

TAP Review of the R-Package submitted by Ghana  
Independent TAP-Expert Review<sup>1</sup> on the Self-Assessment Process  
of Ghana's R-Package

(August 2016)

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<sup>1</sup> This TAP Expert Review consisted of a desk review and correspondence with a few of the stakeholders involved in Ghana's REDD+ readiness process. The review was carried out by Peter Graham, independent TAP Expert, between August 15th and 23th, 2015.

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## Core Tasks of the TAP Expert Review

1. The present document contains the independent review by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) of the Self-Assessment Process of the R-Package<sup>2</sup> undertaken by Ghana through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation process. The purpose of the review is to assess both progress and achievements of REDD+ Readiness in the country, as well as the remaining challenges (if any) that will need to be addressed to effect the transition from Readiness to implementation of performance-based REDD+ activities.
2. The TAP-review is a background document for the Participants' Committee (PC) in its decision-making process to endorse the R-Package. The endorsement of the R-Package is a prerequisite for the formal submission of Ghana's Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) to the PC. The Ghana ER Programme will be implemented at the subnational level, aligning with the main cocoa production landscape and following the ecological boundaries of the core of the High Forest Zone (HFZ) (5.9 million hectares).

## Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review

3. This TAP Expert Review of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process of REDD+ in a country using the R-Package Assessment Framework follows those completed for Costa Rica<sup>3</sup> in September 2015 and DR Congo in April 2015. To maximize consistency among TAP Expert Reviews, the format of this review attempts to follow those previously completed. The TORs for the current TAP expert review are as follows:
  - Perform an independent, desk review of Ghana's self-evaluation of progress in REDD+ Readiness, using the framework of the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework for consistency;
  - Review Ghana's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process that was used for the self-assessment and the reported outcome;
  - Review key outputs and (documents that underpin) and are referenced in the R-Package, including documents pertaining to the national REDD strategy, the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), reference levels and forest monitoring, and national and institutional structures; and

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<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the R-Package is threefold: (i) Provide an opportunity to REDD Country Participants to self-assess the progress on REDD+ implementation; (ii) Demonstrate a REDD Country Participant's commitment to REDD+ Readiness; and (iii) Generate feedback and guidance to REDD Country Participants through a national multi-stakeholder self-assessment and Participants' Committee (PC) assessment processes. (FCPC Readiness Assessment Framework guide June 2013)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/October/1-Costa%20Rica%20TAP%20review%20of%20R-P%20Self%20assessment-English.pdf>

- Provide constructive and targeted feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in subcomponents, and propose actions going forward.
4. To perform this task, a simple methodology has been applied which consists of the following steps:
    - **Step A:** Review the self-evaluation of progress in REDD+ Readiness based on the readiness preparation summary by component, and assessment results found in Ghana's R-package report produced by the National REDD Secretariat.<sup>4</sup> Box 1 below provides the outlines of this report.
    - **Step B:** Review of the results from the multi-stakeholder R-Package self-assessment process, based on the same report (henceforth called Ghana's R-Package) under Step A.
    - **Step C:** Assess what still needs to be done to further develop the Readiness Process.
  5. The purpose of the TAP's expert review is not to second-guess the country's self-assessment, as this is based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process that was guided by the FCPF's readiness assessment framework.<sup>5</sup> The review should rather focus on determining whether a due process and approach was followed while performing the self-assessment, and provide constructive feedback to the FCPF Participants Committee. This report does not provide a detailed or comprehensive description of the components of Ghana's REDD+ Readiness components, as that information can be found in Ghana's R-Package itself, as well as earlier documentation available from Ghana's National REDD+ Secretariat and/or on the FCPF website.

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<sup>4</sup> National REDD+ Secretariat of Ghana, August 2016, Participatory Self-Assessment and Synthesis of Ghana's REDD+ Readiness Process (R-Package).

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, 2013, A Guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework.

*Box 1: Outline of the Ghana's R-Package report, including the Participatory Self-Assessment*

- Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Executive Summary
- 1. Introduction and Overview
- 2. Readiness Organization and Consultation
- 3. REDD+ Strategy Preparation
- 4. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Level
- 5. Monitoring Systems for Forests and Safeguards
- 6. Towards Results-based Actions
- 7. Overall Conclusions
- 8. Next Steps
- Annex I: Persons Consulted
- Annex II: References
- Annex III: Questions Used in the Self-Assessment Exercise
- Annex IV: Catalogue of Documents/Reports Produced Under Readiness Phase

NB. Sections 1-5 include separate sub-sections on (i) Progress and Major Achievements, which is the summary of readiness preparation and assessment results, and (ii) Results of Self-assessment, which constitutes the results of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process.

