

**Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF):
Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) – External Review Form**

May 28, 2008

Guidelines for Reviewers:

- 1) This review form is a record of your review, which may be disclosed for transparency. Please bear that in mind when filling it out.
- 2) Please summarize your comments- address whatever you feel is important.
- 3) Please evaluate and mark (score) each of the 5 Summary Assessment review criteria from the FCPF Information Memorandum, the Participants Committee Selection Criteria, and the numbered R-PIN major topics, as requested in the right-hand column. Select a mark from the following scale: NA: Not Addressed. 1: Inadequately addresses criterion. 2: Barely addresses criterion. 3: Average, or adequately addresses criterion. 4: Good job of addressing criterion. 5: Excellent job of addressing criterion.

1) Country submitting the R-PIN: 2) Date of Review: 3) Name and affiliation of R-PIN Reviewer:	Central African Republic (CAR) Feb. 11 2009 FCPF TAP Synthesis
I. Summary Assessment of the Quality and Completeness of the R-PIN:	
Note with value of 1 – 5	Mark (score):
Criterion (i): Ownership of the proposal by both the government and relevant stakeholders:	
Criterion (ii): Consistency between national and sectoral strategies and proposed REDD Strategy:	
Criterion (iii): Completeness of information and data provided:	
Criterion (iv): Clarity of responsibilities for the execution of REDD activities to be financed:	
Criterion (v): Feasibility of proposal and likelihood of success:	
SUMMARY SCORE: add scores above and enter sum into box on right	SUM:
Improvements the country could make to R-PIN, and any TA needs for it: For purposes of funding the document has sufficient information but it could further articulate clear strategies to implement REDD in terms of capacity and the formation of stronger inter-sector collaboration needed for REDD to work.	
II. Participants Committee Selection Criteria: Information	
Relevance of country in REDD context: Priority to countries with: (i) substantial forest area and forest carbon stocks; and (ii) relevance of forests in economy, including livelihoods of forest dwellers and Indigenous Peoples:	

It has 5.6 million hectares of dense forests, excluding wooded savannahs, constituting about 9% of the overall land mass. The wooded savannah constitutes about 90% of the total land area.

Geographic and biome balance: across the world’s main forest biomes.

The dense forests are part of the Guineo-Congolian Forests and are part of the Congo Basin. Closed forests mainly occur in the south, followed by wooded savannahs and grasslands to the north of the country which constitutes the most extensive vegetation type, with a Sahelian belt in the very north

Variety of approaches: Proposed innovative approaches to tackling deforestation and degradation; methods; testing new mechanisms and distribution of REDD revenues; and/or regionally important leadership.

III. Detailed Review of R-PIN Responses to Template Questions:

Please review the R-PIN quality and completeness in terms of addressing the major questions in the FCPF R-PIN template.

1. Government focal point, and ownership and consultation in producing the R-PIN:
2.

Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting Fishing and the Environment, particularly the office responsible for the UNFCC. Consultations seem to have widened since the last document.

2. Identification of institutions responsible for: forest monitoring, law enforcement, conservation, and coordination across forest, agriculture and rural development:

Forest monitoring and forest inventories:

- DIAF: Forest Management and Inventories Directorate
- DGEF: National Director for Forest and Water

law enforcement:

- Ministry of Water, Forest, Hunting and Fishing and of the Environment
- forestry and forest conservation:**

- Ministry of Water, Forest, Hunting and Fishing and of the Environment
- Directorate for Fauna and Protected Areas
- National Director for Forest and Water

coordination across forest, agriculture and rural development

- Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning
- Ministry of Mines, Energy and Hydraulic

Cross-sector coordination was done by way of consultations with the Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning and that of Mines, Energy and Hydraulics. The fact that most responsible institutions are under one ministry should in theory facilitate good coordination if it is actively pursued.

3. Current country situation:

Where do deforestation and forest degradation occur, main causes, estimates of greenhouse gas emissions, data available? Deforestation occurs mainly close to human settlements and also as a result of new settlements, along infra-structures such as roads, typical of much of the Congo Basin. The Massif of the South-West is the main area of deforestation and forest degradation.

The annual rate of deforestation is about 0.13 % and since the annual reforestation rate is 0.06, net deforestation is 0.07. Like Congo, the document recognizes both proximate and underlying causes of deforestation. The causes are slash and burn agriculture, fuelwood harvesting (dominant form of energy), logging, livestock, wildfires and mining. Once

abandoned, cultivated grounds requires up to 30 years to regain their forested nature. Underlying causes have been provided as population distribution, property rights, cultural practices and political instability within and in neighbouring countries.

