

World Bank - Grant Reporting and Monitoring (GRM) Report

Report to Donor

Ref. TF019203

Reporting Period: 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2021

Printed On:

Report Type: Progress Report

Status: Approved

Assignment: TF019203

Vanuatu REDD+ Readiness Plan Preparation Support

FCPFR - Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

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Summary Information	
TF Status	ACTV
Recipient Country	Vanuatu
Executed By	Recipient
Managing Unit	9269 - SEAE1
Grant Start Date / End Date	04/20/2015 to 05/31/2022
Original Grant Amount	3,600,000.00
Grant Amount	6,100,000.00
Outstanding Commitments	0.00
Cumulative Disbursements	4,747,581.11 as of 06/30/2021
Disbursed 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2021	973,801.29
Donor	TF602001 - MULTIPLE DONORS

This GRM report includes the following sections: Overview, Components, Outcome, Execution, Program(FCPFR), Disbursements.

OVERVIEW

Overall Assessments

Grant Objectives:

The objective of the grant is to assist Vanuatu to carry out readiness preparation activities by supporting the preparation of its REDD+ strategy through a participatory and inclusive process and by producing technical and policy advice to help strengthen sustainable land and forest management practices.

Overall progress from 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2021 with regard to Achieving Grant Objectives:

Comment:

During the reporting period, the project made progress in all its components covering several major activities such as advancement of the preparation of National REDD+ Strategy, organization of National Forest Inventory, generation of activity data on forest resources for establishing the National Forest Reference Level, design of the National Forest Monitoring System, and completion of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment and Environment and Social Management Framework through a participatory and inclusive process.

The progress in project activities translated into disbursement of about 16 percent of the total grant during the year and the cumulative disbursement was at 78 percent of the total grant at the end of FY21 (versus 62 percent by the end of FY20).

The REDD+ Unit, Project Management Unit (PMU), and Civil Society Organization (CSO) Platform actively coordinated to advance project implementation, stakeholder engagement, awareness building and knowledge dissemination. There has been demonstrated improvements in institutional capacity for implementation of REDD+ activities at the national and provincial levels.

The disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the progress on National Forest Inventory (NFI), development of National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), consultations on National REDD+ Strategy and the CSO Platform activities. To overcome the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 and the short time remaining for disbursing the grant prior to the project closure project on December 31, 2021, the Government of Vanuatu requested for extension of the grant by 5-month period from December 31, 2021 to May 31, 2022. The restructuring paper submitted for extension of the closing of the project to May 31, 2022 has been approved by the World Bank.

Overall progress from 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2021 with regard to Implementation of Grant Financed Activities:

Comment:

The implementation progress of the grant for the period is considered satisfactory taking into consideration of disruptions to the implementation of project activities from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grant follow-up and structure

Description and context of Grant:

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Plan Preparation Project (hereafter referred to as the "Project") became effective on April 20, 2015 with a US\$ 3.6 million grant from the FCPF Readiness Fund, which assists countries on readiness activities for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+). The project was restructured in 2017 to include a new component focusing on the establishment of a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), which also included organization of the National Forest Inventory (NFI), a critical element in the management of Vanuatu's forest resources. In 2018, an Additional Financing grant of US\$ 2.5 million was approved to strengthen the four project components funded through the parent grant.

Expected follow up (if any):

To complete the project activities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank approved the extension of the project closing date by 5 months from December 31, 2021 to May 31, 2022. The Project Development Objectives (PDO), project scope or the safeguard category remain unchanged, and no new safeguard policy has been triggered.

Comment on follow up:

The details of the activities under implementation under the four project components are described in detail below

under the components.

End Date of Last Site Visit:

n/a

During the period, due to travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual meetings were organized in lieu of the mission travel for extending the implementation support to the project.

Restructuring of Grant:

The grant was restructured in 2017 to include a new component focusing on establishment of a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS). In June 2020, the grant was extended by 18 months until December 31, 2021 and the Government of Vanuatu requested the World Bank to extend the grant by five months until May 31, 2022 to complete the work program impacted by the delays caused due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government request has been approved by the World Bank.

