

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Mechanism Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) External Review Template

(interim, January 12, 2011, from Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 5)

Guidelines for Reviewers:

- 1) *FCPF REDD Country Participant R-PPs will be reviewed and assessed by the FCPF Participants Committee, the FCPF's governing body, taking TAP comments into account. External (Technical Advisory Panel or other) and Bank reviewers may provide recommendations on how a draft R-PP could be enhanced, using this template on a pilot basis until a process is approved by the PC.*
- 2) *One set of criteria should be used for review: specific standards each of the current 6 components of an R-PP should be met.*
- 3) *Your comments will be merged with other reviewer comments (without individual attribution) into a synthesis document that will be made public, in general, so bear this in mind when commenting.*
- 4) *Please provide thoughtful, fair assessment of the draft R-PP, in the form of actionable recommendations for the potential enhancement of the R-PP by the submitting country. A REDD Country Participant would be allowed three submissions of an R-PP to the PC for consideration.*

Objectives of a Readiness Preparation Proposal (condensed directly from Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 3)

The purpose of the R-PP is to build and elaborate on the previous Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) or a country's relevant comparable work, to assist a country in laying out and organizing the steps needed to achieve 'Readiness' to undertake activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), in the specific country context. The R-PP provides a framework for a country to set a clear roadmap, budget, and schedule to achieve REDD Readiness. The FCPF does not expect that the activities identified in the R-PP and its Terms of Reference (ToR) would actually occur at the R-PP stage, although countries may decide to begin pilot activities for which they have capacity and stakeholder support. Instead, the R-PP consists of a summary of the current policy and governance context, what study and other preparatory activities would occur under each major R-PP component, how they would be undertaken in the R-PP execution phase, and then a ToR or work plan for each component. The activities would generally be performed in the next, R-PP execution phase, not as part of the R-PP formulation process.

Review of R-PP of Republic of Gabon

Reviewer: G. Ken Creighton, Ph.D.

Date of review 14 September 2017

Standards to be Met by R-PP Components

(From Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 5:)

Component 1. Organize and Consult Standard 1a: National Readiness Management

Arrangements: The cross-cutting nature of the design and workings of the national readiness management arrangements on REDD, in terms of including relevant stakeholders and key government agencies beyond the forestry department, commitment of other sectors in planning and implementation of REDD readiness. Capacity building activities are included in the work plan for each component where significant external technical expertise has been used in the R-PP development process.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

Preamble – This R-PP is in some ways atypical of the early round of R-PP’s that I am familiar with. This is, perhaps, appropriate in that it takes in a broader spectrum of concerns that are common to most countries in the process of development such as the socio-economic factors that drive development and the necessary compromises required to set and then achieve NDC’s in the land use and forestry sectors that are realistic, pragmatic and yet meaningful and effective. I have tried to take this into account in the preparation of this review while keeping in mind the need for a degree of conformity to the standards set out by FCPF to guide such reviews.

This program has “grown” out of several national initiatives including the Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan (EGSP), the Forest Management Control Project (FMCP), the Green Gabon Operational Plan, the National Investment Framework (NIF), the National Environmental Action Plan, a number of related projects and the work carried out in establishment of Gabon’s NDC’s under the UNFCCC. Emerging from these efforts was the identification of a need for development of a National Land Use Plan (NLUP) and the strengthening of technical capacities of the National Natural Resources Forestry Observation System (NNRFOS) and its components such as the Gabonese Space Studies and Observations Agency (AGEOS) and establishment of national and provincial level committees to address land use planning and related policies.

The project makes adequate provision for capacity building within key government agencies and a significant expansion of capacity for public outreach, consultation and communications involving all relevant sectoral agencies and authorities at levels from national to provincial to local through the creation of the National and Provincial Natural Resource Regulatory Commissions (CRRNAT & CPRRAT) and the plans established for engagement at District level and grassroots level through village-focused outreach and participatory mapping activities to engage a broad range of stakeholders including rural and forest-dependent people.