## TAP Review Part A: Review of the Self-Assessment Process and the Documentation

*This part of the TAP report provides feedback on the process and documentation of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment as described in Ghana's R-Package. A review of the results of the process is provided in the Part B.*

### **6. Self-Assessment process conducted according to the R-Package guidelines.**

Ghana's National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS) initiated the self-assessment process when it judged the country's readiness preparation well advanced, and after it had prepared all necessary outputs of the readiness preparation process and addressed issues identified at mid-term. The process followed the FCPF R-Package guidelines, based on the assessment criteria and diagnostic questions and the participation of a broad and representative cross-section of stakeholders.

The NRS engaged an independent, external consultant to facilitate the assessment by soliciting inputs from stakeholders through a series of consultation sessions from 21 to 29 April, 2016. The multi-stakeholder consultations took advantage of existing mechanisms established or engaged through Ghana's readiness preparation phase, including the groups shown in Table 1.

Following a series of participatory self-assessment sessions with each of the 4 groups, a meeting was held with Development Partner representatives (World Bank) for an overall assessment of progress of REDD+ process. A final session was held with a cross-section of the stakeholder groups to validate and triangulate the initial findings from the consultations. The final session served to ensure common interpretation of the assessment criteria and diagnostic questions, and thereby strengthen the results and understanding of their implications. The approach to generate the assessment's outcome is based on practices that were established for stakeholder consultations during the readiness preparation phase, including for Ghana's National REDD+ implementation mid-term progress report and request for additional funding (May 2014).

The 35 questions used to guide the self-assessment (listed in Annex III of Ghana's R-Package) are based on the FCPF R-Package guidelines but adjusted to suit local condition and national circumstances, including recognition of the link between REDD+ and Ghana's FLEGT processes, as well as greater consideration of gender throughout the readiness process.

*Table 1 Group composition and participation in R-Package stakeholder consultations sessions (see Annex I of Ghana's R-Package)*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Representation</b>
National REDD+ Secretariat	Climate Change Unit, Ghana Forestry Commission
National REDD+ Working Group	Forestry Commission Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning Ghana Timber Association Cocoa Board of Ghana KASA Ghana National House of Chiefs
National REDD+ Sub-Working Groups	Forestry Commission OLAM Ghana Ltd. IUCN Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC)
CSO, NGO and Private Sector Stakeholders	KASA Ghana ACTWAR Portal Forest Estates A Rocha Ghana National Forest Forum (NFF) IUCN Solidaridad West Africa (SWA)

A colour-coding system was used to evaluate progress on each of the questions for the self-assessment, with final scores derived from plenary discussions. Differing viewpoints, within or among the different groups, were reviewed during the validation session and scoring was updated to reflect common understanding if there had been different interpretation of the questions. Where the scores differ, the differing assessment is described in Ghana's R-Package, in summary in Section 1, and in greater detail in the sections for each sub-component.

### **7. Documents available to support self-assessment process**

Ghana's R-Package references, in Annex IV, the Catalogue of Documents/Reports Produced Under Readiness Phase (1&2). These documents, including consultancy reports and others prepared by the NRS, were either available on the website of the Ghana Forestry Commission<sup>6</sup> or NRS, or made available to the participants in the assessment prior to the consultation sessions (with sufficient time to review). The cross-section of stakeholders who participated in the assessment during the R-package preparation are very familiar with these reports; in particular, members of the various sub-working groups had detailed information on the various thematic areas assigned them.

### **8. Challenges during the self-assessment**

Ghana's R-Package identifies two challenges that emerged over the course of the self-assessments. The first challenge was that some of the questions were too long and complex in structure, with multiple, or compound descriptors. There was difficulty in concluding on an overall score when one or more of the descriptors could not be met. The second challenge concerned the fine line between REDD+ readiness and implementation of some sub-components, where proof of readiness, as suggested by FCPF guidance, would require implementation. This challenge affects the scoring for the Feedback, Grievance and Redress Mechanism (FGRM) as well as the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

### **9. Level of consensus**

As is generally the case for government-led processes, the civil society and private sector assessment (and scoring) of progress is generally more critical than that of the government stakeholders. However, according to Ghana's R-Package report, "the atmosphere was congenial, open and constructive." In some cases, a difference in opinion between government agencies is evident, which may also reflect pre-existing bias.

### **10. TAP Conclusions on self-assessment process, documentation and overall quality of the R-Package**

As shown in Figure 1 of Ghana's R-Package (*Key milestones of Ghana's REDD+ process*), Ghana has demonstrated significant acceleration in its readiness process over the last 3 years (Table

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fcghana.org>

2); advancing to completion (or near-completion) of key elements while addressing technical and procedural challenges (including some unexpected ones) along the way. Having followed the R-Package guidance for its mid-term evaluation of readiness in early 2014, the NRS and many members of the multi-stakeholder working groups were familiar with the format and expectations for this self-assessment of the R-Package. Ghana continues to push ahead, implementing projects under the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and preparing for the implementation of a large, sub-national REDD+ programme under the FCPF Carbon Fund (CF), while completing the remaining sub-components of its national Readiness Preparedness Plan. While this level of ambition creates its own challenges, the focus provided through practical implementation planning supports a practical, efficient and honest self-assessment of Ghana's readiness.

