How Mekong REDD+ strategy documents address legal and illegal forest conversion
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?
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”
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)
Potential tools to address illegal conversion

• Ensure timber/commodities have the documentation needed to 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?
Thank you

Eve Richer
ericher@forest-trends.org
www.forest-trends.org