OUTCOME

Comments on outcome achieved from 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2021

See comments on achievements by component.

Grant Outcome Indicators

No Outcome indicators are defined or used for this grant.

COMPONENTS

Comment on planned and actual Output

n/a.

Comment on component Implementation Progress

Component 1 - Institutional Strengthening for REDD+ Management Arrangements at the National and Decentralized levels.

The National REDD+ unit in the Department of Forestry is the entity responsible for coordination of project implementation and the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the Department of Climate Change is responsible for fiduciary aspects of the project. The REDD+ Unit and the PMU closely coordinate to support project implementation. The REDD+ Unit mobilized support from different national and provincial agencies for REDD+ implementation, organized consultations and multisector dialogue involving several stakeholders. The PMU provided fiduciary support covering financial management, procurement, audit and reporting functions. The National Advisory Board (NAB) and the REDD+ Technical Committee extended technical advice to the project. The Provincial REDD+ Technical Committees (PTAC) were organized on Santo, Malekula, Efate, Erromango and Tana islands to facilitate coordination of diverse stakeholders such as women groups, CSO/NGOs, youth organizations, churches, farmer associations and provincial agencies implementing forestry, agriculture, livestock, fishery, tourism, environment and rural development work programs. The engagement of government, non-governmental agencies and diverse stakeholder groups enabled implementation of an inclusive REDD+ process and strengthened institutional capacity.

Component 2 - Strengthening of stakeholder engagement at the decentralized level

Engagement with diverse stakeholders on national REDD+ priorities is a major priority for the project. The Civil Society Organization (CSO) platform involving several CSOs has been engaged in project implementation with the support from Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organizations. A total of 28 CSO networks have been established on five islands and consultations with CSO members representing diverse stakeholder groups have been organized. The CSO Platform activities included support to multiple CSO Networks on islands to organize awareness activities on REDD+ implementation, NFI, forest resources management and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism for REDD+ has been established at the national and provincial levels. The Social and Environmental Safeguards Assessment (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) have been completed and several trainings and workshops were organized to strengthen the capacity of the project stakeholders, including the staff of the Department of Forestry and other government agencies. As part of communication, consultation and participation subcomponent, activities were implemented to raise awareness among various stakeholder groups; awareness programs using radio, TV and print-media were organized to enhance awareness on REDD+, sustainable forest resources management and climate change. The CSO platform and CSO networks are expected to continue with REDD+ awareness activities at national and provincial levels until the project closure.

Component 3 - Development of a REDD+ Strategy.

The analytical studies prepared to support the preparation of the national REDD+ strategy included - drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, REDD+ strategy options, land tenure and carbon rights, Non-timber forest products value chain and benefit sharing mechanism. The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Environmental and Social Framework (ESMF), Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and Process Framework (PF) have been finalized and the documents disclosed to public at the REDD+ Unit website. These studies along with consultations with diverse stakeholders served as valuable inputs for development of the national REDD+ strategy, which has been finalized and awaiting the endorsement of the Government of Vanuatu. The National REDD+ strategy is expected to be launched after the government's endorsement.

Component 4 - Establishment of National Forest Monitoring System.

The work programs of the National Forest Inventory (NFI) and the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) are in final stages of implementation. The NFI field work is has advanced significantly overcoming the COVID-19 related disruptions. The NFI and NFMS will strengthen Vanuatu's capacity for measurement, monitoring and reporting of forest resources and help to demonstrate the national preparedness for implementing REDD+ initiatives. The NFI field work and remote sensing-based activity data analysis of forest resources are in final stages of implementation and will form inputs to the development of the national forest reference emissions level/forest reference level that the Government of Vanuatu proposes to submit to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The work on forest information system covering database management system has been completed and safeguard information system is in progress as part of the plan to operationalize the NFMS. The UNIQUE Forest and Land Use consultant team has continued the support to building the technical capacity of the Department of Forestry in implementing NFI and NFMS. The project has also supported the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), training videos and reports to provide operational guidance on the implementation of NFMS. The preparation of REDD+ nesting guidelines is in progress to provide guidance on aligning REDD+ initiatives implemented at different scales and to ensure their environmental integrity. The project is advancing the development of Safeguard Information System to report progress on the national REDD+ implementation in line with the Cancun safeguards of the UNFCCC.

