

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

(interim, September 10, 2009, from Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 3)

Review of R-PP of (Republic of Congo)

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Date of review (June 2010):

General Comments

The RPP provides useful information on Republic of the Congo's forest resources. It has a good background to the Forest Resources, and demonstrates the value of forests on forest concessions among others. We commend the Republic of the Congo for the job well done within a short time frame

Strengths of the Republic of the Congo RPP:

- Encompasses environmental values of forests such as support to livelihood, protection and biodiversity roles among others.
- The Value of the Congo Forests as water towers and as repositories of unique biodiversity
- The Involvement of key institutions in the RPP Development Process (MDDEFFE among others and Training Institutions)
- Decentralized committee that if well resourced with clear TORs can steer a national REDD Programme
- It indicates a tentatively good understanding of elements for setting up reference scenarios for carbon and suggests monitoring approaches
- Proposes the use of demonstration pilots and several relevant in-depth studies that will inform the REDD Programme.
- The MRV and Monitoring sections are clearly written and are making strong and specific references to IPCC guidelines

Areas for Improvement of the Republic of the Congo RPP

- The outlines of the TORs of the REDD related bodies and/or committees are missing under the annex or are not clear in the main text
- The hierarchy of the proposed REDD Committee bodies , need clarification and more elaboration is needed particularly articulation to the overall National Climate Agenda under UNFCCC
- The document should more clearly differentiate between Drivers (direct/indirect) and underlying causes to the drivers, and apply accordingly how or to what extent the proposed strategy options directly address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. This refers to part 3: 3.1-3.6

Component 1. Organize and Consult

Standard 1a: National Readiness Management Arrangements

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

Observations:

The document has proposed several levels of the National REDD Committee with Top down and bottom up feed back such as among others:

- i. The R-PP explains the institutional framework for the development and implementation of the REDD strategy, focusing in the future plans to create institutions to take care of this. It mentions the relevant governmental and non governmental players of this organizations and sets the stage for clarifying their roles and responsibilities in REDD strategy design and implementation. The program Institutional bodies that will establish the Republic of Congo for REDD strategy are:
- ii. REDD National Committee (CN-REDD)
- iii. REDD National Coordination (COORDO-REDD)
- iv. REDD+ National Fund coupled with the REDD+ National Registry.
- v. The establishment of the REDD+ Departmental Committees is focal point to guarantee the participation of all the stakeholders identified of the country

Recommendations:

- The functional relationship between these levels and their reporting lines are not clear. For example who facilitates (CNIAC and CERGEC), the specific works of the 12 CD-REDD other than consultations?.
- In addition, the R-PP should clearly state the level in government at which the REDD National Committee (CN-REDD) is situated and operates from (ministry? Cabinet? Department? Etc).
- There is also insufficient clarity how the REDD National Committee (CN-REDD)top body relates to Sub-Regional then Councils/local level Structures and projects.
- While it makes sense to use existing local structures and institutions to manage REDD nationally, this must be accompanied by a thorough analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of such structures (eg. Local Structures) to manage REDD and the require capacity needs and associated budgets should be identified and described.
- Forest dependent Communities and National networks of Indigenous Peoples in Republic of the Congo need specific attention and should be treated as an independent Consultation forum instead of combining them under Civil Society Organizations. Same applies to Universities, Research and Members of the Academia
- Please consider that in paragraph 1 you may provide a general overview about what has been done on climate change in the country and the institutions that are in charge of this issue, because the R-PP focuses directly on REDD without giving a general background of the topic in the country.
- Please link this component with the rest of the R-PP document and provide a more clear definition of the governmental organizations role in the development of the REDD

strategy.

- In the graphic of the sheet 10, established that the CNIAFF and CERGEC are the organizations in charge of compiling and processing the MRV data, therefore it will be useful utilize this particular diagram in the component 4 and unbundling to make it more clear the role of this organism in MRV.

Standard 1b: Stakeholder Consultation and Participation

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

Observations:

- The RPP identifies the major land uses and vegetation types predominate. However isn't clear about the role of forestry sector in the country, because first mentioned that the export of timber corresponding to 6% of GDP and then mentions that represents 10% in 1.5 point.
- The Republic of Congo is composed of a large ethnic diversity; therefore it makes complicated an inclusive process of public consultation, so we must ensure that all stakeholders are represented in these consultations through participatory processes.

