

# How Mekong REDD+ strategy documents address legal and illegal forest conversion



Forest Trade and Finance

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# Initial review of REDD+ strategy documents



- FT reviewed Mekong REDD+ readiness documents:
  - Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PPs); Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap; Laos Forest Investment Program (FIP); Vietnam Emission Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN)
- Key Questions:
  1. Was **conversion for agriculture** listed as **major driver** of deforestation?
  2. Was **illegal** conversion differentiated from **legal**?
  3. Were **different tools/strategies** identified for legal vs. illegal conversion?



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# General findings

1. Commercial agricultural expansion identified as primary driver of deforestation
2. Limited discussion of the scale of illegality associated with conversion
  - mention of “weak law enforcement” & “conflicting regulations”
  - “unclear land tenure”
3. Limited discussion of specific tools to address illegal conversion
  - “implement laws” & “harmonize regulations”



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# Potential tools to address illegal conversion



- **Better data**

- If you don't know problem, how do you address it?
- Analysis of drivers of **illegal** deforestation
- large-scale clearance vs. small-scale encroachment?

- National processes to more clearly **define legality** of land conversion

- Clarify laws (loopholes; retroactive degazetting of forests)
- Improve laws to meet international standards (e.g. FPIC; purchasing policies of international buyers)
- Streamline laws (easier for responsible investors)



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# Potential tools to address illegal conversion



- Ensure timber/commodities have the documentation needed meet the requirements of trade-based approaches
  - public procurement policies
  - EUTR
  - Lacey Act
- Donor programs & international community
  - Criteria for Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD)
  - VPA processes

# Upcoming FT policy brief

- Short report:
  - Key findings from review of REDD+ readiness documents
  - Definition of illegal conversion and main types of illegalities
  - Parallels with efforts to combat illegal logging
  - Specific tools that could address illegal conversion timber and other commodities
- We welcome your input!

# Questions

- Is legal vs. illegal conversion being discussed in REDD+ forums? But too controversial for REDD+ documents?
- How have REDD+ dialogues around illegal conversion evolved in the last few years?
- Terminology?
  - Legal vs. illegal
  - Planned vs. unplanned
- What are the best tools for REDD+ to address illegal conversion in the Mekong?

A scenic landscape of rolling green hills and a dense forest under a cloudy sky. The foreground is filled with lush green trees, while the background shows layers of hills fading into the distance under a bright, overcast sky.

# Thank you

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