

# Independent TAP Review of the R-Package prepared by Liberia.

## Independent TAP-Expert Review on the Self-Assessment Process of the R-Package for of Liberia, September 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 Kojwang H.O. PhD

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### INTRODUCTION: THE CORE TASK OF THE TAP REVIEW

1. This document provides a review of the R-Package Self-Assessment Report prepared by Liberia, by way of a participatory, self-assessment process, between 8<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 which was conducted with key REDD+ stakeholder groups in Liberia, including the RIU, the REDD+ Technical Working Group (RTWG), the SESA Working Group and the NGO coalition. In addition, a number of resource persons and representatives of key funding agencies also provided inputs. In total, 73 persons were consulted as part of this assessment exercise.
2. The preparation of an R-Package provides an opportunity to a REDD Country Participant to self-assess the progress on REDD+, demonstrates a REDD Country’s Participant’s commitment to REDD+ Readiness; and generates feedback and further guidance to a REDD Country Participant through a national multi-stakeholder self-assessment and PC assessment processes on readiness. In the case of Liberia set out its strategic priorities under REDD+ which are described in detail in its National REDD+ Strategy approved in May 2017.
3. The purpose of the review is primarily to assess both progress and achievements of REDD+ Readiness in the country using a readiness assessment framework (<http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2013/July2013/FCPC%20framework%20text%207-25-13%20ENG%20web.pdf>), which consists of a set of 34 readiness criteria, distributed under four main readiness components; and their respective sub-components.

## TAP ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

4. To perform the assessment, the TAP conducted a desk review of key documents starting with the R-Package Document itself, Liberia's R-PP, REDD Strategy, SESA, Land Cover Mapping, RL/REL, and SESA Reports. The terms of reference issued to the TAP by the FCPF Facility Management Team stated the following:
  - i. Perform a review of Liberia's progress and the self-assessment report, based on guidelines in the R-Package Assessment Framework
  - ii. Review Liberia's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process that was used for the self-assessment and the reported outcome.
  - iii. Review key outputs and documents that underpin, and are referenced in, the R-Package, including documents pertaining to the national REDD strategy and SESA, ESMF, reference levels and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures.
  - iv. Provide constructive and targeted feedback, as required to align the processes used for self-assessment and reported outcome, comparing with the R-Package Assessment Framework guidance

The TAP expert is then required to verify completeness of the R-Package, including:

- i. A summary of the readiness preparation process;
- ii. A report of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process;
- iii. The results of the national multi-stakeholder assessment;
- iv. References to documentation pertinent to the nine subcomponents, prepared during the readiness preparation process

## PART A. REVIEW OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND THE ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION

### Self-Assessment process according to the R-Package guidelines

5. The R-Package starts with an introductory section which describes Liberia's involvement since 2012 in the REDD+ process with support from the FCPF. The developments started from the preparation of an R-PIN in 2008, R-PP in 2012, and a series of background studies that culminated in REDD+ Strategy in 2017 and also the R-Package itself in 2017. A comprehensive summary of the participation of other donors in REDD+ has been provided in Table 2, followed by a description of the key steps and decisions made in the self-assessment process.
6. Liberia's process toward REDD+ readiness began in earnest in 2008 when it prepared an R-PIN, signed an R-PP Formulation Grant in 2009 and produced a final R-PP in 2012. In June 2012 it also signed a Readiness Grant and an additional readiness grant funding through the FCPF in 2015. By December 2016 it had produced a National REDD+ Strategy which was approved in May 2017 and by August 2017, Liberia produced an R-Package. As one of the requirements prescribed the FCPF's Participants Committee (PC) Liberia prepared its R-Package which is a requirement before submitting and ER-PD. Liberia is not in the Carbon Fund pipeline and the R-Package submission is a voluntary effort to support future endeavors towards Emission Reduction Program Preparation. As already stated, the R-Package is structured around 34 criteria against which progress toward readiness is assessed in a participatory self-assessment

format followed by an Independent Review by a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The self-assessment was done during the month of May 2017 and it built upon a foundation of consultative processes used during the readiness preparation.

