

**Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF):  
Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) – External Review Form**

**Guidelines for Reviewers:**

- 1) This review form is a record of your review, which may be disclosed for transparency. Please bear that in mind when filling it out.
- 2) Please summarize your comments-- address whatever you feel is important.
- 3) Please evaluate and mark (score) each of the 5 Summary Assessment review criteria from the FCPF Information Memorandum, the Participants Committee Selection Criteria, and the numbered R-PIN major topics, as requested in the right-hand column. Select a mark from the following scale: NA: Not Addressed. 1: Inadequately addresses criterion. 2: Barely addresses criterion. 3: Average, or adequately addresses criterion. 4: Good job of addressing criterion. 5: Excellent job of addressing criterion.

<p><b>1) Country submitting the R-PIN: Democratic Republic of Congo</b>  <b>2) Date of Review: July 1st, 2008 – REVISED JULY 7</b></p>	
<p><b>I. Summary Assessment of the Quality and Completeness of the R-PIN:</b>  <i>Note with value of 1 – 5</i></p>	<p><b>Mark (score):</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion (i): Ownership of the proposal by both the government and relevant stakeholders:</b>                  The proposal has a strong sense of having been the work of outsiders, rather than properly owned by its stakeholders. This needs to be dealt with, if future stages of the process are to proceed correctly.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion (ii): Consistency between national and sectoral strategies and proposed REDD Strategy:</b>                  It is not clear how consistent these are, but some thought has been given to how to deal with this in the future.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion (iii): Completeness of information and data provided:</b>                  Although the data could be more complete, there is a reasonable spread of data, sources, and methods used in their gathering and analysis. Future methodological approaches are also spelt out.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion (iv): Clarity of responsibilities for the execution of REDD activities to be financed:</b>                  Since it is not clear what would be financed, it is also unclear who would be doing what. This needs much attention.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion (v): Feasibility of proposal and likelihood of success:</b>                  A reasonable methodological approach is outlined, though it needs to be edited to incorporate the ideas outlined about sectoral coordination and about stakeholder participation. It needs to be vetted by whoever is giving oversight to international data gathering norms.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>SUMMARY SCORE: add scores above and enter sum into box on right</b></p>	<p><b>SUM: 14</b></p>
<p><b>Improvements the country could make to R-PIN, and any TA needs for it:</b>                  Substantial additional work need to be carried out in designing a better plan for achieving a sound level of readiness. This is such a complex undertaking that TA would be advisable in practically all aspects of such plan.</p> <p>Improvements the country could make to R-PIN, and any TA needs for it:                  The Ministry of Environment needs to take charge of this R-PIN and ensure that:</p>	

- It properly reflects their wishes
- It seems as though it was written to describe their country
- It develops a costed and properly thought out request for funds
- It integrates its proposals on stakeholder participation and sectoral collaboration with those on tree measurement
- Its methodological annex is re-written to become a less obvious commercial proposal by its authors

Doing this may well need TA support, possibly from someone not involved in the first draft.

## II. Participants Committee Selection Criteria: Information

**Relevance of country in REDD context: Priority to countries with: (i) substantial forest area and forest carbon stocks; and (ii) relevance of forests in economy, including livelihoods of forest dwellers and Indigenous Peoples:**

**Geographic and biome balance: across the world's main forest biomes.**

**Variety of approaches:** Proposed innovative approaches to tackling deforestation and degradation; methods; testing new mechanisms and distribution of REDD revenues; and/or regionally important leadership.

## III. Detailed Review of R-PIN Responses to Template Questions:

*Please review the R-PIN quality and completeness in terms of addressing the major questions in the FCPF R-PIN template.*

### 1. Government focal point, and ownership and consultation in producing the R-PIN:

The Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism is given as the entity submitting the R-PIN, and the Focal Point for the REDD process is the Director of Sustainable Development within that Ministry. It is uncertain whether ownership of the R-PIN is high beyond possibly the Ministry of Environment. Consultations took place with the Woods Hole Research Center and other sections of the Ministry of the Environment. Apparently no consultations were carried out with other stakeholders of the civil society and the private sector. If so, ownership of the R-PIN is probably low.

One Congolese author is named at the head of the list of contributors. The other three named authors of the submission are identified as belonging to the French consulting firm FRM. Two small consultation workshops took place, involving the authors and the five named professionals who were consulted.