EXECUTION

Bank project related to the grant

Project ID / Name: P124806 - Vanuatu REDD Readiness Plan Preparation
Project Status: Lending
Global Focal Area: Climate change
Product Line: CN - Carbon Offset

Implementing agency and contact details

Agency: Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Biosecurity, Government of Vanuatu
Contact: Rexon VIRANAMANGGA; Brian Philipps
Address: Department of Forestry/REDD+ Unit, Agricultural Station, Airport Road, PMB 9064, Vanuatu
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Website:

PROGRAM

Program Specific Questions

1. Describe progress in how the Grant activities are being coordinated with other REDD+-related initiatives, including those funded by Describe progress in how the Grant activities are being coordinated with other REDD+-related initiatives, including those funded by others

During the year, FAO funded activities complemented REDD+ priorities of the Departments of Forestry, Environment and Agriculture. The continuation of COVID-19 pandemic during FY21 disrupted the technical assistance from external funding agencies.

2. Describe any important changes in the technical design or approach related to the Grant activities.
None.

3. Describe progress in addressing key capacity issues (implementation, technical, financial management, procurement) related to this Grant.

The project contributed to improve technical and institutional capacity of the Department of Forestry, its coordination with various government and non-government agencies and strengthened financial management and procurement capacity needed to implement activities under different components.

4. Describe progress in addressing social and environmental issues (including safeguards) related to the Grant. Is the SESA conducted in accordance with the Common Approach?

To assess the environmental and social implications of the REDD+ Strategy, the project supported preparation of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), and Process Framework (PF) in consultation with diverse stakeholder groups. The SESA has been conducted in accordance with the Common Approach.

The Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) for REDD+ has been established to seek feedback and to address grievances of stakeholders on REDD+ Readiness and implementation of REDD+ Strategy as well as options for benefit sharing mechanism have been outlined. The CSO Platform at the national level and CSO networks on islands organized activities to raise awareness on the accessibility of FGRM to stakeholders.

5. Is the ESMF prepared in accordance with the Common Approach?
Yes.

6. Describe progress in stakeholder consultation, participation, disclosure of information, and the FGRM related to this Grant.

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The project facilitated consultation and participation to raise awareness among various stakeholder groups and disseminated information on the implementation of REDD+ activities through radio, TV and print-media and facilitated the organization of FGRM to receive feedback and to respond to grievances of stakeholders on REDD+ Readiness activities and on REDD+ strategy implementation.

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements Summary in USD

Date From	Date To	Planned Cumulative	Planned Period	Actual Cumulative	Actual Period
01/01/2015	06/30/2015	0.00	0.00	185,632.08	185,632.08
07/01/2015	12/31/2015	0.00	0.00	185,632.08	0.00
01/01/2016	06/30/2016	0.00	0.00	362,540.11	176,908.03
07/01/2016	12/31/2016	0.00	0.00	634,327.68	271,787.57
01/01/2017	06/30/2017	0.00	0.00	829,264.86	194,937.18
07/01/2017	12/31/2017	0.00	0.00	1,404,639.54	575,374.68
01/01/2018	06/30/2018	0.00	0.00	1,789,888.48	385,248.94
07/01/2018	12/31/2018	0.00	0.00	1,929,169.24	139,280.76
01/01/2019	06/30/2019	0.00	0.00	2,498,791.75	569,622.51
07/01/2019	12/31/2019	0.00	0.00	3,272,646.69	773,854.94
01/01/2020	06/30/2020	0.00	0.00	3,773,779.82	501,133.13
06/30/2020	12/31/2020	0.00	0.00	4,438,250.30	664,470.48
01/01/2021	06/30/2021	0.00	0.00	4,747,581.11	307,330.81