Comment: I have some observations about the timing of implementation for some of the actions noted above. These are discussed later in this review.

Conclusion: This component meets the standard but see comments and recommendations in subsequent sections.

Standard 1b: Information Sharing and Early Dialogue with Key Stakeholder Groups:

The R-PP presents evidence of the government having undertaken an exercise to identify key stakeholders for REDD-plus, and commenced a credible national-scale information sharing and awareness raising campaign for key relevant stakeholders. The campaign’s major objective is to establish an early dialogue on the REDD-plus concept and R-PP development process that sets the stage for the later consultation process during the implementation of the R-PP work plan. This effort needs to reach out, to the extent feasible at this stage, to networks and representatives of forest-dependent indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers and forest dependent communities, both at national and local level. The R-PP contains evidence that a reasonably broad range of key stakeholders has been identified, voices of vulnerable groups are beginning to be heard, and that a reasonable amount of time and effort has been invested to raise general awareness of the basic concepts and process of REDD-plus including the SESA.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

As this project is “nested” within several related ongoing national initiatives noted in the previous section it is difficult to distinguish outreach specifically related to this program from more general measures to promote public awareness and engagement within the framework of national policies and initiatives noted above. Indications of intentions to expand engagement with local communities within the forested regions and the urban centers is provide on pages 51 - creation of an open access NLUP database; p52 - plans for land use conflict resolution; p54 - participatory village mapping; and p57. Provisions to incorporate output from consultations are noted toward the end (Year 5) of the project but a case can be made to initiate those earlier in the implementation. The intention to engage with International NGOs active in Gabon is noted but no specific details are provide on how that will be arranged.

Conclusion: *This component meets the standard* but further documentation of efforts to engage the full range of stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and forest-dependent communities in particular should be encouraged.

Standard 1c: Consultation and Participation Process

Ownership, transparency, and dissemination of the R-PP by the government and relevant stakeholders, and inclusiveness of effective and informed consultation and participation by relevant stakeholders, will be assessed by whether proposals and/ or documentation on the following are included in the R-PP (i) the consultation and participation process for R-PP development thus far³ (ii) the extent of ownership within government and national stakeholder community; (iii) the Consultation and Participation Plan for the R-PP implementation phase (iv) concerns expressed and recommendations of relevant stakeholders, and a process for their consideration, and/or expressions of their support for the R-PP; (v) and mechanisms for addressing grievances regarding consultation and participation in the REDD-plus process, and for conflict resolution and redress of grievances.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

Table 7 (pp.42-44) Discusses in some detail the intentions for engagement with the range of relevant ministries and authorities at national, provincial and district levels.

With regard to outreach and engagement with local stakeholders the document (p42)identifies as a potential risk: *“Rural poverty and historical marginalization from national conservation policy development coupled with limited access to information in much of the country could lead to conflictual situations with respect to land allocation decisions.* With regard to mitigation of this risk the document states *“A critical component of the project, as designed, is dedicated to mitigating this potential risk -- a full 1/4 of the program budget will be allocated to the design and implementation of strong communication and community integration strategies including the*

³ Did the R-PP development, in particular the development of the ToR for the strategic environmental and social assessment and the Consultation and Participation Plan, include civil society, including forest dwellers and Indigenous Peoples representation? In this context the representative(s) will be determined in one of the following ways: (i) self-determined representative(s) meeting the following requirements: (a) selected through a participatory, consultative process; (b) having national coverage or networks; (c) previous experience working with the Government and UN system; (d) demonstrated experience serving as a representative, receiving input from, consulting with, and providing feedback to, a wide scope of civil society including Indigenous Peoples organizations; or (ii) Individual(s) recognized as legitimate representative(s) of a national network of civil society and/or Indigenous Peoples organizations (e.g., the GEF Small Grants National Steering Committee or National Forest Program Steering Committee).

establishment of land-use planning consultation and information centers in each district. Additionally, the proposed participatory village mapping activities will importantly ensure that the existing needs and land-use practices of rural people are appropriately considered in the land-allocation decision process.”