### 2. Identification of institutions responsible for: forest monitoring, law enforcement, conservation, and coordination across forest, agriculture and rural development:

Various institutions have a role in monitoring forest resources, forest law enforcement, conservation and ensuring intersector coordination. Three Ministries seem to be involved in inter sector coordination. However it is not explained how coordination takes place in practice, particularly given the large number of agencies involved in the management of forest resources.

All the institutions bar one cited as being responsible for forest-related functions belong to the same ministry as has submitted the proposal. The one exception is the National Institute of Statistics. It would have been helpful if something had been said about the capacity of the institutions in question, with a more detailed description of their functions, though the template did not call for this.

The question of coordination is not handled very convincingly, since the Ministries responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development and Local Government are not mentioned; nor is there any indication as to how new cross-cutting ideas

such as REDD would be handled at an inter-ministerial level. The major decentralizing changes under way in the country, in which the number of provinces will increase fourfold, and each of them will have a degree of autonomous control over forestry issues, are not mentioned here.

The REDD process raises major issues about land ownership, resource use rights, rights to revenues from them, and taxation thereof. Such cross-sectoral issues are not mentioned.

**3. Current country situation:**

**Where do deforestation and forest degradation occur, main causes, estimates of greenhouse gas emissions, data available? Key issues in forest law enforcement and forest sector governance?**

There is a general idea of where deforestation takes place, around major urban centers and along roads and the Congo river. Deforestation maps are available as Annex 1 but it is not clear the year when data was acquired (2006?). This section does not contain estimates of the extent of deforestation but other parts of the report indicate that estimates by CARPE, the Congo Basin Partnership and FAO fluctuate between 0,2% and 0,3% per year. FAO has estimated degradation at around 0.15% per year. It would appear that these are recently published estimates (2006 through 2008). Forest inventories were conducted in the 70s and 80s over 20 million hectares and data are also available for certain areas. The text does not provide information on whether methodologies employed in these various assessments are consistent with each other and what degree of detail these estimates contain. It is stated that estimates of deforestation will be soon produced covering the 1990-2000 and 2000-2005 periods.

Regarding main immediate causes of deforestation and forest degradation, leading drivers are the collection of wood by rural populations (leading mainly to degradation rather than deforestation), the conversion of forest lands to agricultural uses employing shifting cultivation methods and the common and traditional use of fire to clear forest lands and for facilitating hunting. Large scale conversion of forests is likely to take place under a recent agreement between the government and a Chinese company that would lead to the establishment of palm oil plantations over 3 million hectares. Oil exploration and mining do not appear to be very important causes of deforestation. Deforestation pressures arising from large scale industrial exploitation of forests have not been important until now. Of course the implementation of the palm oil project would drastically change the importance of this deforestation driver. A reasonable description of the causes of forest degradation is given, though most of the text is repeated in another R-PIN submission.

Estimates of emissions from deforestation are available for year 2007 only (0.22 Pg of CO<sub>2</sub>). No further details are provided.

A general description of data sources is given, though it could have been more detailed and specific. It is, incidentally, identical to the description given in the submission by another Central African country.

The major law enforcement issues turn around the process of the legitimacy of forest concessions, and a donor-funded project under way to try to bring a semblance of coherence and order to this issue. The difficulties of law enforcement are compounded by the country's economic state, as it emerges from a long period of war and breakdown of civil order. The text does not contain a discussion of the main issues related to forest law enforcement and governance beyond stating that illegal logging is not known and that violent conflict has obviously reduced the quality of governance. This aspect of the report needs substantial improvement.

**4. Data available on indigenous peoples and forest dwellers?**

Data on indigenous peoples and forest dwellers apparently are fragmentary and dispersed. No data about pygmies are given, though there is a paragraph underlining their importance in any future REDD-related initiatives. The R-PIN states that some data collection will take place in the near future although it is not clear what kind of information will be collected.

General information about human population densities in the Congo Basin is given, but no data about DRC are given, even though these are readily available

**5. Current strategy in place to address deforestation and forest degradation. What stakeholder process was used to arrive at it?**

Some general information about forest degradation policies is given – this same information is also presented for another Central African submission. The place given to deforestation issues in the new Forest Code for DRC is described, as are provisions in the law about re-/ afforestation to compensate for deforestation losses.

