



# Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

## Technical Assessment: Final ER-PD for Republic of Congo

June 19, 2016

# Presentation of TAP

The technical assessment of ERDP of the Republic of Congo was conducted since June 2016 through reviewing two draft versions; the review of the final ER-PD was conducted between 4 May and 19 May 2017

The TAP team:

- Juergen Blaser – Switzerland (Team Lead/Policy Issues)
- Till Neeff - Italy (Carbon accounting)
- Pacifique Mukumba - DRC (Safeguards)
- Matthieu Wemaere - Belgium (Legal aspects)

# Overall assessment of final ER-PD

		1 <sup>st</sup> full Assessment	2 <sup>nd</sup> assessment	Indicators not met
II. Level of Ambition	YES	3	3	
	NO			
	N.A.			
III. Carbon Accounting	YES	33	34	9.1; 10.3; 18.2; 21.1
	NO	5	4	
	N.A.	5	5	
IV. Safeguards	YES	3	6	
	NO	3		
	N.A.	1	1	
V. Sustainable Program Design and Implementation	YES	11	12	
	NO	1		
	N.A.	2	2	
VI. ER Program Transactions	YES	10	10	
	NO			
	N.A.	1	1	

## II. Level of Ambition

Ind. 2.1 The Accounting Area is of **significant scale** and aligns with one or more jurisdictions; or a national-government-designated area (e.g., ecoregion) or areas.

**YES**

- ER program designed for **future** social and economic development in the region
- Still work in progress:
  - Forthcoming discussions on national principles and action plans in respect to agro-business development (presumably in August 2017).
  - Open issues in respect to address mitigating environmental concerns in the mining sector have been recently solved (cancellation of 3 permits in the NP).

# III. Carbon Accounting

**Ind. 9.1 Uncertainty** associated with activity data and emission factors is quantified using accepted international standards, for example by providing accuracy, confidence interval, distribution of error, and propagation of error. Where errors in data and methods are considered large as defined in IPCC Guidelines, Monte Carlo methods (numerical simulations) should be used to estimate uncertainty.

**NO**

- The ER-PD underestimates total error in historical emissions measurement with the current 16.98% of mean historical emissions at the 90% level. Two possible explanations include:
    - Activity data error is reported at 4% only. The TAP notes that possibly a series of aggregating and disaggregating operations may have treated errors incorrectly. This should be verified once more.
    - The Monte Carlo analysis for error aggregation in historical emissions measurement used a uniform error distribution and not the normal distribution → this is leading to significant underestimation of error.
- As other countries face the same issues, this could eventually be addressed through capacity building in the first stage of ERPA implementation

# III. Carbon Accounting

<b>Ind. 10.3</b> The ER Program explains what steps are intended in order for the Reference Level to achieve consistency with the country's existing or emerging greenhouse gas inventory.	<b>NO</b>
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- Work is ongoing for the programme approach and national data collection efforts to inform each other, notably regarding the UNFCCC forest reference emissions level. Such work could also become useful for the national GHG inventory.
  - The ER-PD does not currently discuss the relation to the national GHG inventory beyond a generic statement.
- TAP view: A lot of information is given about linking ERPD and FREL – but nothing in respect to ERPD and GHG inventory (which could be important for the future)

# III. Carbon Accounting

**Ind. 11.1** The **end-date for the Reference Period** is the most recent date prior to two years before the TAP starts the independent assessment of the draft ER Program Document and for which forest-cover data is available to enable IPCC Approach 3. An alternative end-date could be allowed only with convincing justification, e.g., to maintain consistency of dates with a Forest Reference Emission Level or Forest Reference Level, other relevant REDD+ programs, national communications, national ER program or climate change strategy.

**YES**

- The ER-PD clearly complies with the indicators for the reference period, nonetheless the TAP found their assessment difficult.
  - The methodological framework refers in several places to ‘adjustments above annual historical emissions during the reference period’. But the reference level is not actually calculated based on the historical average emissions during the reference period. Rather, it is calculated from a model of likely future emission trends with several components.
- Historical emissions refer to the period of 2003-2012. In addition data from 2013-2015 are used to justify the adjustment; this is an acceptable approach.