Interestingly, in CAR selection logging does not cause permanent changes as vegetation quickly fills gaps left by felled trees. For purposes of REDD, the information on the time it takes to recover lost volume would be important.

Estimates of carbon emissions have been provided but these are still very rough since data on deforestation and degradation remain patchy and has not been systematically collected. So far emissions estimates have stemmed from an estimated rate of deforestation of 0.1% (equivalent to 14.3 million tones of C per year based on an average carbon fraction of 72.9 t C/ha). Under REDD these estimates would need to be more robust than is the case today.

Fire has now been recognized as a major factor in degradation and deforestation in the closed canopy and the dominant wooded savannah biome. In any future REDD strategy fire management has to be seriously considered.

Information and data available include:

- Land cover maps but the information is not conducive for estimating land cover changes
- Reconnaissance forest inventory, which could presumably be used to rapidly estimate carbon stocks
- There is also inventory data collected for sustainable management purposes, mostly in the commercial forestry parts of the country, namely the South East and South West Massifs.

Key issues in forest law enforcement and forest sector governance?

These are reported as low administrative capacity leading to weak Concession Management by Forest Authorities, including ambiguity in the procedures for the allocation of forest concessions.

Low fines appear not to deter illegal activities

The way by which concessions are allocated should be made more transparent and more competitive.

CAR has yet to join the FLEGT process which could improve its capacity to enforce laws

Political instability particularly in the north is also impeding law enforcement and the distribution of fuelwood

**4. Data available on indigenous peoples and forest dwellers? **

Since the last document there is a marked improvement on the availability of data on indigenous or forest dependent people and there is data on the proportion of the national populations claimed by a number of groups in CAR. The BaAKa are mentioned as numbering anywhere from 8000 to 20 000 individuals. However these communities have not been consulted under the current process but it is critical that they are in the next stage, particularly if the R-PIN is approved.

The interesting point is that the new Forest Legislation (2008) specifically recognizes the rights of indigenous communities, who are also consulted on matters of forest management and hence concessions.

As in the Congo, indigenous peoples do live within forests but the fringes of these forests are under pressure of encroachment from open savannah dwellers, further putting pressure on the indigenous people.

5. Current strategy in place to address deforestation and forest degradation. What stakeholder process was used to arrive at it?

The stakeholder participation process is not clearly described but information can be discerned from the description of policy processes, associated sustainable forest management programmes, and offers of support from donors such as French AFD, the Yaunde Summit on the Congo basin Countries

The country does not have a specific national strategy to combat deforestation or degradation but a number of national and regional initiatives and processes could constitute the best strategies at the moment.

Sustainable Forest management: CAR has embraced a sustainable forest management initiative supported by the French AFD. This is promoted through a French Funded Project, PARPAF, which seeks to improve the management of logging concessions among other objectives and the objective is that all forests by 2011 should be governed by approved management plans. Linked to this is a bushfire observatory which uses satellite imagery analyzed in Italy

Conservation: Includes setting aside hunting zones and protected areas and other forest reserves

Regional Initiatives: Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC) was launched in reflection of the national commitment made against deforestation and degradation. The CARPE process under USAID supports biodiversity conservation

Governance: Joining FLEGT, Integrating forest sectors programmes in poverty reduction strategy papers.

6. What would be needed to reduce deforestation and forest degradation?

- Zoning of forest lands and landuse planning associated with those
- Retaining some proportion of forest revenues to local communities
- Technical training in forestry
- Fuel efficient stoves
- Intensification of agriculture to limit agricultural expansion

Has country considered the potential relationship between REDD strategies and country's broader development agenda?

One can infer from the proportion of rural dwellers, that production forestry for generating revenues to governments will automatically compete with REDD since forestry contributed between 10 – 13% of its GDP and employs over 4000 people. This has to be carefully discussed and analysed if REDD has to become nationally supported.

Other development objectives consistent with REDD are;

Use of fuel efficient wood stoves to reduce consumption
Intensification of agriculture
Greater participation of local communities in forest management
Benefit sharing schemes from commercial logging

Has any technical assistance been received, or is planned on REDD?

Substantial support has been received from scientists from Montpellier in France, French AFD. Central African Republic and all Congo Basin countries have received support from France and other CBFP partners (NGOs, Germany...) in the climate negotiations context and under the COMIFAC Process.