*Table 2 Overall progress in Ghana's REDD+ Readiness from Mid-term Report to R-Package assessment*

Component	Sub Component	Summary of scores	
		MTR 2014	R-Package 2016
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	Yellow	Yellow
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	Green	Green
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	Yellow	Green
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	Yellow	Green
	2c. Implementation Framework	Yellow	Orange
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	Yellow	Green
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	Yellow	Green
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	Yellow	Green
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	Orange	Yellow

- a) *The FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework was used appropriately and conscientiously during the self-assessment process. Its local relevance was improved through integration of existing mechanisms and processes, including those established through the readiness phase, as suggested by the FCPF framework itself.*

- b) *While the government representation outweighed NGO, Civil Society and private sector representation, the composition of individuals was sufficiently diverse to adequately represent the constituencies (e.g. based on their participation in various aspects and stages of the readiness phase).*
- c) *The information provided in the R-Package implies that the participants had a good degree of understanding of Ghana's readiness process and objectives, based on previous consultations and engagement in working groups. However, the need to correct misunderstandings during the validation session suggests that additional preparatory materials and/or discussion prior to the assessments could have improved the process (if not the outcome).*
- d) *The documents page of the NRS website (as part of the website of the Ghana Forestry Commission (GFC)) does not provide links to all of the documents that are available on the GFC website (or via the FCPF website).*
- e) *According to Ghana's R-package, the stakeholder process was well-organized and well-facilitated. In addition to clear and useful assessments on readiness progress, the discussions were able to reveal common views on deficiencies and ways to address them.*
- f) *The whole group of participants had an opportunity to review the first draft of the R-Package self-assessment, as received from the consultant. Some members of the group partook in the review that produced the latest version.*

## TAP Review Part B: Summary of the REDD+ Processes – Strengths and Weaknesses of the R-Package as highlighted by Ghana's self-assessment

*This part of the TAP review focuses on the self-assessment results; progress indicators for the nine subcomponents, significant achievements and areas requiring further development.*

### Readiness Organization and Consultation

#### **11. Sub-Component 1A: National REDD+ Management Arrangements (Questions 1-6) {Yellow}**

Ghana's R-Package describes the National REDD+ Management structures, including the roles and responsibilities of the NRS, the National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) and the seven Sub-Working Groups that cover the range of thematic areas. The overall assessment is that this sub-component is progressing well but further progress is required in a couple of areas, notably in completing the overarching policy and legal framework for implementation and in securing sustainable and predictable finance for implementation of all aspects of REDD+ in Ghana. Section 2.1.1 of Ghana's R-Package includes a Table summarizing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats raised by stakeholders in response to the assessment questions.

The national REDD+ Secretariat has shown effective leadership in managing Ghana's REDD+ readiness process, as seen through the change in multi-stakeholder self-assessment scores shown in Table 2 above. It is evident that Civil Society's and NGOs interest in Ghana's REDD+ plans have moved from being resistant to supportive with several collaborations taking place within the landscape for REDD+ implementation, including in the completion of Ghana's REDD+ Strategy. An example of the strength of the management structure, in terms of its ability to respond and adapt to needs, is the Sub-Working Group on Gender that was formed in 2015 as a response to growing demands to prioritize and strengthen gender considerations. The R- Package does not provide information regarding the level of functional effectiveness of this Sub-Working group on Gender. The self-assessment also gave high marks to *Accountability and Transparency* and to *Technical supervision capacity*. It is also noteworthy that the progress over the last few years took place while there was significant turn-over within the staff of the NRS, including its head.

The main element of this sub-component that requires further development, and for which many groups (other than the NRS) felt that was not progressing well, is a *Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM)*. A preliminary assessment of options was carried out during the readiness phase but the design of the FGRM has not concluded. To address this, a consultancy assignment is currently ongoing towards the design of operational modalities for the FGRM (expected completion in October 2016). As the readiness of this element is difficult to assess without implementation, the NRS intends to test the FGRM design in the sub-national, emissions-reduction programme (ERP) area.

In the assessment of progress on *Funds management capacity*, it is notable that the NRS was less confident than the NRWG, NGOs and private sector, given that there have been no problems identified through financial audits or by the Projects Oversight Committee of the Forestry Commission. This points instead to two important requirements that have been identified needing further work: institutional arrangements for the administration and management of carbon revenue in Ghana, and the lack of sustainable and predictable funding for the National REDD+ Secretariat and associated management arrangements and activities. The Terms of Reference for a consultancy to address the first requirement, e.g. a 'National Fund Management Arrangement', has been developed but the timeline is unclear. To avoid raising expectations (once again), this work may wait until programme finance is secured. To address the second requirement, sufficient and predictable funding, the assessment calls for greater recognition and budget support for the NRS mandate within the Forestry Commission and its parent Ministry (MLNR) and by the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council (ENRAC). The challenge of ENRAC's inactivity is a significant one, preventing necessary, cross-sector integration of policy reform at the national level. This challenge was noted during the Mid-Term Assessment and there is greater hope now for action as Ghana works to implement strategies to meet its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and take advantage of REDD+ payment incentives.