7. The R-Package is well articulated, clear and structured in line with the R-Package Assessment Framework. The progress made against each of the 34 assessment criteria are well described and the self-assessment scores are presented according to each stakeholder group. In many instances, the R-Package makes reference to the National REDD+ Strategy and as a result the TAP perused the same document to get the context of the self-assessment.

### **Facilitated Self-Assessment Process**

8. From the description of the process, Liberia has made it clear that it was guided by the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework and as result, Liberia studied self-assessment reports that had become before it, such as, those of Mexico, The DRC, Ghana, Costa Rica and Vietnam. The process was led by an independent external facilitator whose purview was to solicit stakeholder inputs rather than make judgements or evaluations from such inputs. It also appears that there was an identification of stakeholder groups, representative of individuals and institutions with a strong stake and engagement in the National REDD+ process. It is also useful that the process clearly involved participation of the key stakeholders and the diversity of stakeholders who were involved is clearly spelt out and the lists of participants are also gender disaggregated to show the mix of male and female participation.
9. Furthermore, the assessment generated scores that reflected the different opinions of the stakeholders on each criterion or set of criteria. The progress made and the key shortcomings that need to be addressed and their recommended remedial measures were agreed upon at each of the workshops. The degree of achievement under each criterion were agreed upon in each workshop with green being the highest level, yellow representing medium progress, orange just below medium and red representing the lowest degree of achievement.

### **Time frame and development of the Readiness Process in Liberia**

The next three paragraphs provide a summary of the events and milestones, gleaned from some key early documents that have preceded the development of both the R-Package Document that is assessed herein.

10. Liberia first engaged in the REDD+ readiness process in 2007, with funding from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), and a national REDD+ Technical Working Group (RTWG) was established as a platform for government and non-governmental organizations to engage in the preparation of a Readiness Program Idea Note (R-PIN) which was submitted to the FCPF in May 2008.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by the draft Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), finalized in April 2012. Since then, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have co-led the work to complete the REDD+ readiness phase of the FCPF process. In 2014 Liberia signed an agreement with Norway to cooperate on REDD+ and develop Liberia's forest sector, with intentions that Norway would contribute funds to Liberia's REDD+ efforts up to an amount of 150 million USD, if verifiable deliverables for REDD+ are achieved. Liberia has maintained momentum on readiness efforts and by December 2016 it had produced a National REDD+ Strategy which was approved in May 2017, in June 2017 a National REDD+ Strategy and by August 2017, an R-Package.

### **National ownership for REDD+ Readiness Process**

11. The self- assessment report provides a clear picture of stakeholder participation and also what appears to be a honest view of what the weaknesses are, and the improvements that should be made, which are listed in an action plan in the R-Package. For example the admission that the private sector have not fully supported or understood the REDD+ Initiative and are still largely sceptical of the concept.
12. Another important evidence of national ownership is the fact that the President reconstituted the National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC) after a period of relative inactivity; a development which led to their first meeting in March 2017 and later in June 2017. Since this is a crucial inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms at the highest level in government, it is an important milestone. In 2017 the NCCSC approved the National Climate Change Policy and the National REDD Strategy.
13. From the documentation on REDD+ in Liberia there seems to be a strong interest and support in the understanding of REDD+ based on earlier work facilitated by international NGOs such as Conservation International, Flora and Fauna International and later others such as Norway as the key bilateral donor and multilateral organizations such as the FCPF.