On p52, with regard to the “companion” project that is financed through the CAFI program, the document states: *“Several steps were included in the CAFI-Gabon NIF to ensure public engagement. (1) The development of a communication and consultation strategy and plan, formulated by an international consultant. The consultant will work with the CRRNAT Technical Committee to make certain implementation is context-appropriate, consensus building, and inclusive. (2) The establishment of consultation and information centers on land-use planning in each of the 48 departmental prefectures. The 48 centers will be manned with an extension officer trained in land-use planning who will interact with the population, local sectoral agencies and economic stakeholders. (3) Regular interface between extension agents and the Libreville-based offices through the hiring of local communication experts responsible for information exchange among partners and stakeholders. Specifically, the communication experts will work with the departmental extension agents, the local authorities and the CPRRNATs to organize annual departmental and provincial meetings and workshops involving local populations (notably the Chiefs of Cantons), civil society, relevant economic operators and representatives of the main sectoral agencies”.*

On p54 the document states: *“The village mapping exercise will serve as both as a data layer for the NLUP and a process by which village engagement, consulting and consensus will be achieved.”*

On p58 the document states: *“In the final year of the NLUP process, consultations will be conducted at the departmental, provincial and national levels to finalize and adopt the NLUP. These meetings will allow stakeholders to take stock of the completed work, to express their opinions, and to make revisions.*

CRRNAT multidisciplinary teams will conduct validation workshops in each province. This activity will finalize the process of communication and local consultations initiated in previous years. To reach a wide public, both in civil society and the private sector, the teams will:

- *Improve access to information on the NLUP;*
- *Communicate the technical, legal and political data incorporated in the NLUP V2;*
- *Facilitate access to NLUP databases via the Internet;*
- *Gather information on people’s opinions of the NLUP.*
- *Identify potential disputes and ensure ad hoc resolution.*

Comment: To ensure documentation of the actions and results obtained through the outreach, communications and consultations processes it would be beneficial to establish a semi-autonomous committee or other appropriate entity with representation from civil society to review the results and inputs from the engagement process with the ability to conduct independent consultations with affected stakeholders and to document results of these “field checks”.

Conclusion: This component meets the standard but the proponents should take into

consideration the recommendation noted above.

Component 2. Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy

Standard 2a: Assessment of Land Use, Forest Law, Policy, and Governance:

A completed assessment is presented that: identifies major land use trends; assesses direct and indirect deforestation and degradation drivers in the most relevant sectors in the context of REDD-plus; recognizes major land tenure and natural resource rights and relevant governance issues; documents past successes and failures in implementing policies or measures for addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; identifies significant gaps, challenges, and opportunities to address REDD; and sets the stage for development of the country's REDD strategy to directly address key land use change drivers.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The assessment provides an overview of total natural forest cover and geographical patterns of forest degradation, human demographic distribution (pp. 20-21 & 26), analysis of drivers including historical and current and patterns of agriculture expansion and future goals (pp.21-23); timber extraction (pp. 24-26), including detailed mapping of the historical establishment of logging concessions, plantations and protected areas, and the locations of community forests (p.26); fuelwood extraction (pp.26-27); and extension of infrastructure related to mining and dams (pp.27-28). The summary of national goals for agricultural expansion (Table 2) provides a quantitative indication of future (to 2025) expectations for expansion of agriculture – some fraction of which will presumably occur on converted forestlands. Most recent data (2013) indicates 57% of the national territory is under forest (logging) concessions about half of which are subject to management plans in compliance with current codes. Improved monitoring under this project and introduction and promulgation of improved methods of concession management and logging are aimed to reduce emissions from these activities.

