

ASIA PACIFIC REGION

HOW TO BECOME FLUENT IN UNFCCC-ESE

REDD+ is a mechanism under the UNFCCC, and for this reason, it is the decisions of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the UNFCCC that guides all of us in designing, developing and implementing national REDD+ programmes. It is therefore essential that we have a good understanding of exactly what the CoP decisions mean. However, for anyone wanting to educate themselves on CoP decisions, there are a couple of significant barriers to overcome or questions to answer.

Firstly, which CoP decisions mention REDD+? Most CoP meetings reach a large number of decisions, and only a few, at most, will be relevant to REDD+. Secondly, as anyone who has tried to read a CoP decision will know, CoP decisions are written in a rather strange, stylized language that is difficult to follow, even for native English speakers, unless you have been immersed in the UNFCCC process for some time. Here's an example, from Decision 14/CP.19:

"The CoP ... Decides that, consistent with decision 1/CP.16 and decision 2/CP.17, annex III, the data and information referred to in paragraph 3 above should be provided through the biennial update reports by Parties, taking into consideration the additional flexibility given to the least developed countries and small island developing States."

What does this mean? As the majority of us have not been immersed in the process, it is extremely difficult to work out what exactly this is referring to – requiring a reader to refer back to two previous decisions as well as to text earlier in the same decision.

Fortunately, the REDD+ Cambodia Programme, with support from the UN-REDD Programme, has produced a handy publication that helps to overcome both of these barriers. The publication is called ***"The Road from Bali to Warsaw: Collection of COP Decisions on REDD+"***, and can be downloaded from the REDD+ Cambodia website at:

<http://www.cambodia-redd.org/category/document-centre/redd-materials/cop-decisions>

Thirteen CoP decisions from CoP-13 (Bali) in 2007 to CoP-19 (Warsaw) in 2013 are included in the publication. These are all of the CoP decisions directly related to REDD+. But, in addition to bringing all the decisions together in one publication, with the full text of each decision reproduced, the value of the publication comes from the fact that each decision is preceded by a box which summarizes what it means in "normal" English. So, going back to the example quoted above, the box that precedes Decision 14/CP.19 explains that it is the data and information used for the estimation of anthropogenic forest-related emissions and removals that should be reported through the biennial update reports, and that the data needs to be transparent and consistent over time, including with the established REL/RL.

Also, by having all decisions compiled in a searchable document, it is possible to quickly and painlessly check on all decisions related to a particular issue. So, for example, if you are interested in all decisions related to safeguards, it is a simple matter to discover that you need to study Decisions 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 12/CP.17, 9/CP.19, 11/CP.19, and 12/CP.19.

Even for those of us who work full time on REDD+, it is necessary from time to time to remind ourselves of exactly what the CoP has decided. Having everything in a single publication can therefore save a lot of time and effort. ***The Road from Bali to Warsaw*** is an invaluable resource for anyone involved with REDD+ to understand exactly what the international community is expecting when it comes to implementing REDD+.

As contributors to Go-REDD+, we aim to stimulate debate by commenting on some of the latest papers and publications related to REDD+. The conclusions we draw, and the questions we pose, are intended to facilitate critical examination of these papers.

Go-REDD+ is an e-mail listserv managed by the UN-REDD Programme team in Asia-Pacific, based in Bangkok. The main objective of Go-REDD+ is to distribute information, synopses of research results and activities related to REDD+ in Asia-Pacific, to assist countries in their REDD+ readiness efforts. Old messages will be archived on the [Regional Activities pages](#) of the UN-REDD Programme website. [Discussion forum](#) on Go-REDD+ is available through UN-REDD Programme's online [knowledge sharing platform](#). The Go-REDD+ team welcomes feedback, suggestions or inquiries to goredd.th@undp.org.