## PART B1. SUMMARY OF REDD+ PROCESSES – STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE R-PACKAGE FROM THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### An overview

14. Part I of the R-package describes a chronology of events, processes and achievements, as well as International Aid that has supplemented efforts of the Government toward REDD+ Readiness. The main government donors that have supported or supporting Liberia besides the FCPF are Norway, USA (USAID). There is mention in the R-Package of limited UN-REDD support in the early stages of readiness. In addition, international environmental NGOs; Conservation International (CI) and Flora and Fauna International (FFI) have had a long presence in the country
15. On its Strategic Vision on the implementation of REDD+ in Liberia, it is worth noting that the country has proposed the following strategic priorities
  - Strategic priority 1: Reduce forest loss from pit sawing, charcoal production and shifting agriculture
  - Strategic priority 2: Reduce impact of commercial logging
  - Strategic Priority 3: Complete and manage a network of Protected Areas
  - Strategic Priority 4: Prevent or offset clearance of high carbon stock and high conservation value forest in agricultural and mining concessions.
16. The key achievements that have been registered between 2007 and 2017 are listed herein as follows:
  - Development of an R-PP which laid the foundation for the national REDD+ Strategy
  - Preparation of a National REDD+ Strategy
  - Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)
  - Readiness Organization and Consultation
  - Establishment of a Forest Reference Emission Level/ Reference Level (RL) and development of land and forest cover map.

### Key Gaps identified from the self-assessment process

17. The bullets below represent the gaps that the self-assessment has clearly recognized what the stakeholders participating in the assessment process agreed to and has expressed in the form of recommendations going forward. These are summarized herein as follows:
  - There is a need to support existing projects to link activities and output reporting to the main actions in the REDD+ Strategy through improved coordination and engagement;
  - To appoint an appropriately qualified consulting firm to design an acceptable FGRM to guide the implementation of REDD+ in Liberia;
  - To upgrade REL, to include activity data gathered from field sites as part of National Forest Resource Assessment, meeting UNFCCC requirements;
  - In line with the forest resource assessment process, establish and operationalize the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) to guide sectorial reporting on forest cover changes and carbon sequestration for Liberia's forest;
  - Design and establish national REDD+ registry;

- Establish a safeguard information system (SIS) and operationalize the environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and to comply with Cancun and Warsaw agreements under UNFCCC;
- Clarify the legal basis for carbon rights and benefit sharing within the context of REDD+;
- Preparation of a capacity building and plan for RIU, RTWG and other key stakeholder groups;
- Establish MRV, Safeguards and Communications Working Groups and monitor implementation of communications work to ensure that it continues within context of LFSP.

## Summary of the self-assessment process shown by component

REDD READINESS COMPONENT AND SUB-COMPONENT	PROGRESS INDICATOR
<b>Component 1. Readiness Organization and Consultation</b>	
Sub-component 1a National REDD+ Management Arrangements	Yellow
Sub-component 1b Consultation, participation and outreach	Green
	Green
<b>Component 2 REDD+ Strategy Preparation</b>	
Sub-component 2a Assessment of land use, Land use changers, Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	Green
Sub-component 2b REDD+ Strategy Options	Green
Sub-component 2c Implementation Framework	Yellow
Sub-component 2d Social and Environmental Impacts	Green
<b>Component 3 Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Levels</b>	Yellow
<b>Component 4 Monitoring systems for Forests and Safeguards</b>	
Sub-component 4a National Forest Monitoring System	Red
Sub-component 4b Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance and Safeguards	Yellow

### Proposed REDD+ Readiness Preparation Action Plan

18. In response to the gaps and other considerations during the self-assessment process, Liberia has made a number of recommendations going forward. These in the opinion of the TAP are all valid points for further action to improve Liberia's national REDD+ strategy and action plan in general and also in its ER-P. In this section, the TAP has added additional comments to each component.