7. What stakeholder consultation process would country use for developing and implementing REDD under FCPF support?

The country has considered a large consultation of all stakeholders, including all levels of information and stakeholders, from small forest dwellers up to inter-ministerial forums, while designing REDD initiatives. However, this is not clear and as stated earlier, previous consultations did not include government sectors other than the Ministry responsible for forests and environment. In the meantime a number of purposeful public consultations have been spearheaded by non-governmental organizations who appear to have the potential to ensure the effective participation of local / indigenous/ forest dependent communities.

Consultation is discussed with all the Congo Basin countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon) for harmonizing each other's policies through COMIFAC and seeking common positions in international forums.

8. Implementing REDD strategies: challenges to introducing effective REDD strategies, and how might they be overcome?

Establishing a baseline (reference case scenario) that recognizes the strong current economic conditions that could drive new deforestation, versus the historical fact of low deforestation, in order to implement REDD strategies will be a challenge. It could be mitigated through the launching of capacity building programmes for the implementation of REDD by responsible agencies.

With the absence of satellite imagery and maps, establishing a satellite imagery reception station in Central Africa to

update data is another challenge, but since France, Germany and other funding agencies have already shown their interest on establishing such a station, it can be managed.

Since CAR still needs infra-structure such as roads, any REDD strategy should allow for such infra-structure in its planning. There is a possibility that more land will be required to grow coffee and seed cotton. Competition from commercial forestry is an issue but can be overcome by low-impact harvesting, the volumes of which could be accounted for in carbon terms.

The quest for growing bio-fuels could be quite formidable and would need to be considered

Getting the support of indigenous and forest dependent people

With a fairly weak government affected by political instability, the government appears unable to enforce sustainable management laws and policies

Poverty is a major issue and the issue of using REDD as an incentive system to get poor people to participate will be a major issue

Would performance-based payments through REDD be a major incentive for implementing a more coherent strategy to tackle deforestation?

It is not clear whether this would work, but tenure arrangements that confer carbon rights to indigenous and forest dependents is a likely incentive if it could be included.

9. REDD strategy monitoring and implementation:

How forest cover and land use change are monitored today, and any constraints in this approach?

There is no national monitoring programme and the majority of the data collected is done through international and regional initiatives and the custodianship of the data does not seem to be shared by member countries of the COMIFAC.

So far, the only monitoring seems to take place mostly in logging areas and the collection of data, is supported by the PARPAF Programme.

The interest by World Resources Institute and the Global Forest Watch will produce a map of CAR forests and should provide, a very useful baseline for future monitoring.

The major constraints for monitoring are the lack of studies in the north of the country, and also the lack of high-resolution satellite imagery for an annual or biennial survey. Although the methods using forest inventory data is described, it is not clear how the data is integrated to come up with the land use change monitoring. It is suggested to combine the use of remote sensing data for monitoring the past historical emission estimates. If the capacity is lacking, it could be additionally proposed in the application

The proposal recommends that monitoring be done at the regional level through the observatory system (OFAC), which will serve the COMIFAC Countries, would probably make acquisition of high resolution satellite imagery cheaper than individual country acquisitions. However, this should not be enough since within CAR some monitoring capacity will still need to be built.

10. Additional benefits of potential REDD strategy, and how to monitor them: biodiversity and rural livelihood?

Besides biodiversity and ecosystem services, it is suggested that REDD will promote land use planning, increase incomes, reduce erosion, maintain water catchments and provide a buffer against desert encroachment and desertification

11. What assistance is country likely to request from FCPF Readiness Mechanism?

- National reference scenario; baseline data collection on forest cover and to build capacity for forest cover mapping and to estimate carbon stocks and emissions from land use activities
- Develop a national REDD Strategy
- Improving governance issues around concessions and the treatment of indigenous communities
- A strong national working group on forests and carbon to monitor and steer a national REDD strategy is also recommended.

12. Donors and international partners already cooperating with country on REDD.

France has supported the design the R-PIN and has shown interests on CAR's forest sector and is reportedly keen to support REDD Processes.

13. Country's Potential Next Steps and Schedule:

Many methodological improvements should be implemented within limited time. However, detailed schedule on such future works is not provided but should be guided by what is listed in section 11 above. It is recommended that CAR describe when and how methodological issues will be addressed.

14. Attachments and their usefulness:

This time there was little time to go over the all the attachment because of time limitations.

1. The matrix 'articulation of REDD activities' provides a useful insight into the thinking behind the R-PIN
2. However the data on carbon stock estimates in the Congo Basin Countries is not properly labelled an the figures (supposedly on carbon) is not self explanatory and appear to be very rough estimates .