In order to achieve greater recognition within the government's central agencies, it was acknowledged by some stakeholders, including the NRS, that there needs to be continued

effort to mainstream REDD+ in the consciousness and regular business of other government agencies, “to enhance the effectiveness of cross-sectoral collaboration in terms of actually generating change within institutions and sectors beyond forestry”.

*Table 3 SWOT analysis of NRS (from Ghana's REDD+ R-Package)*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretariat has a lean, nimble and cohesive team with a clear focus and mandate:</li> <li>• There is strong internal buy-in and support within the FC, at both the operational and leadership levels.</li> <li>• Great support from NRWG which has a diverse pool of expertise and experiences across several relevant agencies; and</li> <li>• Favourable policy environment that supports Climate Change initiatives/actions in Ghana.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional interconnectedness in the land-use sector at multiple levels via formal structures for inter-sectoral collaboration;</li> <li>• Strong partnerships forged with donors, private sector &amp; CSOs; and</li> <li>• Strong linkage of REDD strategy to national development agenda</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of the Climate Change Unit (which hosts the NRS) at Forestry Commission’s Executive Management Team (EMT) level;</li> <li>• Challenges with technical capacity/logistics;</li> <li>• Lack of sustainable and predictable finance</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak law enforcement; as well as increasing rates of illegal mining and illegal logging activities;</li> <li>• Lack of sustainable and predictable funding</li> </ul>

Overall, the TAP finds that Ghana’s National REDD+ Management Arrangements are well developed and functioning as needed, with the positive contributions from, and collaborations with, civil society and private sector groups and representatives. Where there are exceptions to this progress, for the FGRM and sustainable / predictable funding, plans are in place that should lead to resolving them. Further progress and successful implementation will depend on the functionality of ENRAC for cross-sectoral coordination.

**12. Sub-Component 1B: Consultation, Participation and Outreach (Questions 7-10) Green**

The R-Package provides a comprehensive description of Ghana’s progress and processes for consultation, participation and outreach in its REDD+ readiness work. Overall, this sub-component was viewed to have achieved significant progress and continues to perform very well. Civil society / NGO stakeholders recognized this progress while also noting that more could be done “to deepen and broaden consultation and engagement to all parts of the country”.

The strengths of the Consultation, Participation and Outreach sub-component had already been demonstrated by the time of the mid-term assessment and were further demonstrated through the implementation of a well-designed communication strategy<sup>7</sup>. Evidently, based on the results of the group discussions and assessments, the communications campaign and active participation of civil society and private sector in various aspects of the readiness process and ERP development has overcome earlier resistance to the concept of REDD+ in Ghana and successfully engaged key partners in collaboration. Key strengths include the integration of REDD+ consultations with related initiatives such as the FIP and VPA/FLEGT processes. This integration was not only pragmatic operationally, it enabled sharing of experience across initiatives and actively engaged the members of the NRWG (which is a key decision-making body for all matters of REDD+ in Ghana) who were responsible for coordinating those initiatives. Another major strength in the on-going process on consultations has been the development of a database of REDD+ actors “for the purpose of enhancing networking, sharing of experiences, knowledge exchange, opening of feedback channels as well as assisting in the development of effective capacity building programmes.” While the R-Package self-assessment process did not involve a large number of civil society representatives from local levels, the existing civil society and platforms for community outreach, (such as The National Forest Forum, Forest Fora, Civic Response, Forest Watch Ghana and traditional authorities and Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) institutions), which operate at national, regional and local levels, have been used for dissemination of REDD+ information to forest communities and other stakeholders.

In addition to playing a key, participatory role in the completion of Ghana’s REDD+ Strategy, CSOs supported the development of the REDD+ safeguard instruments, which included a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF).

The communications and outreach strategy has also been successful in using a wide range of approaches, including radio, non-printed media, “plain-language” guides (REDD+ Digest), and public events and even using local musicians to publicize and popularize the messages. Developing awareness among the population, as well as a common language for REDD+ in the country, should help to maintain broad political interest in these issues.

Ghana’s R-Package notes that the Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) of the FIP is expected to provide local communities with financial and learning resources to support their participation under the FIP, which significantly complements REDD+. The DGM should, therefore, assist Ghana to fully achieve the objectives outlined in its R-PP but there is insufficient detail provided in the R-Package to assess the likelihood or degree of impact. In addition to the VPA/FLEGT and FIP, Ghana’s R-Package describes synergies with other projects and initiatives, which included collaboration with IUCN to develop and communicate a Gender Roadmap (2013) and Gender Action Plan (2015).

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Ama Kudom-Agyemang October, 2013. Redd-Plus Communication Strategy

Communications, participation and outreach effort will continue to be challenged by the usual limits on funding, availability or access to participants, as well as shifts in political interests, but it appears that the current strategy is robust. The testing of the FGRM and benefit-sharing through the implementation of the Cocoa-Forest ERP will likely prove to be the next test of readiness of this sub-component.