Recommendations:

- Define the methodology to be used for public consultations for each platform (public, private and civil society) and try to include participatory techniques for these queries
- In the civil society platform include all the indigenous people and local communities of the country, migrants, minority ethnics groups and in general all the vulnerable groups to realize a specific consultation directed to them and respecting every international agreement signed for the Republic of the Congo.
- It was recognized that one of the main problems relates to land tenure; Local people face many difficulties to realize all the formalities needed to register the possession of the land. It is recommended that during public consultation, this topic is allocated with higher importance, and have as result the strengthening procedures and laws to make it simpler the process of land registration among other processes.
- Establish the principal guidelines of the public consultations in the document, a list of the main themes to develop for the REDD strategy it will be helpful.
- Link the 1a component whit this chapter, with the intention of clarifying which institutional agent will take care of the public consultation.
- In the table of budget is established a 4 years period to realize the public consultations, however in the tables of the activities schedule is been only set a 3 years period, its recommended to standardize the time in each graphic, a 2 years period is recommended for the public consultations.
- The initial set of consultations seem proper and covered the entire country
- Since Forest dependent Communities(FDC) and indigenous people(IP) are responsible for managing a significant amount of non-gazetted forest land, it is probably important that a national process involving all FDC & IP is initiated and that such a body be made permanent to support the REDD implementation process.

Component 2. Prepare the REDD Strategy

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

Observations:

- Section 2 (a) demonstrates a good understanding of carbon trading issues
- The Legal Framework as described seems not quite clearly how supportive to REDD and indeed SFM is?
- There is little policy information section that recognizes all forms of tenure / forest ownership systems, baseline measurements, verification of measurements, financial mechanisms, stakeholder engagements and governance issues.
- The National Forest Action Plan (PAFN, 1994) is more than a decade old, it probably needs a plan for review

Recommendations:

- While the use of the existing PAFN(1994), could save costs and build on existing achievements, the reviewers propose for a review plan of PAFN to accommodate how well to address the drivers which have been well explained in the RPP.
- While the section recognizes the importance of social issues, it needs to do more than just reporting on them. It should probably prepare for a cyclical process which will allow for changes in the design if negative social issues arise from REDD implementation.
- The RPP should state if there are existing benefits sharing mechanisms, how they function and how they may inform REDD. Using that it should propose possible benefit sharing mechanisms or propose how they are likely to be designed.

Standard 2.b: REDD strategy Options:

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

Observations:

- There very comprehensive strategic intervention proposals for REDD strategy development linked to PRSP
- It has recommended a set of quite worthwhile in-depth studies

Recommendations:

- The main strategy options in the text should be elaborated more and the key elements put into the Annex
- The strategies should show how they directly or indirectly attempt to mitigate the forces of deforestation and degradation.
- The Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the associated root causes should be among the list of in-depth studies
- Another case which is worthy of an in-depth study is how the rights of minorities, forest dependent and indigenous people (pygmies) will be taken care of under REDD

Programmes. It is strongly recommended that this be one of the in-depth studies.