# III. Carbon Accounting

**Ind. 13.3** For countries meeting the eligibility requirements in Indicator 13.2, a **Reference Level could be adjusted** above the average historical emission rate over the Reference Period. Such an adjustment is credibly justified on the basis of **expected emissions that would result from documented changes in ER Program circumstances**, evident before the end-date of the Reference Period, but the effects of which were not fully reflected in the average annual historical emissions during the Reference Period. Proposed adjustments may be rejected for reasons including, but not limited to: i. The basis for adjustments is not documented; or ii. Adjustments are not quantifiable.

**YES**

- The approach taken in the ER-PD to quantify future emission trends relies on **complex models and excel sheets that are difficult to follow**. Models aim to predict future road expansion, population growth, future concession management and their impacts on forest change. They present a well-intended effort to arrive at emission estimates. Nonetheless, the considerable complexity hampers the ability to follow calculations carried out.
- An **approach towards more simplicity** would introduce more transparency about limitations to what is achievable.



# III. Carbon Accounting

Ind. 18.2 Emissions from forest degradation are accounted for where such emissions are more than 10% of total forest-related emissions in the Accounting Area, during the Reference Period and during the Term of the ER-PA. These emissions are estimated using the best available data (including proxy activities or data).	<b>NO</b>
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- The ER-PD does yet not demonstrate how effective ER programme design and implementation will mitigate significant reversal risks beyond the term of the ERPA.
  - Once the term of the ERPA concludes, the funding sources may no longer be available. Such kinds of risks need to be taken into account
- TAP view: the risk of non-performance beyond the CF terms should simply not be completely ignored and at least discussed and potentials explored.

# III. Carbon Accounting

<b>Ind. 21.1</b> The ER Program Monitoring Plan and Monitoring system are technically capable of <b>identifying Reversals</b> .	<b>NO</b>
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- Programme monitoring includes a quantification of emissions from forest degradation and deforestation, which implies the ability to identify reversals.
- In addition, the programme will monitor reversals for each verification, where reversals that exceed **5%** of total forest area put accounting for emission reductions on hold.
- The threshold of 5% of total forest area in the programme area for a particular “event” amounts to 600,000 ha, corresponding to about 60 years of baseline deforestation rates.

→ TAP view: 5% is rated very high and unrealistic and needs at least to be explained

## IV. Safeguards

Ind 24.1 The ER Program demonstrates through its design and implementation how it **meets relevant World Bank social and environmental safeguards**, and promotes and supports the safeguards included in UNFCCC guidance related to REDD+, by paying particular attention to Decision 1/CP.16 and its Appendix I as adopted by the UNFCCC

**YES**

- Overall well elaborated and explained
- Institutional arrangements for SIS still need to be created
- The forthcoming due diligence process still need to look at the grievance mechanism.

# V. Sustainable Program Design and Implementation

<b>Ind 27.1</b> The ER Program identifies the key drivers of deforestation and degradation, and potentially opportunities for forest enhancement	<b>YES</b>
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- Work on an overarching framework for land use still ongoing
- Ongoing exchange on harmonization of forest law/mining law
- Results of the inter-ministerial coordination meeting on land use, which was scheduled for end of May 2017?

## Two additional remarks (lessons from the current ERPD)

- The question of performance of an ER program after 5-year CF support → most of the proposed activities are longer-term
- The missing opportunity to develop a SMF approach in REDD+ (as certified FM is an important policy element in the country)  
→ Rep. of Congo as a special case in respect to natural forest management that would have been ideal to address an ER methodological approach on SMF

# Concluding remarks

- The TAP Team comments the overall **good quality** of the Final ER-PD, which is complete in all its sections.
- The ER-PD has many **innovative elements** that are of interest for RBP approaches in REDD+ and to test them at real scale.
- The TAP recognizes the overall **multi-sectoral approach** in a forest-rich jurisdictional area and carefully weighted opportunities and threats contained in the proposed REDD+ approaches.
- The TAP rated the current version of the ER-PD very highly.

# Thank You!

As you know: The perfect is the enemy of the good....



Forest inventory in Likouala forest , Congo Rep. by a Pygmy forest worker ©JBlaser