible discrepancies and limitations related to the analysis).

2.6. Step 6: Endorse and disseminate the report

The final step is to endorse and disseminate the report. As DARD is stipulated as a responsible agency of PRAP implementation, the monitoring report shall be endorsed by DARD (however, it may depend on the protocol of each province). After the report is endorsed by DARD, it should be submitted to the PPC and other related agencies.

3. Lessons and discussions

The Northwest provinces conducted their first annual PRAP monitoring for year 2018. This section aims to share the lessons learnt from their monitoring exercises and lists out some discussion points that can be considered in the monitoring of the following years.

3.1. General issues related to PRAP monitoring

- Linkage between the national REDD+ monitoring and provincial REDD+ monitoring are expected to synchronize to the extent possible, however, the linkages are not yet clearly defined. For example:
 - There is an on-going debate on the formulation of Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the National REDD+ Action Program (NRAP).
 - The Safeguards Information System is under development. The initial version of the web-portal is already established and serving as a transparent source of showing Vietnam's country approach to safeguards. The monitoring framework is being discussed, but it is not yet clearly agreed on which indicators should/could be monitored by the provincial level and how. It is important that the provinces are fully informed about their role and equipped with sufficient capacity to contribute to the SIS.
 - Along with further refinement and operationalization of the monitoring of

environmental and social impacts, Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM: a mechanism to accept, assess, and resolve stakeholder feedback or complaints related to the implementation of REDD+) needs to be put into practice, building on existing institutions, regulatory frameworks, mechanisms and capacity. This shall promote the role of local communities, transparency and safeguarding the people's rights when implementing REDD+. However, further elaboration of the principles at the national level is required for the provincial level to operationalize FGRM in their own province.

- UNFCCC requires reporting of "... (how the safeguards) have been addressed and respected..."¹ The PRAP monitoring undertaken for year 2018 tried to show that the safeguards have been "addressed" but still weak in describing how they were "respected"². Along with the evolution of international REDD+ mechanisms (e.g. results-based payments finally in operation) and the progress of REDD+ in Vietnam (e.g. Safeguard Information System³ already in place; REDD+ being implemented at national and provincial levels; and approaching the results-based payment stage), it is becoming further important to safeguard the society and the environment. The efforts and results of the safeguards being "addressed" and "respected" shall be duly recorded in a transparent manner. This is an area which can be further enhanced in the future implementation and monitoring of the PRAPs.
- In order to ensure REDD+ is truly meaningful for the society and environment, the PRAP should further build-in the activities that not only 'mitigate' the impacts but also 'enhance' social & environmental benefits (or so called 'non-carbon benefits'). The findings from the PRAP monitoring are expected to serve for considering such progressive approach to safeguards.

3.2. Technical issues related to PRAP monitoring

Overall

- In some cases, it is not easy to actually monitor the expected results of an action. For example, degree of success in 'REDD+ awareness raising and capacity building' (as a 'result' of PRAP implementation) or 'loss of traditional knowledge, culture and livelihoods' (as a social impact) may require thorough qualitative analysis. In such cases, process monitoring can be considered as an alternative. For instance, the number of training sessions for the former, and number of consultation meetings for the latter.

Results monitoring

- Focus the monitoring to what you really need to monitor - the "indicators". There were some confusions observed when the provinces were exposed to information which are not actually the target of monitoring, however, of their high interest. Such confusions miss-

¹ Decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 4 and Decision 17/CP.21 paragraph 5. More relevant information could be found in 1/CP.16, 12/CP.17, 12/CP.19, 17/CP.21 decision.

² For the interpretation of the terms 'addressed' and 'respected' see *UN-REDD Programme Info Brief "Summaries of Information: How to demonstrate REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected"* (October, 2016), p. 5.

³ The web-portal can be accessed through <http://sis.vietnam-redd.org/>

lead the assessment. However, this does not undermine the importance of being broad and comprehensive in looking at the issues, as the findings are also valuable for reflecting into their provincial actions (even though not directly related to the PRAPs).

- In most of the PRAPs, the results are set for the provincial level (i.e. aggregation of the selected target areas). In reality, many of the data are collected bottom-up from the lower administrative level (i.e. commune to district, and then to province). In this regard, setting of district-level baselines can be considered in order to allow assessment based on different contexts across districts.
- For the indicators which can only be measured at the end of the PRAP period, developing a progress indicator (or ‘sub-indicator’) can be useful. The purpose is to see whether the progress is on a good track, or if there are any issues to be remedied. For example, if the indicator is “the areas (ha) newly and successfully afforested/reforested by the end of 2020”, the monitoring in 2018 and 2019 cannot yet assess the results against the indicator. As an alternative, survival rate of the planted seedlings can be monitored to see whether the progress of the solution package is likely to achieve the expected results.
- Each ‘solution package’ which aims to produce a certain outcome consists of a list of ‘solutions’ (i.e. output of actions). The information related to the implementation of ‘solutions’ are useful source to understand the factors which have contributed to the success or have acted as a bottleneck. In fact, monitoring of ‘solutions’ were not being carried out sufficiently in the Northwest provinces and may have limited the quality of analysis under the PRAP monitoring.

Environmental and social risks monitoring

- There are different ways to collect data on social and environmental risks and associated impacts.
 - Mobilizing the forest rangers under district-FPDs is a recommended option as Vietnam has established administrative structure and human resources to carry out such work. It is important that the forest rangers are well trained on the objectives of PRAP monitoring and data collection methods. This also allows collecting appropriate and detailed information through face-to-face dialogues. Also this gives an opportunity to familiarize the district forest rangers in PRAP monitoring. The downside is that it requires time and cost, therefore, such activities should be institutionalized into the provincial forestry sector activities.
 - Another option is to collect data in written format from target districts. This is also a fair option under Vietnam’s administrative system. The required cost could be smaller compared to method above. However, data request needs to be very explicit in order to efficiently collect the right responses. The respondents (e.g. district and commune levels) also need to have good understanding on the objectives of PRAP monitoring in order to provide adequate response.
- It should be noted that some impacts can happen integrally or continuously like a chain-reaction. For example, restricting grazing land may cause ‘marginalization of particular groups’, ‘land and resource use conflicts’ and ‘loss of traditional knowledge...’ at the same

time. From practical viewpoint, studying the complexity of such mechanism itself is not the main purpose of the annual PRAP monitoring. The primary role of the PRAP monitoring is to alarm the occurrence of negative impacts and encourage the stakeholders to take responsive actions.

- The impact of “Loss of traditional knowledge, culture and livelihoods” (Cancun safeguards III “Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities...”) is often difficult to assess in terms of quantity and quality. It is often difficult to assess in a short timeframe of annual PRAP monitoring, whether such losses are actually occurring, and moreover, whether such losses are always negative to those communities. This implies the limitation of monitoring (although the monitoring is still useful to signal the existence of such affected communities), and by contrast, highlights the importance of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) throughout the implementation of PRAPs to make sure there will be no regrets in the participating communities.
- A set of criteria is needed for in order to assess the level of social and environmental impacts. In fact, it is not straightforward to come up with objective criteria, as the social and environmental impacts are mixture of quantitative impact (e.g. size of the people affected) and qualitative impact (e.g. seriousness of an impact to each of them) in most cases. In the case of Northwest provinces, the impacts were classified as ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’, according to the thresholds developed based on the analysis of collected data (e.g. 2018) and historical data (e.g. 2015, 2016, 2017). Expert knowledge were also added in for defining thresholds. The bottom line is that, a) the monitoring framework sufficiently predicts the potential risks, and b) the monitoring provides early warnings on more significant social and environmental impacts which may need particular attention.