- In view of the impending reviews of both the current National Forest Action Plan (PAFN, 1994) and the PRSP, the REDD Programme could use the opportunity to critically review their usefulness as delivery mechanisms for REDD and to mainstream REDD issues in the Forest Policy through these programmes
- Clarify in paragraph 2.2 about important efforts to achieve sustainable forest management; also clarify if the area that is posted in (ii) (ANP considered) don't overlap with the area that is included in naturally flooded forest (v), and clarify the total area to have already framed for conservation in the country.
- It is unclear the term referred to DFNP and its difference with DFP so it would be good to extend this definition and also mention that forest lands are covered in 18 FMU. The R-PP does not mention if this includes the savannah, as in the definition of DFP mention that the land for wildlife is included. In a table about land with forest management also mentions that the land with forest management is located in 60 FMU. We suggest a concept clarification of FMU.
- In terms of land tenure and forest rights and other governance issues mentioned that the state is the principal owner and manager of the forests of Congo (1.6), it would be advisable to briefly describe how is the process of granting land and how it will be the definition of the carbon rights
- It's very valuable that the main laws of the country consider the international demands such as those generated at the summit in Rio de Janeiro and construct a better framework for sustainable and wide accepted development rules, We suggest that would be helpful to mention the essence of each law (2.4.1) and how does each one relate to the implementation of REDD. About deforestation drivers, most of them stem from one underlying and complex issue directly related with property rights. It is been recognized in the R-PP that one of its main weaknesses is issue of land tenure and certification of grants. We encourage you to include a proposal on suggestions how to solve this conflict (2.4.3 and 2.5).
- The main identified problem is agriculture and the slash and burn management practices related with this activity and the fact that it is itinerant makes it worse regarding carbon emissions. We recommend including a study to find out the difference regarding emissions between shifting and permanent plots cultivation systems, and also find out if drivers are directly related to land rights
- Although the mining industry is mentioned it isn't thoroughly touched neither considered as a relevant issue for deforestation in the R-PP (3.5 and 4.4). We suggest carrying out a study, including workshops for results presentation on the impact of the mining industry on forest degradation and deforestation processes. . The R-PP is planning three studies to review deeply about the drivers or agents of deforestation. One concern we have is that almost all studies are planned to be performed in a very short time (1 month or 2). None of them addresses the themes that rise causes of deforestation. Please include the themes mentioned above, either as a separate studies or as part of these three already planned another factor to consider is whether the studies, such as infrastructure (5.3) are not duplicated with other previous studies that in theory are necessary for the development of those roads.

Overall compliance with very general proposals about strategies and options that the country will follow to revert the four identified DD drivers

- Do not mention the way of action and who will be responsible for such activities; it would be desirable to complement this information and then make a further review about feasibility of these actions.
- Perhaps it would be good reconsider the idea of 24 pilot projects. Two projects for each state might be a figure that should take into account the number of available specialist people capable of implementing these projects.
- We see as a good idea to develop an analytical table for each criteria requested by the FMT template. We also see an opportunity to improve this approach if you cluster into one and reflect more clearly which are the strategic options that are proposed and their evaluation results be reflected in a more synthetic and visual comprehensible table.
- About the co-benefits, four out of five options were assigned with a very high qualification; the fifth option did not get such analysis. The first strategy is a cross-cutting option and has a positive impact on the four drivers previously identified. R-PP mentions actions like PNAT planning and the expansion of NPA's but they aren't consistent about how to do this work, or who would be in charge of doing so, and although there are legal ways to approach it, the R-PP mention that is unknown the feasibility to do that. (2b 2c 2.3 and 2.2).
- This option is so important that we would recommend going deeper into how the activities could be carried out.
- The second strategy is about development of Sustainable Management Forest Resources, and addresses the certification of forest products as a successful measure for the conservation of forests. Please provide information on who are the land concessionaires in the country and who are the certifying body.
- About the third strategy SO3 and its sub options SO3.1 and SO3.2 are unfeasible according to the analysis put forward, so we suggested reviewing these sub options (The bank loan to poor people and the condition of payment after harvesting, isn't a very attractive or feasible option). Being the subsistence agriculture identified as the main cause of deforestation, the solutions exposed are extremely brief, doesn't deepens and or doesn't seems to go according to the socioeconomic conditions of the country either.
- Finally, Option 5, about cross-cutting policies for REDD+, it's a very important issue to track because it's aimed to solve the underlying drivers of the DD. The R-PP mentions the exploration for mineral and oil resources as driver which is could be strongly destructive but it doesn't provide enough solutions or activities to mitigate it. We recommend to carefully analyze this driver of DD

Standard 2.c: REDD implementation framework:

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

Observations

- R-PP indicates the need to link REDD strategy to the PRSP and this is a good step to ensure holistic approach and treat REDD as not only an environmental concern but also developmental.