The proposal does a good job of describing the stepwise process that has occurred over the past 10+ years of bring the majority of forest concessions within a management and regulatory framework that encourages actions that minimize emissions and other negative impacts and indicates future actions such as FLEGT membership and negotiation of a VPA with the EU intended to make further progress, though it acknowledges that more can be done. The proposal rightly acknowledge there is still more to be done in the areas of reconciling concession allocations and building necessary monitoring ability within the GoG to assure compliance.

Intended legal and regulatory reform measures to improve environmental governance are discussed in section 2c (see pp. 34-35 and Table 4).

Recommendation: Tracking of progress in terms of dispute resolution, transparency and establishment of land rights should be publicly reported on an annual basis. Engagement of appropriate non-governmental organizations in that review process should be encouraged.

Conclusion: This component meets the standard.

Standard 2.b: REDD-plus strategy Options:

The R-PP should include: an alignment of the proposed REDD-plus strategy with the identified drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and with existing national and sectoral strategies, and a summary of the emerging REDD-plus strategy to the extent known presently, and of proposed analytic work (and, optionally, ToR) for assessment of the various REDD-plus strategy options. This summary should state: how the country proposes to address deforestation and degradation drivers in the design of its REDD-plus strategy; a plan of how to estimate cost and benefits of the emerging REDD-plus strategy, including benefits in terms of rural livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and other developmental aspects; socioeconomic, political and institutional feasibility of the emerging REDD-plus strategy; consideration of environmental and social issues; major potential synergies or inconsistencies of country sector strategies in the forest, agriculture, transport, or other sectors with the envisioned REDD-plus strategy; and a plan of how to assess the risk of domestic leakage of greenhouse benefits. The assessments included in the R-PP eventually should result in an elaboration of a fuller, more complete and adequately vetted REDD-plus strategy over time.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

This section describes anticipated linkage with a number of planning and policy initiatives including the Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan (EGSP) the elements of which are described in pp. 32-35. The proposal identifies principal drivers of deforestation and degradation - agricultural expansion, timber extraction, fuelwood extraction, extension of infrastructure, land governance and demographics (pp. 21-28). While the EGSP includes a number of elements or components (see Figure 9 p32) it is inferred rather than explicitly described how the R-PP supported National Land Use Plan and the strengthening of technical capacities for monitoring, planning and introducing improved management of commercial forests and plantations (see p5 Target Outcomes) will deliver measurable results for reducing deforestation and forest degradation. This is effectively addressed later in the proposal in Components 4a and 4b that describe how improved capabilities for monitoring and measurement can contribute to better enforcement of timber harvesting regulations and for zoning for agricultural expansion to avoid areas of high-carbon-stock (HCS) and high-conservation-value (HCV) forests.

The proposal posits that the development, adoption and implementation of a multi-sectoral National Land Use Plan, the strengthening of technical capabilities for monitoring and measurement of GHG fluxes from forests under management, and introduction of new methods to reduce emissions from timber harvest operations will contribute to the goals of reduced deforestation and degradation. The success of this will depend on the degree to which this information is accepted and utilized to implement zoning policies for expansion and can be utilized to improve timber harvesting and concession management practices and influence decisions about location of transportation infrastructure. The planned development and introduction of a "green labeling" system to recognize improvements in the forestry sector in a way that brings financial benefits is an innovative element of this program.

Conclusion: *This component meets the standard.*

Standard 2.c: REDD-plus implementation framework:

Describes activities (and optionally provides ToR in an annex) and a work plan to further elaborate institutional arrangements and issues relevant to REDD-plus in the country setting. Identifies key issues involved in REDD-plus implementation, and explores potential arrangements to address them; offers a work plan that seems likely to allow their full evaluation and adequate incorporation into the eventual Readiness

Package. Key issues are likely to include: assessing land ownership and carbon rights for potential REDD-plus strategy activities and lands; addressing key governance concerns related to REDD-plus; and institutional arrangements needed to engage in and track REDD-plus activities and transactions.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

2c. REDD-plus Implementation Framework

This section provides a general description of the work program planned to address the three Outcomes identified in the Executive Summary, though thin on detail it adequately describes the key work elements required to accomplish the three primary objectives of this program.