Overall, the TAP find that the progress in this sub-component demonstrates a strong degree of independence of the ongoing improvement of readiness, capacity building and refinement of plans through effective engagement of local institutions and stakeholders (government, civil society, NGO and private sector).

## REDD+ Strategy Preparation

### **13. Sub-Component 2A: Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance (Questions 11-16) {Green}**

Overall, this sub-component was viewed to have achieved significant progress and Ghana has already begun to apply the results of the assessment to a large-scale, subnational ERP submitted to the FCPF Carbon Fund for consideration (Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme). The assessment and analysis of historical land use and drivers has been built on many years of analytical work, including in the development of Ghana's REDD+ Strategy, and there was a high degree of agreement among stakeholders that there was now a good understanding of the drivers and the links between drivers and REDD+ strategy options. Based on the 'yellow' scoring by NRWG, while not stated explicitly in the R-Package, it appears that some stakeholders view that there were few areas where further work is needed. Some see a need for the REDD+ strategy to go into more detail in describing how specific actions will be undertaken (e.g., "how tree tenure will be strengthened in legal reviews and how this will be linked at the field level to supporting broader measures around FLEGT").

However, among the many significant developments there was broad recognition that plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure and governance required further development, despite some progress to-date. The group of NGO and private sector stakeholders scored this element as 'orange' while the NRS and NRWG felt that, while not complete, the development of such plans was progressing well. Part of the reason for this difference of assessments may be a result of the problems with the first attempt at a REDD+ Strategy, which have since been largely overcome. The most difficult issues to resolve are not only technical and may take longer to resolve at the national level unless a clear plan is agreed and high level bureaucratic and political support is strong. The context of the Paris Agreement and Ghana's submission of its INDC, as well as Ghana's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies

(2014-2020): An agenda for Transformation<sup>8</sup>, constitute a major opportunity to address the complex, unresolved issues of natural resource rights, tree tenure, and governance.

Overall, the TAP finds that Ghana's R-Package provides an accurate assessment of the progress for this sub-component and recognizes the need for a concrete action plan for addressing the outstanding barriers to the legal and policy issues associated with forest law, policy and governance, and with a sense of urgency. Ghana's R-Package provides an outline of such an action plan but does not provide many details. There is an implicit reliance on the Natural Resources and Environmental Governance - Technical Assistance (NREG-TA) initiative to advise on any changes to legislation that are likely to be required to operationalize carbon rights. The responsibility for assessing the implications of current land and tree tenure arrangements for the allocation of carbon rights is in the hands of the National Expert Consultation on Allocation of Terrestrial Carbon Rights which is outside of the NRS. This challenge of mixed responsibilities (with different time lines) was noted in the mid-term assessment, and calls for enhanced inter-governmental collaboration. The inter-sectoral Technical Coordinating Committee-Plus (TCC+) has a clear role to play here, as the body established to oversee and guide the policy and institutional coordination of environmental and natural resource governance across the various government institutions.

#### **14. Sub-Component 2B: REDD+ Strategy Options (Questions 17-19) {Green}**

Overall, as with the previous sub-component, this sub-component was viewed to have achieved significant progress and Ghana has already begun to apply the REDD+ Strategy, elaborating the national strategy in the ERP Document (ERPD) for the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme and integrating it into the national policy framework. Ghana's REDD+ Strategy consists of 13 strategy options that have been amalgamated into 3 priority strategic interventions. Three programmatic approaches have also been identified based on ecological zones and the drivers of deforestation associated with them. In this way, Ghana has developed a strategy for scaling-up implementation of REDD+ actions after the initial implementation of the Cocoa-Forest Programme in the High Forest Zone and cocoa growing areas.

At the time of Ghana's mid-term assessment, a consulting group (PwC) had just begun the large task of preparing a REDD+ Strategy for Ghana. After some setbacks in the process and the active participation of the various REDD+ stakeholder groups, and after a thorough SESA process the Strategy was finalized. The self-assessment scores indicate that further work is needed to associate the emissions reduction potential of the Strategy and its component interventions. Despite the success in synchronizing other related elements of Ghana's readiness process, and the regular interaction among the working groups and/or contractors, the work on the Reference Emissions Level / Reference Level (REL/RL), (biomass data in particular), was not completed in time to complete the calculations. Given that the development of the REL/RL is

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<sup>8</sup>GoG 2014. Ghana's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2014-2020): An agenda for Transformation, by H.E. John Dramani Mahama. <http://www.presidency.gov.gh/coord.pdf> (referenced in Ghana's R-Package)

near completion, the ‘further progress required’ appears to be achievable within the year (2016).