- The “Bill under review to promote recognition of customary rights” is an important initiative to clarify the land tenure of the indigenous peoples and local communities.
- The section is very comprehensive and recognizes and elucidates a lot of issues that still need to be resolved prior to achieving a comprehensive REDD+ strategy. This is best practice.

Recommendations

- The national strategic in-depth studies and pilots should also include participatory methods for monitoring and reporting on socio-economic effects of REDD implementation.
- We recommend, in the section 2.4.2 Potential content of the law, to consider in this bill clarifying everything related to carbon rights. We also suggest that in Paragraph 3.4, should consider that the State shall set a multisectoral body, where all the actors representatives get involved in the transactions of REDD+ carbon credits, in order to make this process transparent and reliable.
- An implementation framework is about institutions and institutional frameworks, their mandate, partnerships and the deployment of resources according to well laid out objectives. This is not yet clear in the RPP. The elements should be listed and briefly described in the main text and if possible annexed.

Standard 2.d: Assessment of social and environmental impacts:

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

Observations

- The RPP states that there is limited capacity for SESA and has called for International consultancy and the World Bank Support on the same
- It has made reference to World Bank Safeguards which it will also use to guide its work
- In the section on Strategic Requirements, the RPP recognizes the need for SESA

Recommendation

- It would be useful for Republic of the Congo to put in place (Annex) clear ToR for the SESA and also what impacts could be anticipated with the current RPP.
- The objective of this component did not fully meet the request, as it aims to reduce the negative impacts to comply with the safeguards that marks the World Bank and the participating country's own laws, and do not agree with the activities that are well developed in Point 3.
- It is recommended to align the objectives set out in the activities. We also recommend linking the organizations listed in the component 1.a to those mentioned in this component, to establish roles, and monitoring impacts from the strategy implementation.

Component 3. Develop a Reference Scenario

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

Observations:

- It has been stated that some data on carbon stocks/MRV already exist but not clearly presented or discussed in the main text neither annexed

Recommendations

- This section could be improved by presenting a review of historical data which Republic of the Congo has and a statement of Republic of the Congo's capacity in this field (which it has anyway) and where it will put efforts to increase capacity through additional trained personnel or improve the skills of existing personnel. Hence All available data and capacities in Republic of the Congo should be evaluated to prepare for a "best effort" to estimate historical forest carbon changes as key input to the REL development. The available information here is too general.
- Republic of the Congo should also state, which among the causes or drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are, in their judgment , likely to affect its estimation of REL significantly
- Section 3 could be improved by synthesizing existing data and information and plan for a National Forest Management Information System (NAFOMIS) to outline its options clearly on how it will contribute to develop a reference scenario and possibly contribute to future MRV.
- The proposal presented by Republic of Congo, shows a good development of all subcomponents for a Reference Scenario. In order to estimate historic reference scenario, and because the Republic of Congo currently has a relatively low rate of deforestation (0.75), we suggest considering the forest transition theory (Angelsen 2007): Is probably that in the near future, the deforestation accelerates considerably (many drivers and causes are already listed in the document). But if set the reference line only in the historic deforestation, the future scenario rate may be underestimated. However, we all are still pending of the final resolution from UNFCCC negotiations on this topic.
- For estimation of future deforested Areas, your proposal is to implement three models. An alternative that takes into account that national capacities in modeling are poor is to take advantage from IIASA support (option3). For the initial implementations consider option 2, the option 1 is a simplified approach therefore has limited prediction capacity.
- We suggest the use of GIS-technology to generate the risk map considering all the threats, this through a multi-criteria analysis.
- To localize future deforested or degraded areas, is very important to update in a short time the inputs (like layers of infrastructure- roads-mines, localities, logging).
- Find financial mechanism to support institutions in charge of these activities (CERGEAC and CNIAFF). Proceed to set a MRV team for modeling and update the spatial information.
- The methodology proposed for carbon estimation takes into account all the pools, which requires improving the data collection in site studies for soil carbon, and the methodology description for these measurements.
- In the case of aerial biomass estimation, should also be considered sample plots as a tool for future monitoring, in which they have measurable parameters for the assessment.