Figure 13 and Table 7 clearly summarize the national goals and expected impacts to be achieved from the development and adoption of the NLUP and the improved technical capabilities described in outcomes 2 and 3.

Pages 52-58 describe the major activities to be carried out in the development of the NLUP

Outcome 1: Completion and implementation of a National Land Use Plan will result in minimized emissions from new development activities.”

Comments:

(1) Though these are discussed at a general level, the overall presentation does a good job of covering all of the principal elements of the program.

(2) The proposal notes (p55) the opportunity that the village mapping component provides to engage local stakeholders in the NLUP exercise - including public outreach, consultation and seeking consensus around the value of the overall NLUP exercise.

Outcome 2: Completion of the Natural Resource and Forest Monitoring System will enable Gabon to both monitor the impacts of the NLUP and meet Tier 3 monitoring standards for GHG emissions/ removals in the LULUCF sector.

Comment: Activities required for Outcome 2 are not discussed here. They are adequately described in some detail in Component 4. This is one of the more exciting potential outcomes of this program on a technical level as it would indirectly enhance the precision of measurement capabilities throughout the Congo Basin where forests of similar composition and structure occur.

Outcome 3: Completion of activities to improve emissions estimates from degradation and improve forestry practices, including examining potential for reforestation, at a national scale will result in reduced emissions from the forestry sector.

Comment: This program element seeks to improve the precision and technical performance of measuring and calculating changes in emissions and sequestration levels and rates at national and subnational scales. This covers a variety of technical issues including setting a baseline level and developing a protocol for annual or biannual measurement as well as developing methods for measuring the impact of stock enhancement programs and improved harvest methods.

The ambition described on p 61 to:

- *“Develop and design a sustainability standard specific to the forestry/agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development contained in the Sustainable Development Law, which also takes into account the reduction of GHG emissions in the forest/agriculture sector in agreement with the NDC of Gabon, and*
- *Design a sustainable development credit mechanism to encourage the best practices and the best operators. These credit mechanisms will rely on a sustainable development register. The previously best practice guidelines for emissions reduction in the forestry sector will be directly lined to this credit mechanism”*

is a notable innovation that is worth considering as a way to generate revenues from “good practice” that goes beyond carbon markets and strictly carbon based compensation.

Comment: As noted above for Outcome 2, the development and application of methods to improved measurement and estimation of carbon flux in Afro-tropical forests will not only improve the precision of Gabon’s UNFCCC reporting but could contribute to improving monitoring and measurement elsewhere throughout the African Equatorial forest belt. There should be a condition that methods developed be documented and remain in the public domain for use.

Conclusion: *This component meets the standard.*

Standard 2.d: Social and Environmental Impacts during Readiness Preparation and REDD-plus Implementation:

The proposal includes a program of work for due diligence for strategic environmental and social impact assessment in compliance with the World Bank’s or UN-REDD Programme’s safeguard policies, including methods to evaluate how to address those impacts via studies, consultations, and specific mitigation measures aimed at preventing or minimizing adverse effects. For countries receiving funding via the World Bank, a simple work plan is presented for how the SESA process will be followed, and for preparation of the ESMF.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

2d Social and Environmental Impact –

The funding proposed and the activities enumerated in this section and elsewhere throughout the proposal appear to be sufficient to meet the SESA requirement of the World Bank and conform to the guidance of the UNFCCC and the UNCBD. Article 5 of Gabon’s sustainable development law specifically addresses Gabon’s Environmental and Social Management Framework. Table 5 (pp65-66) provides an overview of the correspondence between this Gabonese legislation and the World Bank Safeguards.