The R-Package notes during the self-assessment a “thorough analysis of costs and benefits was lacking, as by that time, the World Bank had yet to issue operational guidance on how this could be accomplished”. However, the FCFP FMT has held a couple of sessions to familiarize the Government of Ghana on the use of cost/benefit analysis tools. It could be useful to conduct such an analysis once the emissions reduction potential has also been determined. Also, it may be worthwhile to update the Strategy once (/assuming) the Forest and Wildlife Bill is passed by the Ghanaian Parliament, as this could allow the incorporation of more definitive plans based on potential provisions regarding tree tenure and benefit sharing.

#### **15. Sub-Component 2c: Implementation Framework (Questions 20-23) {Orange}**

There was widespread recognition among the stakeholders that good progress has been made towards adoption and implementation of legislation or regulation, establishment of a benefit-sharing mechanism, and development of other policy tools within the implementation framework. However, significant work remains before the national implementation framework is complete, including the resolution of debates over tree and carbon tenure, rights for CREMAs to manage forest and wildlife resources at the local level, and the development of a database to register project information and track REDD+ activities. The self-assessment of progress has been scored worse / lower than at the time of the mid-term assessment, which implies that progress has slowed and potentially gone backwards for this sub component. Given that this is a self-assessment, it is possible that the difference is in relative expectations and a deeper appreciation of the challenges at this time.

A certain amount of necessary background work has already been done during the readiness phase to support the development of the framework. Key achievements include the recognition of REDD+, as a pathway for emissions reductions, in Ghana’s Forest and Wildlife Policy of 2012 and the National Climate Change Policy of 2013. REDD+ features prominently in Ghana's NDC, thanks to the representation of the NRS on the interdepartmental technical team. Efforts are also currently underway to develop a Low Carbon Development Strategy for Ghana, with a series of national level stakeholder consultations already conducted.

At this time, the level of integration of REDD+ into Ghana’s high-level, national policy and plans represents significant progress. However, the implementation framework is not yet completely operational as there is, as yet, no definition of carbon rights, national benefit-sharing mechanism, though current legislative processes and ongoing work by the NREG-TA are intended to address these issues. National guidelines have been issued and adopted for feedback and grievance redress mechanisms (FGRM) and a consultancy has been commissioned (expected to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2017) to facilitate the process for the design and set-up of a national fund management arrangements for REDD+.

- The elaboration of such implementation guidelines in the Cocoa-Forest ERP may be considered as a step-wise approach to developing the associated national level guidelines, particularly if national legislative and policy processes take much longer to run their course.

There is no national benefit sharing mechanism in place at this time but the plan is to test proposed benefit sharing arrangements in the Cocoa-Forest ERP before finalizing the design of national level benefit sharing arrangements. This will also be linked to the national guidelines for FGRM described in the R-Package. Studies commissioned by NRS, IUCN and other partners have led to the recommendation and testing of three options applicable to Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA), Modified Taungya System (MTS) and Commercial Forest Plantation Development (CFPD).

There is no national REDD+ registry and activity monitoring system but Ghana has contracted a consultant to develop a data management system (REDD+ Registry) for the Cocoa-Forest ERP and this assignment is expected to be completed by September 2016. The R-Package describes the functions of the system, including a link to Ghana's National Climate Change Data Hub, which is operated by Ghana's EPA.

- While it is not surprising that the higher-level, legal and policy tools are taking more time to develop, the TAP suggests that greater clarity and detail in the plans to complete the policy tools (and/or resolve outstanding legal issues) is needed, with contingency plans for those elements that are at the highest risk of further delay.

#### **16. Sub-Component 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts (Questions 24-26) {Green}**

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) Report<sup>9</sup> and the Environmental and Social Management Framework<sup>10</sup> for Ghana's REDD+ process were completed in 2014. The SESA and Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)<sup>11</sup> were updated in 2016 to align the REDD+ Strategy that was completed in 2015. All stakeholders agreed that the SESA and ESMF processes met a high standard in both process and reporting. As stated in the R-Package, "there was a universal recognition of the clear links between the outcomes of the SESA and the selection of strategy options within the National REDD+ Strategy." With regard to Question 26 (seeking evidence that the ESMF is in place and operating), the assessment concluded that this criterion could only be met upon implementation of REDD+ activities, rather than readiness activities. As such, Ghana plans to implement the ESMF at the ERP level and scale up to the national level.

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<sup>9</sup> SAL Consult Ltd, SAL Consult Ltd, 2014. REDD mechanism in Ghana. Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Final Report Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

<sup>10</sup> SAL Consult Ltd. 2014. REDD+ mechanism in Ghana: Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Final Report. Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Republic of Ghana.

<sup>11</sup> SAL Consult Ltd, 2014. REDD mechanism in Ghana. Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF). Final Report. Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Republic of Ghana

The consultation process covered six regions that covered the three major ecological zones (High forest, Transition and Savannah). The consultation approach was designed to appreciate gender issues related to REDD+ at the community level and level of interaction with Regional/District Forest Services Division managers (essentially the front-line staff for the Ghana Forest Commission). Through the consultation process, it was found that the implementation of REDD+ related actions created a potential risk of resettlement of people living within forest reserves. As this would trigger World Bank operational safeguard policies, for resettlement in off-reserve areas, a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) was developed.