## PART B2. ASSESSMENT BY THE TAP

### COMPONENT 1. READINESS ORGANIZATION AND CONSULTATIONS

#### Sub-component 1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements (Criteria 1-6, Yellow)

- 1) Accountability and transparency
- 2) Operating mandate and budget
- 3) Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration
- 4) Technical supervision capacity
- 5) Funds management capacity
- 6) Feedback and grievance redress mechanism

20. In terms of the management of REDD+, the proposed institutional and management arrangements are well described and appear more straightforward, than in many countries, with complex webs of hierarchical governance structures and systems. The description of national and sub-national entities that will manage the REDD+ are clear, and the reconstitution of the NCCSC as an Apex Body for REDD+ is significant in this regard.
21. From the self-assessment, stakeholders appreciate the level of accountability and transparency on REDD+ that is addressed under Criterion 1.
22. So far, Criterion 2 on operating mandates and budget has been well described in the R-Package and seems to have satisfied participants in the self-assessment process.
23. On Criterion 3 which addresses the critical issue of coordination, the TAP agrees with the observation made during the self-assessment process that coordination with other sectors which are crucial to REDD+ such as agriculture, mining, transport infra-structure and others is still a challenge. It is reported that several MOUs have been signed between the Forest Agency and other such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geographic Information Systems (LISGIS), Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME), Liberia Land Authority (LLA) and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MoFDP). The MOUs combined with a functional NCCSC should ensure coordination to support REDD+ and actual ER Programmes but the MOUs may need instruments that mainstream REDD+ within the National Planning Framework and actual programming that ties up climate change mitigation, adaptation in other sectors with REDD+.
24. On Criterion 4, on technical supervision capacity, the self-assessment by Liberia has observed that technical supervisory capacity for REDD+ still need to be strengthened at national and sub-national levels, since that is a weak point at the moment. The TAP suggests that this, together with Criterion 3 are issues that can be addressed in the strategy. Mention has been made of the fact that all external consultants used in the readiness process have a duty to build capacity in their government counterparts. While this is good in theory, it is an aspect of technical cooperation where a recipient country requires a *sound capacity development plan* and a *careful selection of personnel and local institutions* who will be the main subjects of targeted capacity development and also to carry on with implementation and monitoring over the short and long term.

25. On Criterion 5, the R-package has also observed that the management of funds has been fairly effective and transparent even though NGO partners were not entirely satisfied as much as were the RIU and RTWG members involved in the self-assessment.
26. On Criterion 6 dealing with FGRM issues, the TAP notes what the R-Package has admitted and openly stated the problems associated with this and a new consultant is being engaged to take over and move the process to its desired state. This is somewhat surprising for a country that has experimented with REDD+ Pilots through organizations such as CI and FFI. Current policies and laws, past projects and the lessons learnt could provide a basis for developing a national grievance and redress mechanism. An alternative explanation as to why there has been little progress is, the fact that, Liberia had several years of internal civil strife may explain why the settling of grievances may be more complicated than in countries that have never experienced, but it is nonetheless an issue it has to address.

### **1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach (Criteria 7-10, Green)**

- 7) Participation and engagement of key stakeholders
- 8) Consultation processes
- 9) Information sharing and accessibility of information
- 10) Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes

27. The self-assessment process described in the R-Package demonstrates a clear and structured system of consultations that Liberia has conducted at all levels for the purposes of awareness creation for REDD+, through a REDD+ Communication Strategy and a clearly defined set of audiences; implementing partners, policy and decision makers, forest dependent people, county level civil society and citizen groups, and private sector/industry.
28. On Criterion 7 on participation, it is noteworthy that the consultations during the REDD+ strategy process operated coincided with the SESA review process, which also required a detailed stakeholder analysis to identify groups at all levels and how they may be impacted by the REDD+ process. This enabled information sharing between processes in the preparations to readiness, even though NGOs themselves felt that they need to communicate more effectively with each other.
29. On implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes, what is significant is that stakeholder concerns and opinions expressed in consultations and in the SESA review process were seriously considered and reflected in the design or modification of strategy options. From the assessment there was a feeling that more should be done on gender sensitivity in communications and participation.
30. A major concern is that despite many years in readiness preparations the private sector and industry remain sceptical of the importance of REDD+ as they view it as a threat to their businesses; a development which requires attention within the PIU, RTWG and the NCCSC.