The proposal outlines specific measures to be taken in the course of program implementation to ensure effective outreach and communication, stakeholder dialog consultation and input. This is concentrated toward the end of the implementation cycle – prior to formal “validation” or adoption is not exceptional in that there is a significant amount of information and data collection and analysis that goes into the early stage before proposals can be formulated to discuss. Elements such as the village mapping exercises, the establishment of the district and province level units. The planning and budgeting for outreach through seminars and workshops as well as media communications and the budget for communications that are to begin early in project implementation should ensure broad awareness of the goals and purpose of the NLUP component. The Gabon legal structures also call for consultation with stakeholders as a key element of the ESIA process.

Conclusion: *This component meets the standard.*

Component 3. Develop a Reference Level**Standard 3: Reference Level:**

Present work plan for how the reference level for deforestation, forest degradation (if desired), conservation, sustainable management of forest, and enhancement of carbon stocks will be developed. Include early ideas on a process for determining which approach and methods to use (e.g., forest cover change and GHG emissions based on historical trends, and/or projections into the future of historical trend data; combination of inventory and/or remote sensing, and/or GIS or modeling), major data requirements, and current capacity and capacity requirements. Assess linkages to components 2a (assessment of deforestation drivers), 2b (REDD-plus strategy activities), and 4 (MRV system design).

(FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a stepwise approach may be useful. This component states what early activities are proposed.)

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:**Component 3 REL & FREL's**

Gabon proposes a historical reference level based on its GHG emissions from development activities in 2000 as a business-as-usual baseline, and excluding carbon sequestration by forests. That seems appropriate given its status as a high-forest-cover (88%) and low deforestation (0.026% or less) country. The scenario for BAU, uncontrolled emissions, was developed based on two assumptions for the LULUCF sector (1) Increase in areas covered by logging permits, based on observed trends since 1950; (2) Population growth and rising food needs, resulting in development of agricultural crops at the loss of the forests. These factors mean that overall net forest emissions may be expected to increase but through improved management the emissions rate on a per-hectare basis for active concessions may be expected to decline somewhat due to introduction and verification of improved management practices such as reduced-impact-logging and more operations conforming to forest certification systems.

Annual deforestation declined over that estimated in the previous decade after 2001 due to revision of the Forest Code and the 2002 creation of a network of 13 national parks and 4 national reserves. The decline was principally due to establishment of these protected areas and stricter controls on logging operations. Forest loss during the period from 2010-2015 was principally associated with agro-industrial activities, logging and mining, the establishment of large infrastructure such as hydro-electric dams and roads, and to the conversion of forests into fallows and pastures in rural areas. As a developing country with a growing population, Gabon cannot reduce its absolute level of emissions but through focusing on a strategy of low-emissions development through which it will grow its economy while keeping GHG emissions as low as possible it should be able to reduce the per-hectare rate of emissions from logging concessions and plantations below the current business-as-usual level.

***Comment:** The proposed baseline Forest Reference Emissions Level takes into account historical factors without "penalizing" the country for more recently adopted positive measures such as establishment of the protected area network and improved regulation and oversight of the timber industry both of which have expenses (costs) that are required to remain effective or increase their effectiveness in maintaining low emissions levels.*

Conclusion: This component meets the standard.

Component 4. Design a Monitoring System**Standard 4a: Emissions and Removals:**

The R-PP provides a proposal and workplan for the initial design, on a stepwise basis, of an integrated monitoring system of measurement, reporting and verification of changes in deforestation and/or forest degradation, and forest enhancement activities. The system design should include early ideas on enhancing country capability (either within an integrated system, or in coordinated activities) to monitor emissions reductions and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, and to assess the impacts of the REDD-plus strategy in the forest sector.

The R-PP should describe major data requirements, capacity requirements, how transparency of the monitoring system and data will be addressed, early ideas on which methods to use, and how the system would engage participatory approaches to monitoring by forest-dependent indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers. It should also address independent monitoring and review, involving civil society and other stakeholders, and how findings would be fed back to improve REDD-plus implementation. The proposal should present early ideas on how the system could evolve into a mature REDD-plus monitoring system with the full set of capabilities.

(FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a staged approach may be useful. The R-PP states what early activities are proposed.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-Plan meets this standard, and recommendations:

Component 4a Component 4 pp. 72-87. See also Section 2d pp. 58-62

National forest monitoring is carried out by the National Natural Resource Forest Observation System (NNRFOS) and by the AGEOS unit. The NNRFOS is designed to meet Tier 3 standards following UNFCCC best practice guidance. In 2011 the GoG embarked on a process of quantifying biomass and forest carbon based on a combination of field data and remote sensing data. The system is based on a network of permanent one-hectare forest plots distributed according to a systematic, random sampling design across the country (see Figure 18 p75) and "wall-to-wall surveillance based on satellite-base remote sensing technologies.

Comment: *Created with input from some of the best research institutions and agencies, globally, this monitoring system can be considered state-of-the-art.*

Gabon has the satellite infrastructure and data suited to develop its NNRFOS. With AGEOS's recently created satellite reception station, Gabon can acquire and provide various types of remote sensing data for forest monitoring. Gabon is growing its existing monitoring system (AGEOS and NRI) to establish a fully operational NNRFOS in line with the GIEC and UNFCCC guidelines for Tier 3 monitoring. Additional work with the US Forest Service (USFS) and SIRS indicates that the World Map of Forest Changes⁴ developed by WRI and the University of Maryland, could be combined with field data to produce reliable forest statistics at the national level. The plot system established by NIS will also nserve as a basis for survey and monitoring of rare, endemic, threatened and endangered species on a pilot basis.

Comment: *Plans are described for upgrading the system as new software and other methodology becomes available. Also, extending the range of monitoring to, for example, threatened or endangered species such has elephants and great apes. As it currently exists and with planned upgrades this is possibly the most advanced system in Sub-Saharan Africa for tropical forest*

monitoring – and is well positioned to continue to strengthen its capacity through a global network of collaborators.

Conclusion: This component meets (and probably far exceeds) the standard.

Standard 4b: Other Multiple Benefits, Impacts, and Governance:

The R-PP provides a proposal for the initial design and a workplan, including early ideas on capability (either within an integrated system, or in coordinated activities), for an integrated monitoring system that includes addressing other multiple benefits, impacts, and governance. Such benefits may include, e.g., rural livelihoods, conservation of biodiversity, key governance factors directly pertinent to REDD-plus implementation in the country.

(The FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a staged approach may be useful. The R-PP states what early activities are proposed.)

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-Plan meets this standard, and recommendations:

4b. Design for multiple benefits, Governance, Safeguards

Pages 82-88

The proposal has a detailed work plan and institutions already established to make best use of the capabilities described in Section 4a to extend monitoring and analytical work to a range of co-benefits and contribute to monitoring and enforcement as well as land use planning from the village to province to national levels. Also see Table 8 (pp.65-66) for notes on how the system(s) will contribute to monitoring safeguard implementation.

The NLUP is particularly intended and designed to gather, analyze and distribute information needed for development planning at scales from national down to district - and in some instances village - levels. The tools and methods available through this program are also valuable and appropriate for various types of monitoring relevant to biodiversity conservation. Table 11 on p 82 provides a sample of non-carbon co-benefit applications that can benefit from the capacities built or strengthened under this program.

The ability to monitor the forest situation in near-real-time from satellite imagery routinely gathered will aid in enforcement of laws and regulations related to (both legal and illegal) timber harvesting. Use of the HCV (High Conservation Value) system for analysis and classification of land use potential is particularly valuable and innovative.

Table 18 (pp86-88) provides a helpful summary of how the systems deployed will contribute to monitoring and application of social and environmental safeguards.

Conclusion: This component meets the standard.