## Reference Emissions Level / Reference Level (FRL)

### **17. Sub-Component 3a: Reference Emissions Level / Reference Level (Questions 27-29) {Green}**

Ghana is following a stepwise approach towards the development of a national FRL, which they expect to complete by December 2016. They have started with a FRL that covers the Cocoa-Forest ERP accounting area. Despite some setbacks in the original plan for the development of the FRL, with additional FCPF readiness funds granted after Ghana's mid-term report the NRS was able to complete the development of the tools and acquisition of data necessary for a FRL that included both deforestation, forest degradation and carbon stocks enhancement. Ghana's R-Package outlines a plan (from June to December 2016) for the completion of Ghana's national FRL (see Table 11, Section 4.1.1).

According to the self-assessment, and based on the body of work described in Ghana's R-Package (including a set of Standard Operating Procedures in line with UNFCCC and IPCC best practices), the subnational FRL presented in the report was prepared following a clearly documented methodology. The average annual emissions from 2000-2015 for the Cocoa-Forest ERP accounting area were 37.1 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr. The TAP review of Ghana's Cocoa-Forest ERPD will be able to go into greater depth and detail in assessing the appropriateness of the methodology, data and assumptions used in determining the FRL for the ERP accounting area. There is insufficient information in Ghana's R-Package report for such a technical assessment and the publically available documentation is currently limited to the report from Indufor Oy (2015)<sup>12</sup> and the original Terms of Reference for their contract. It is notable (though perhaps not surprising given the highly technical nature of this component) that only the NRS and Sub-Working Groups participated in the assessment consultations, with the participation of only 3 non-government representatives (Olam, IUCN and NCRC).

## Monitoring System for Forests and Safeguards

### **18. Sub-Component 4a: National Forest Monitoring (Questions 30-32) {Green}**

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<sup>12</sup> Indufor Oy, 2015. Development of Reference Emissions Levels and Measurement, Reporting and Verification System in Ghana FC/FCPF/MRV/REL/RFP/01/2013. Final Report.

The National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) is not yet operational as its final design will be closely linked to the design of the FRL and will follow the same methodology. There was general agreement among the participants in the self-assessment process that the design of the NFMS, follows latest good practices and IPCC/UNFCCC guidance and requirements for monitoring deforestation, degradation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Section 5.1.1 of Ghana's R-Package begins with a statement that is not consistent with the rationale for the NFMS described in the Guide to FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, which states the overall objective of the NFMS is to "generate information that allows comparison of changes in forest area and carbon content (and associated greenhouse (GHG) emissions) relative to the baseline estimates used for the REL/RL." Ghana's R-Package states that the overall objective of the NFMS "to develop a monitoring, reporting and verification system that allows for transparent accounting of emissions and removals of CO<sub>2</sub> through time that can be compared against the projected reference scenario." While the practical differences between these two rationales do not appear to follow through to the actual design of the NFMS as presented in Ghana's R-Package, there may be valuable, non-REDD+, uses or opportunities lost as a result of the conflation of the two systems: Monitoring vs. Measurement, Reporting and Verification.

*[NB.] A robust and transparent national forest monitoring system can contribute to strengthen forest governance and to further consider counter measures to deforestation and forest degradation. The development of an operational forest monitoring system is a long-term effort, generally serves multiple purposes (e.g., natural resource management more generally), and commonly entails a combination of remote sensing and field-based data collection from the national forest inventory or other sources. A national forest monitoring system assimilates data collected nationally and locally (e.g., through sampling in community-managed forests), helps build trust among local constituencies via a participatory approach, and contributes to the national GHG inventory that countries report to UNFCCC in their National Communications and Biennial Update Reports.<sup>13</sup>*

As with the FRL, while the R-Package contains descriptive information, there is insufficient information (or detail) in the report to provide a technical assessment to compare with the multi-stakeholder assessment. For example, while it is evident from the descriptions that a range of data sources, both ground based surveys and satellite sensors, contribute activity data, it is unclear as to how the collection of that data will continue as part of an ongoing monitoring plan. In addition, the methodology descriptions for monitoring (forests and associated activities) and measuring (the GHG emissions and removals resulting from six activities) can be

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<sup>13</sup> Guide to FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, 2013

difficult to follow. The TAP review of the Cocoa-Forest ERPDP can be expected to provide a more detailed and useful assessment based on more detailed information.

The self-assessment concludes that clear roles and responsibilities have been agreed regarding the operations of the NFMS, and the R-Package includes a graphic to support this, yet there is much hidden in the function “Implement SOPs”<sup>14</sup> However, the system will require significant running costs, institutional support and capacity and none of these parameters have yet been fully tested.