The proposal does not answer the question on whether participatory stakeholder consultation processes were employed

in the design of the current strategy to address deforestation and forest degradation, and if so what kind.

With regard to strategy to address deforestation and forest degradation, DRC elaborated a National Forest Plan (in 1996?), that addresses forest management issues in general. The implementation of this plan would, if effective, lead to the elimination of various causes of forest decline. According to regulations deforestation, when necessary, is regulated by the government and deforestation processes involving more than one hectare are subject to taxes. A tree planting program is under way and has already established some 7,200 hectares of plantations, mainly on the Batéké Plateau. The Government is also aiming at reducing illegal logging and intends to participate in the Forest Law Enforcement and Trade initiative of the European Union and at expanding a program for reserves and protected areas.

**6. What would be needed to reduce deforestation and forest degradation?**

Increased coordination along inter sector lines would be a priority and possibly a land use plan would be developed. However the R-PIN does not give a sense of what concrete actions could be undertaken to address specific causes of deforestation and forest degradation. Clearly substantial additional thinking should be dedicated to this theme, and this undertaking could be supported by international assistance.

**Has country considered the potential relationship between REDD strategies and country's broader development agenda?**

Definitively so. Consideration of inter sector linkages and the need to align potential REDD programs with national priorities and policies would receive particular attention. (However, see "critical reviewer" below)

**Has any technical assistance been received, or is planned on REDD?**

Some technical assistance has been in place, dealing with issues related to REDD. Also the Wood Hole Research Center has provided support to carry out an assessment of emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation.

One critical reviewer stated the following, relating to the entire section 6: *"The first two questions under this heading were unanswered, just as they were unanswered in another central African submission; the third has been answered, but the answer is identical to that in another submission, so cannot properly reflect the country's thinking."*

**7. What stakeholder consultation process would country use for developing and implementing REDD under FCPF support?**

The proposal states that consultative processes would follow the directives of the Forest Code, which emphasize a dialogue in "Provincial Consultative Councils of Forests" which would have a broad representation of various stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other local populations.

There is a good description of the consultation process that has been in operation as part of the concession reconversion process, and it is clear that different interest groups have been widely involved. It is implied but not stated that this would be replicated country-wide as part of the REDD process. A reasonable description of the barriers to cross-sector collaboration in an initiative such as REDD, is given, though its force is somewhat weakened by the fact that an identical text appears in another country's submission. There is a short but appropriate description of interstate collaboration among the COMIFAC countries.

There is a clear description of cross-sectoral consultation processes that should be implemented as part of the 2002 Forestry Code, and how this fits with local government. Thought is given to how this might work for the REDD process.

The role of forest dwelling communities in the definition of forest concession limits is described, as provided for in a law of 2006. It is not explained how this would have a bearing on REDD processes. The IP reviewer proposes a wide consultation process for indigenous communities, including sensitization and capacity building to implement REDD- to clarify objectives and advantages of REDD. Preferably this should result in a separate plan on REDD for indigenous forest dweller communities in cooperation with indigenous representatives and organizations. The sub plan should involve indigenous representatives and or organizations.

**8. Implementing REDD strategies: challenges to introducing effective REDD strategies, and how might they be overcome? Would performance-based payments through REDD be a major incentive for implementing a more coherent strategy to tackle deforestation?**

Among the key challenges, the establishment of a credible baseline and the weaknesses of government institutions are cited as of a great importance. There is a good description about the need to establish an appropriate baseline dataset, and about the advantages of approaching REDD at a regional level. This much is true, and partly explains the fact that this piece of text, as so many others, is identical in this submission and at least one other from another Congo Basin country. Further, the need to establish an adequate forest monitoring mechanism is considered of a paramount importance. This section is far too general, which suggests that additional thinking should take place to identify areas of priority action.

There is a good discussion of performance based payments, with a justification for who might and might not be eligible to participate in the benefit stream from such a system. However, the central issue of whether REDD performance payments would provide a realistic incentive to reducing deforestation and forest degradation is not truly addressed in the proposal. The proposal needs substantial additional analytical work in examining this subject.

The 2002 Forest Code is carefully analysed to reveal inconsistencies in the question of ownership and use rights over trees, and who may enjoy benefits from them. This is enormously relevant for any future benefit streams that may emanate from the REDD process. While individuals and local communities do not appear to be well enough protected in this regard, there is a partial switch in benefit flows from national to provincial governments. Future difficulties in this domain are underlined.