## **COMPONENT 2. REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION (CRITERIA 11-15, GREEN)**

### **2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance (Green)**

- 11) Assessment and analysis of land use and land use change drivers
- 12) Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to forest enhancement
- 13) Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities

- 14) Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance
- 15) Implications for forest law and policy

- 31. On Criterion 11, the TAP has also observed that to understand the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and barriers to REDD+ it was necessary to conduct analyses on all manner of forest concessions, agricultural concessions, large scale and artisanal mining, protected area networks and all manner of small holder and subsistence forms of land use. The outcomes of these are clearly annexed to the National REDD+ Strategy and will be used to align the REDD Strategy to national development objectives. This is all good but what it does not say is that a REDD+ Strategy may also require new objectives or the modification of existing objectives. Again the results of the assessment is annexed to the National REDD+ Strategy.
- 32. On Criterion 12 and 13 which are on drivers, the TAP notes that the REDD+ Strategy includes an action plan which sets out key activities that address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- 33. On Criterion 14, the R-Package could consider developing and proposing guidelines on carbon rights which has not been adequately resolved even though discussions have been initiated.
- 34. On Criterion 15, the policy and legal implications of the proposed strategy options have been described, including options to join the EUs Voluntary Partnership Agreement to curb illegal activities in the forest sector through law enforcement; FLEGT. However policies and procedures for a grievance redress mechanism (FGRM) framework are not yet in place.

## **2b. REDD+ Strategy Options (Criteria 16-18, Green)**

- 16) Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options
- 17) Feasibility assessment
- 18) Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies

- 35. On Criteria 16 and 17 the R-Package and the National REDD+ Strategy clearly state that not only did strategy options respond to the identified drivers; both direct and indirect, but they were also subjected to cost benefit analyses, their technical feasibility and were also subjected to the SESA process.
- 36. On Criterion 18 the TAP notes that the policy and legal implications of the strategy options were also analysed and described. In this regard, the need to ensure or promote the compliance on the part of partner agencies with the principles and guidelines in the respected MOUs was singled out as an issue to be taken up in inter-sector coordination which is crucial for the success of a National REDD+ Programme
- 37. It is nonetheless surprising that the emission reduction (ER) potential, which one would have expected in the cost-benefit analysis was not strongly featured. Seems that the REDD Strategy and the R-Package could use the proxy data they used to set RL / REL to estimate the ER potential of the strategy options, as part of the benefits in the cost-benefit analyses. In fact, a technical feasibility assessments could help Liberia to even set ER targets and test the validity of the stated ER targets, in addition to being a tool to seek and influence funding decision for an ER program. Obviously the planned FAO led National Forest Inventory and the establishment of a forest monitoring system will entail setting up of plots and experiments on growth and yield that will be required to set more accurate expected ER benefits of interventions.

38. In the technical and economic feasibility of the strategy options, it would be useful to identify and describe those likely policy and technological options that would transform Liberia's forest sector and enable it to increase ER without compromising development goals. This would be particularly important as Liberia goes to the next stage of preparing an emission reduction programme document (ER-PD).

## **2c. Implementation Framework (Criteria 19-22, Orange)**

- 19) Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations
- 20) Guidelines for Implementation
- 21) Benefit sharing mechanism
- 22) National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities

39. On Criterion 20, the R-Package has a clear understanding of the key issues that constitute an implementation framework and has described what it sees as gaps that need to be addressed. One obvious one is Liberia's law which does not address REDD+ directly, even though many part of the existing laws are supportive of some REDD principles and objectives.
40. On Criterion 21, the current ideas on Benefit Sharing Mechanisms based on Community Rights Law and Forestry Reform Law (section 14.2 (e) do set guidelines upon which Benefit Sharing under REDD+ could be based. As such it is worrying that this is not yet in place. Benefit sharing and carbon rights are critical incentive devices for forest dependent groups, the cooperation of which Liberia needs to achieve emission reductions from the restoration of degraded natural forests to enhance carbon stocks. In essence the issue of benefit sharing should be clearly linked to responsibilities to generate and sustain emission reductions and be underpinned in legislation.
41. The need for a REDD+ registry has been clearly recognized and are being addressed in the second phase of FCPF Funding to Liberia