Component 5. Schedule and Budget

Standard 5: Completeness of information and resource requirements

The R-PP proposes a full suite of activities to achieve REDD readiness, and identifies capacity building and financial resources needed to accomplish these activities. A budget and schedule for funding and technical support requested from the FCPF and/or UN-REDD, as well as from other international sources (e.g., bilateral assistance), are summarized by year and by potential donor. The information presented reflects the priorities in the R-PP, and is sufficient to meet the costs associated with REDD-plus readiness activities identified in the R-PP. Any gaps in funding, or sources of funding, are clearly noted.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

Component 5 Schedule and Budget

Comments on the Schedule:

1. *It is good to see that the Provincial and National NR Regulatory Commissions (CRRNATs and the CPRRNATs) will be initiated in Year 1.*
2. *I would advise that “Communicate and consult with local and national stakeholders” begin earlier than Year 5 – perhaps Year 2 at the latest? Also this should probably be “cyclical” during the course of the program not “one shot” and continue for at least several years after the NLUP is adopted and put into practice.*
3. *Participatory village mapping doesn’t appear in the Activities Calendar – it should*
4. *There should be some indication of work on the SESA in the Activities Calendar*
5. *There is no activity line for the co-benefit monitoring discussed in 4b.*

Comments on the Budget:

1. *Why does “Set up the CRRNATs and the CPRRNATs” appear on 3 budget lines?*
2. *“Local and national consultations” doesn’t appear in the budget until Year 5. My recommendation is that it should start sooner along with outreach and communications actions.*
3. *There is no budget for SESA.*
4. *There doesn’t seem to be a budget line for the co-benefit analyses discussed in Component 4b.*

Conclusion: This component will meet the standard upon receipt of adequate responses to the observations noted above.

Component 6. Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Standard 6: The R-PP adequately describes the indicators that will be used to monitor program performance of the Readiness process and R-PP activities, and to identify in a timely manner any shortfalls in performance timing or quality. The R-PP demonstrates that the framework will assist in transparent management of financial and other resources, to meet the activity schedule.

Reviewer’s assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

Component 6

The acronym PNAT does not appear in the acronyms table.

To a large extent, tracking technical progress relies on data and analyses generated by the Natural Resource and Forest Monitoring System (details in section 4b). No additional funds are requested or required to develop the M&E strategy for the NIF and R-PP Framework beyond those indicated in Table 15 (pp.89-90).

Table 16 (p92) provides a summary of indicators and outputs of Gabon’s NIF (National Investment Framework) and the R-PP framework for each of the three expected major outcomes. Table 14 in

Component 5 (p88) provides an activities calendar for activities planned within the NIF and R-PP framework that could provide the basis for identifying Indicators to be tracked over the five year life of the project, organized around the three principal outcomes. The Results Framework for the Gabon NIF and R-PP (pp.92-94 Table 16) lists 13 specific outputs that, along with the identification of appropriate temporally indicated milestones to track progress toward these outputs could form the basis for a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Comment: *The information provided in Section 2c Table 7 (p50 - Objectives and MOVs); Section 4b Table 13 (pp.85-87 - Results Indicators); Section 5, Table 14 (p88 - activities calendar) and Table 16 (pp92-94 - Output Indicators and MOVs) provide a more than adequate basis for defining a program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This should be done and include (1) a provisional timetable for implementation over the 5 year course of the project, perhaps including a mid term review and (2) indications of when, where and for what elements independent review/evaluation would be appropriate and beneficial. Adequate budget resources should be identified to accomplish that.*

Based on the information provided in the document as indicated above there is an adequate basis to identify an M&E Framework presented in the design document.

Conclusion: *This component marginally meets the standard but would fully meet the standard if the information provided in Tables 7,14, 15, 16 and accompanying text were assembled into a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with a provisional schedule for implementation. Provision should be made for adequate budget resources to accomplish this.*

End gkc 9-14-2017