**9. REDD strategy monitoring and implementation:**

**How forest cover and land use change are monitored today, and any constraints in this approach?**

Various initiatives at the national, local and at the level of the Congo Basin are under way that provide data on deforestation processes.

The role of SPIAF, the forest inventory division of the Ministry, is carefully described. There is a reasonable description of monitoring, using both classical forester's ground-based wood mensuration techniques and also describing the status of satellite-image based forest cover monitoring; the institutions involved are also described (the Observatoire des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale, with the aid of the EU-funded FORAF project, is at the heart of this). The contribution of recent analyses by the USAID-funded CARPE programme is also described, relating to work in DRC. It is not evident however, how these various exercises could provide a data for constructing a solid baseline. Forest cover studies and land-use change are another area in which regional collaboration is strong, and this is properly mentioned. The need for higher resolution imagery is also mentioned, as is the desirability of a regionally-based receiving platform (this need will probably soon be met due to French-British collaboration). Constraints discussed include the lack of recent imagery of adequate levels of resolution, the persistence of cloud cover, and the lack of imagery obtained at short intervals. Monitoring capacity is not discussed as a potential challenge.

The same response is given here, as for the other Central African country reviewed, on the monitoring of REDD performance: a clear summary of ground data collection methods, as well as remote sensing approaches, is given.

**10. Additional benefits of potential REDD strategy, and how to monitor them: biodiversity and rural livelihood?**

A rather cursory description is given of the non-carbon benefits that might be realised through the REDD strategy, including wildlife conservation, non-timber forest products, and by creating local opportunities for economic development. It is thus implied that both biodiversity and rural livelihoods would benefit. Quite how this might be achieved is not clear. The role of forests as providers of non-forest environmental services (water catchment, micro-climate regulation) is underlined.

No answers are given to questions about the monitoring of benefits from REDD implementation to biodiversity conservation or to rural livelihoods.

**11. What assistance is country likely to request from FCPF Readiness Mechanism?**

It is thought that the country would need support in all and each one of the stages of developing a satisfactory level of REDD readiness. The response gives some careful thought to the need to design a proper consultation methodology, as a first step in the assistance that might be requested.

The answers to the other questions on deforestation trends; on identification of methods of reducing deforestation and accompanying this with incentives; on the monitoring of emissions and emissions reductions, are all interesting in themselves, largely generic (the bulk appears also in another Central African submission) but do not actually explain what DRC would want to do with support from the FCPF Readiness Mechanism.

**12. Donors and international partners already cooperating with country on REDD.**

These include the WWF-US and the Woods Hole Research Center which have supported the country in the design of the present proposal. Other donors are identified as being potentially interested in future stages of the REDD process. These include France, Germany, Belgium, USA and the EU. Omitted from this list are the World Bank, the African Development Bank the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Norway and Canada, each of which is likely to be interested in supporting the REDD process.

**13. Country's Potential Next Steps and Schedule:**

An urgent appeal is made for the urgency behind improving the baseline monitoring of the forest and of degradation up to the present time, as well as for economic studies to study the impacts of a potential payments system. The ever-present issues of capacity building are not ignored in this plea. These constitute a list of urgent matters, but do not actually chart out next steps. No schedule has been prepared. A request is also made for immediate support for an inter-ministerial steering unit.

It is apparent that substantial additional thinking is needed to identify next steps based of sound analytical work that would allow the better design of a concrete plan of immediate action.

One reviewer concluded the following: ***“It is this reviewer’s opinion that an urgent issue is to take real control of the process and the thinking behind it. This R-PIN submission shares 87 identical paragraphs with that of another central African country reviewed by this reviewer. Another 47 paragraphs are specific to DRC.”***

**14. Attachments and their usefulness:**

Annex 1 on the monitoring of carbon stocks is a detailed methodological overview of what needs to be done in the field to estimate standing stocks of carbon, using well-tried forest measurement techniques. Applying it would be enormously useful, though the desirability of imposing comparable global standards is not mentioned. Agreeing on such standards would undoubtedly introduce unwelcome delays. The Annex makes it clear that the firm that wrote it, FRM, wishes to be involved in the next steps.