## **2d. Social and Environmental Impacts (Criteria 23-25, Green)**

- 23) Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues
- 24) REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts
- 25) Environmental and Social Management Framework

42. On criterion 23 dealing with analysis on safeguards, the R-Package has clearly stated Liberia's comprehensive SESA Review Process which coincided with the REDD+ Strategy Development Process and as a result facilitated the assessment and revision of the strategy options with respect to their likely impacts (Criterion 25). It is also interesting that the SESA Process was based on six Case Study Sites which were chosen by stakeholders themselves and each site differed in socio-economic, environmental and even demographic terms (Table 10 of the R-Package). Furthermore the assessment of safeguards were subjected to stakeholder validation in organized meetings in which over 240 persons from civil society, government and academia participated.
43. On criterion 24 and also 25, the social and environmental safeguard assessments provided inputs and feedback that was used to revise draft environmental and social management frameworks (ESMF). In addition the SESA Review Process also provided feedback that was considered in the design of REDD+ strategy options.

44. Despite the impressive development on safeguard issues, the R-package needs to address benefit sharing, carbon rights also in the context of social safeguards as it develops a more robust of the ESMF than what is in the current draft.

### COMPONENT 3. REFERENCE EMISSIONS LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVELS (CRITERIA 26-28, YELLOW)

- 26) Demonstration of methodology
- 27) Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances
- 28) Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines

45. On Criteria 26, 27 and 28. In the R-package, Liberia is of the opinion that it has achieved the significant progress. In terms of methodology development under Component 3, despite admitting in the self-assessment that it is a subject matter that is not well understood in much of the country and within the RTWG members, thanks to its highly specialized and technical nature. The initial RL/REL used proxy data due to the unavailability of national data, but the R-package states that this will change with funding from Norway and FCPF who will jointly fund FAO to set up and run a National Forest Assessment Programme which collect both historical and fresh activity data which will be used to revise current RL/REL.
46. On Criterion 26 and 27 , on demonstration of methodology, and use of historical data respectively, the self-assessment rated this as on course, in view of what has been achieved and the existing plans to actually collect historical national forest activity data which will make the RL / REL estimates much more robust than the ones done with proxy data. As a result, historical data will render the estimates compliant with UNFCCC / IPCC Guidelines, a view with which the TAP agrees.
47. Liberia's reference period in the R-Package in its Draft ER-PD is 2005-2014, which is reasonable. However, it may require the rapid development of an emission reduction programme document to avoid a long time lag between the RL/REL estimates with the actual accounting period when an ER Programme kicks in. In any case a review of the RL/REL is inevitable in the face of national historical data that FAO will generate.

### COMPONENT 4. MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS (CRITERIA 29-31, RED)

#### 4a. National Forest Monitoring System (Red)

- 29) Documentation of monitoring approach
- 30) Demonstration of early system implementation
- 31) Institutional arrangements and capacities - Forests

48. On Criterion 29, it is important to note that Liberia has a weak tradition of forest monitoring hence the impending FAO led work supported by FCPF and Norwegian funding will set a new standard on the methodology and possibly organizational arrangements for a new monitoring approach.

