

PC Review of R-PP of Democratic Republic of Congo

Reviewers: Norway (lead), Denmark, European Commission, Nepal, Suriname

Overview

The PC reviewers share the view that DRC should be commended for demonstrating great strides towards REDD readiness. They recommend the PC to consider the R-PP as a good basis for moving forward with the limited up-front financial support from the FCPF Readiness Fund, while recommending several adjustments that would improve the R-PP.

In particular, the PC reviewers would like to thank the Technical Advisory Panel for providing an excellent review. The PC reviewers are confident that the TAP review will help improve the R-PP substantially going forward. The PC Reviewers agree in full with the TAP review and its recommendations.

In addition to its endorsement of the TAP recommendations, the PC countries would like to provide a few general comments:

1. **DRC deserves credit for the R-PP process so far.** Substantial work went into the first draft of the R-PP. Consequently, consultation meetings took place before a second draft was presented in late February. The second draft took into account many changes that were proposed, including a good risk matrix with mitigation measures. One of the PC reviewers participated actively in the process, and points to the open attitude and willingness to incorporate feedback among the project team. This provides a good foundation for the near future, when much broader consultations will have to take place for the implementation of the R-PP to be effective. **DRC deserves credit for its candidness in assessing the challenges ahead.** This provides for good diagnostics, and will help formulate a REDD-strategy with higher likelihood of success.
2. **The implementation schedule is very / overly ambitious.** It seems highly unlikely that the targets can be reached within the proposed time frame. DRC scores very low down on a number of governance indicators (such as ‘voice and accountability’, ‘political stability’, ‘government effectiveness’, ‘regulatory quality’, ‘rule of law’, and ‘control of corruption’), and implementing REDD+ in DRC will be very challenging. In addition, human resource limitations, a comprehensive and ongoing decentralisation process and planned elections in 2011 all call for a more realistic programming. It is also vital that REDD processes and activities allow for participation and ownership by relevant stakeholders, including on a national level. While enhancing sustainability, this may slow down progress in the near term. A likely extension of the R-PP implementation time with 1 to 2 years will also have budgetary implications. **It is recommended that the timeline and implementation schedule be reassessed by the Government at the end of 2010.**
3. **The REDD strategy must be embedded in the new DRC Poverty Reduction Strategy.** This will be critical for the success of REDD in DRC. Given the generally weak track-record of inter-sectorial coordination, careful attention must be given to coordination of REDD activities. It is important that the interdepartmental REDD committee becomes operational. Also, UNDP and the World Bank have key roles to play in the dialogue with the Government on the new PRSP.
4. **Compatibility with REDD+ objectives.** The PC reviewers are aware of the differing views of civil society organizations to some of the proposed “preliminary” strategies included in Annex 2b of the R-PP. The PC reviewers would like to stress that successful REDD+ should be

compatible with – indeed contribute to – and in no way compromise, sustainable economic development. DRC and other REDD+ countries are free to manage their forests sustainably, including through logging concessions when done in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. Of course, if this leads to lower (or negative) emission reductions, the country would receive lower (or completely forego) results-based payments from REDD+. Hence, some PC reviewers have questioned how the potential granting of 10 million hectares of new operation licenses can positively contribute to DRC's REDD+ strategy or even sustainable development strategy, and thus whether it belongs in the strategy section of the R-PP. (It is of course highly relevant as context for REDD+ efforts.) These reviewers would also highlight the importance of ensuring sustainability and proper law enforcement before ending the logging moratorium.

5. **Clearer link to ongoing key projects/programs.** The R-PP several places refer to projects relevant for the strategy development. In particular, the Congolese Forest and Environment Sector Project (PNFoCo) must be closely aligned. A particular responsibility rests with the World Bank being the main financier of this project. Co-ordination with other government initiatives and donors will be essential. Coordination at the regional level through COMIFAC and CBFP will also be very important considering that certain activities and functions can be executed more cost effectively through regional cooperation.
6. The issue of **traditional land rights** in DRC must be properly addressed in the development of a REDD mechanism. The analytic part of the R-PP clearly recognizes this need, the Congolese Ministry of Environment do the same, but how this should be done, and what strategy is necessary to ensure such a process, needs to be clarified further. While recognizing that the question of land tenure is political, and as such only can be resolved through a national political process, the PC reviewers would like to point to the general experience of the importance of local control by and involvement of the people actually living in the concerned areas.
7. The **gender dimension** is not sufficiently covered in the R-PP. Forestry is incorrectly treated as 'gender neutral'. In the DRC R-PP it is therefore important to address gender gaps and put women's role in REDD higher up on the agenda.
8. A PC reviewer called for the establishment of an **independent national unit for monitoring**. This could include an ombudsman function for stakeholders. It could also be tasked with monitoring financial disbursements
9. **Active risk management, especially with respect to the management of REDD funds**, must be given the highest priority. The R-PP envisages a national REDD+ fund, with 11 provincial funds to channel funds to the regions. While generally in favor of direct access and "country systems", the PC reviewers have reservations as to whether such a model is realistic in DRC within the relevant time frame, and **recommends DRC to also explore alternative options** in order not to lose time later on should it prove infeasible.
10. While the budget seems reasonable given the timeline, **there is a significant funding gap**. The PC reviewers recommend DRC to seek out alternative funding sources, including from the Congo Basin Forest Fund and the UN REDD program.
11. Despite all the challenges and indeed high risks involved the PC reviewers consider it necessary to move forward due to the substantial benefits of success, both to the people of DRC and for the climate. Successful implementation of REDD+ in DRC will likely require experimenting with pilots to build successful models.