- The goal to reach the Approach 2 and Tier 2 in MRV might be unfeasible in the short term because Republic of Congo doesn't have national information about emission factors (they mention they will use general allometry equation like Brown and Lugo, and Chavez et al., but they don't have national allometric equation.) Something similar happens for the activity issue (land use areas), where they pretend to use estimate data using satellite imagery, without a reasonable validation process. However, we recommend the use of allometric equations for estimating the aerial and sub-superficial biomass. Currently exist a lot of equations that consider a smaller amount of data which can be easily measurable in the demonstration plots and could save resources in the future; the database of General Office of the Nacional Center for Statistic and Economic Studies already have them available.
- Is important to insert spatial and remote sensing technology to calculate reference scenario and to integrate spatial and temporally parameters for future comparisons. It is also important to improve the local operating capacities in cartographic production, SIG and model. You may consider CNI AFF agreement to strengthen these capacities?

Component 4. Design a Monitoring System

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

Observations

- It is not stated quite clearly how the national forest monitoring/inventory (important aspect of insitu data) will be based on i.e. permanent sample plots.
- R-PP lack of use of Forest dependent communities/indigenous people to check the accuracy of field measurements makes the process non inclusive, thus there is a need to commit to capacity building so that Forest dependent communities/indigenous people are involved.

Recommendations

- The R-PP must detail out how Republic of the Congo will reinforce MRV country coordination.
 - An important ecosystem service; water should also be included as one of the MRV elements - since Republic of the Congo has 8,369,760 million ha of water catchment forests (permanently flooded)
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- The proposed inventory, while is important, is also inadequate to validate a MRV in a national level. Then we suggest invest more resources to increase the number of permanent sample sites.
 - Even the most forest land is owned by the government, it is important to consider the involvement of communities and indigenous people for a low cost community monitoring system.
 - It's advisable to implement an intermediate strategy with low-cost field sampling and high intensity, to realize quick estimates of biomass density using a scheme of ranges or intervals. This would allow them to create a better estimate about the uncertainties associated with satellite and field
 - We suggested a merge of the field information with the satellite that aims to expand at

national level (wall-to-wall) the estimations reflecting the uncertainties in a spatially explicit way.

- With the objective of facilitating the social participation in the project, the establishment of consult forums including scientific, social and governmental community can be positive for regarding transparency during the project execution, information management, data availability and results coming from the implementation of the country REDD strategy.
- The MRV doesn't consider co-benefits or safeguards, so it is important to expand the proposed monitoring system to assess it, i.e. biodiversity at level landscape (connectivity and fragmentation).
- The co-benefits part, besides citing which are some of the principles and criteria, the R-PP should briefly describe how they will be integrated into the monitoring and verification system; or if MRV will be made apart for co-benefits. It may be useful to review the publication on REDD + Social & Environmental Standards (www.climate-standards.org/REDD+). It should have its own planning and budget table.

Component 5. Schedule and Budget

Standard 5: Completeness of information and resource requirements

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

Observation:

Component 5 shows a summary of amounts that makes it understandable and practical, doubts whether the figures are handled in dollars or another currency (K \$). The total amount is very low considering that the participation of government is only 4%.

Recommendations:

- In Sub-component 1.a, we show that the committees designed to REDD will be funded mainly by external sources of government, which is considered nonviable for the permanence of these committees, so it is recommended that this cost is covered locally.
- The principles of M and E are recognized in the document, as are the use of process and product indicators. However indicators could be made more SMART
- In Sub-component 1.b, consultation activities are undertaken in a very long period, we recommend to narrow the time down to two years maximum to start the process of implementing REDD strategy.
- In the budget program for 2b, the R-PP addresses a national workshop for every two issues, but anyway is broken by study, so we suggested to be displayed as a single workshop to avoid confusion. And also that the budget be made in thousands of dollars. It attracts attention that the budget reflects only 3% as government contribution for the implementation cost of REDD + strategy.
- In Sub-component 2D, only budgeted development studies, but neglect policy and governance aspects.
- In Component 3, the time to get the reference scenario is until 2013 (four years) should be diminished to two years, to follow REDD activities.

<p>Component 6. Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</p> <p>Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations: No observations were included from the PC reviewers, nor recommendations on component 6.</p>