49. On criterion 30 on early testing and demonstration, Liberia could use earlier inventories that have been done even in restricted forest areas within the country.
50. On Criterion 31, on institutional arrangements, a national organization structure for monitoring should be set up as party of the preparation of National Forest Monitoring System and as much as possible capacity of national and selected sub-national bodies should be enlisted into the monitoring process exists. Furthermore there should be provision for the participation of local communities

**4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards (Criteria 32-34, Orange)**

- 32) Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues
- 33) Monitoring, reporting and information sharing
- 34) Institutional arrangements and capacities – Multiple Benefits and Safeguards

51. Criteria 32 and 33. Based on the SESA Review Process sufficient preparation has been made to monitor safeguards. However, it is not clear from the R-Package on Liberia’s own interpretation on what constitutes non-carbon benefits and in addition no clear recognition of the need to monitor governance indicators has been stated.
52. Criteria 34. For the monitoring of safeguards the lines of responsibilities for monitoring seem to rest on the FDA and a sensible proposal to convert the SESA Working Group into a safeguards monitoring unit has been made. It has also been recognized that capacity for the monitoring of safeguards is lacking in the country, hence a capacity building plan and the identification of institutions that could take this up will be an important consideration.

**PART C. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PC**

Based on the TAP assessment of the R-Package self-assessment report, indications are that it was well managed and documented over a relatively short period of time in May 2017. So far, the gaps or weaknesses were clearly stated in a frank and open manner. In addition a number of pertinent recommendations were made by the stakeholders themselves. The TAP is in agreement with the recommendations which emanated from the self-assessment process. The TAP has listed a few additional comments and recommendations which support or augment those of the self-assessment participants. These are listed and briefly described herein

53. It is highly commendable that several MOUs have been signed between the Forest Agency and other such as the EPA, MOA, LISGIS, MLME, LLA and MoFDP. The MOUs combined with a functional NCCSC should ensure coordination to support REDD+ and actual ER Programmes. In this regard the MOUs will only be effective if they are used to mainstream REDD+ within the National Planning Framework and actual programming that ties up climate change mitigation, adaptation in other sectors with REDD+.
54. A major concern is that despite many years in readiness preparations, the private sector and industry remain sceptical of the importance of REDD+ as they view it as a threat to their businesses. This requires attention within the PIU, RTWG and the NCCSC.
55. The concept of deforestation offsets associated with the second strategic priority of the National REDD+ Strategy should be made more explicit on what it will entail. In this regard Liberia could benefit from countries such as Vietnam that have operationalized such off-sets.

56. In the technical and economic feasibility of the strategy options, it would be useful to identify and describe those likely policy and technological options that would transform Liberia's forest sector and enable it to increase ER without compromising development goals. This would be particularly important as Liberia goes to the next stage of preparing an emission reduction programme document (ER-PD).
57. Liberia just as it did with its RL/REL could use the proxy data to estimate the emission reduction potential of the strategy options, as part of the benefits in the cost-benefit analyses. This could help it set ER targets and test their validity, in addition to being a tool to seek and influence funding decision for an ER program. Obviously the planned FAO led National Forest Inventory and the establishment of a forest monitoring system will entail setting up of plots and experiments on growth and yield that will be required to set more accurate expected ER benefits of interventions
58. Based on the SESA Review Process sufficient preparation has been made to monitor safeguards. However, it is not clear from the R-Package on Liberia's own interpretation on what constitutes non-carbon benefits and in addition no clear recognition of the need to monitor governance indicators has been stated.
59. More clarity is needed on institutional arrangements, in the form of a national organizational structure for monitoring as part of the preparation of National Forest Monitoring System and as much as possible to enlist national and selected sub-national bodies into the monitoring structure and process. Furthermore, there should be provision for the participation of local communities
60. Liberia's reference period in the R-Package in its Draft ER-PD is 2005-2014, which is reasonable. However, it may require the rapid development of an emission reduction programme document to avoid a long time lag between the RL/REL estimates with the actual accounting period when an ER Programme kicks in. In any case Liberia should be prepared for a review of the RL/REL, which will be inevitable in the face of national historical data that FAO will generate.
61. The TAP reinforces the recommendation in the self-assessment for the immediate development of a capacity development plan linked to the outcomes of the 4 strategic priorities described in the National REDD+ Strategy of 2017