Overall, as the NFMS is not yet operational and waiting on the completion of the FRL, the judgement on the progress of Ghana’s NFMS is limited to the evidence of the parts which are expected to make up the whole NFMS. In addition to the concerns noted above, the TAP suggests that there are a couple of risks that could be addressed in the design – (i) adequate and predictable funds to support the operation of the NFMS, and (ii) the long term commitment of institutions responsible for data collection.

**19. Sub-Component 4b: Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards (Questions 33-35) {Yellow}**

As noted previously, Ghana has completed the SESA/ESMF processes and produced a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and will be applying a Feedback, Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) at the programme level before scaling up. A REDD+ safeguard information system (SIS), following the relevant UNFCCC rules and guidance, was not anticipated at the time of Ghana’s R-PP endorsement but a consulting firm has been engaged to design and develop Ghana’s SIS. The assignment is expected to be completed by October, 2016. This process, clearly described in Section 5.2.1 of Ghana’s R-Package, will be able to take advantage of an existing project that is developing a country-led safeguards approach (CSA), which meets both international and national commitments to address and respect safeguards.

The consultations and assessments for the SESA and ESMF have achieved significant progress in identifying relevant non-carbon aspects and social and environmental issues associated with Ghana’s REDD+ Strategy. Implementation of the REDD+ Strategy options plus the development of Ghana’s SIS will continue to advance the development of this sub-component by increasing transparency and coordination of data collection and sharing. As with the NFMS, there remains some uncertainty about the adequacy and predictability of funds to support the operation of the SIS and associated mechanisms.

## TAP Review Part C: Summary Assessment and Recommendation

Based on the documents consulted, the TAP reviewer is of the opinion that the combination of the R-package self-assessment report (produced by Ghana’s National REDD+ Secretariat), which

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<sup>14</sup> Standard Operating Procedures. A set of twelve were developed by Indufor Oy (2015)

incorporates the multi-stakeholder self-assessments, provides an accurate picture of REDD+ Readiness progress in Ghana.

Apart from documenting considerable progress in a number of REDD+ Readiness elements, Ghana has conducted the self-evaluation process and presented its R-Package at this time in order to move forward with its Cocoa-Forest Emissions Reductions Programme (ERP). Therefore, the self-assessment also serves as a means to identify, prioritize and plan how to complete the development of REDD+ Readiness elements.

There appears to be a significant degree of consensus among Ghana's REDD+ stakeholder groups. While civil society and private sector representatives were slightly less optimistic or slightly more critical of assessments of progress, this was not consistent across the Readiness components or criteria. This would suggest that the NRS is succeeding in enabling an open and participatory process.

The self-assessment clearly described the need and challenges to developing Ghana's national REDD+ implementation framework. Legislative and multi-sector policy and planning processes tend to be relatively slow moving and outside the remit of the NRS. Therefore, the self-assessment process serves to highlight the importance of engaging effectively with other government departments and sector representatives in order to mainstream REDD+ considerations within their scope of work and responsibility. The integration of REDD+ in Ghana's NDC, and the involvement of the NRS in national climate change policy processes is a good sign and an excellent opportunity to 'mainstream' REDD+ in the suite of climate change policies and measures.

Overall, the plans outlined for addressing outstanding deficiencies in Ghana's REDD+ Readiness appear well conceived and, subject to the availability of funding and continued political support, further progress is expected. Ghana has made considerable progress since the mid-term report and evaluation, despite a few surprises and setbacks along the way.

Ghana's continued push for an ambitious timetable – at this time, to begin implementing the Cocoa-Forest ERP as soon as program is formally included in Carbon Fund– has helped bring stakeholders onside with the REDD+ agenda due to the focus on practical, land-based solutions to address climate change and economic development at the community and national level.

## Annex I. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CERSGIS	Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System
CCU	Climate Change Unit
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
ENRAC	Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council
ENREG	Environmental and Natural Resource Governance
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Emissions Reduction Programme
ER-PIN	Emissions Reductions - Programme Idea Note
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Programme
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FMT	Facility Management Team
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
FPP	Forest Preservation Programme
FSD	Forest Services Division
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HFZ	High Forest Zone
IKI	International Climate Initiative (of the German Government)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MESTI	Ministry of Environment Science, Technology and Innovation
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRWG	National REDD+ Working Group
NREG-TA	Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Technical Assistance
POC	Project Oversight Committee
PS	Private Sector
PwC	Price WaterhouseCoopers Ltd
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and conservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
FRL	Forest Reference Level
REL	Reference Emission Level
RL	Reference Level
RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
R-Package	REDD+ Readiness Package
SECO	Swiss Economic Cooperation Organisation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWG	REDD+ Sub Working Group
TCC+	Technical Coordinating Committee- Plus
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

## Annex II. Additional Documents consulted

Independent Evaluation of REDD+ Readiness at Mid-Term  
 Development of REDD+ Communication Strategy  
 Establishment of Benefit Sharing  
 Development of Measurement, Reporting and Verification System  
 Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)  
 Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)  
 Development of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)  
 Development of Dispute Resolution Mechanism (GRM)  
 Ghana's REDD+ Strategy