

TAP Review of the R-Package submitted by Costa Rica

**Independent TAP-Expert Review¹ on the Self-Assessment Process
of Costa Rica's R-Package – September 2015**

¹ This TAP Expert Review consisted of a desk study and telephone interviews with a few of the stakeholders involved in Costa Rica's REDD+ readiness process. The review was carried out by Simon Rietbergen, independent TAP Expert, between September 15th and 28th, 2015.

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Core Tasks of the TAP Expert Review

1. The present document contains the independent review by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) of the Self-Assessment Process of the R-Package² undertaken by Costa Rica through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation process. The purpose of the review is to assess both progress and achievements of REDD+ Readiness in the country, as well as the remaining challenges (if any) that will need to be addressed to effect the transition from Readiness to implementation of performance-based REDD+ activities.
2. The TAP-review is a background document for the Participants' Committee (PC) in its decision-making process to endorse the R-Package. The endorsement of the R-Package is a prerequisite for the formal submission of Costa Rica's Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) to the PC. The Costa Rica ER Program will be implemented at national level, with small areas of the national territory excluded because they are open water, or have permanent cloud cover or volcanic activity, together accounting for 3% of the national surface area. The small Coco Island in the Pacific Ocean is also excluded from the ER Program.

Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review

3. This is the second TAP Expert Review of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process of REDD+ in a country using the R-Package, following the DR Congo Review done in April 2015. The TORs for the current TAP expert review are as follows:
 - Perform an independent review of Costa Rica's self-evaluation of progress in REDD+ Readiness, using the methodological framework of the FCPC Assessment Framework for consistency;
 - Review Costa Rica's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process that was used for the self-assessment and the reported outcome;
 - Review key outputs and (documents that underpin) and are referenced in the R-Package, including documents pertaining to the national REDD strategy, the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), reference levels and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures;
 - Provide constructive and targeted feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in subcomponents, and propose actions going forward.
4. To perform this task, a simple methodology has been applied which consists

² The purpose of the R-Package is threefold: (i) Provide an opportunity to REDD Country Participants to self-assess the progress on REDD+ implementation; (ii) Demonstrate a REDD Country Participant's commitment to REDD+ Readiness; and (iii) Generate feedback and guidance to REDD Country Participants through a national multi-stakeholder self-assessment and Participants' Committee (PC) assessment processes. (FCPC Readiness Assessment Framework guide June 2013)

of the following steps:

- Step A: Review the self-assessment process of REDD+ Readiness based on Costa Rica's R-package report produced by the REDD Secretariat³ and the report of the consultants appointed to help facilitate the participation of the five stakeholder groups in the self-assessment process⁴. Box 1 below provides the outlines of both these reports.
 - Step B: Review of the results from the multi-stakeholder R-Package self-assessment process, based on the same two reports (henceforth called the Costa Rica's R-package report, and the Stakeholder self-assessment report, respectively) under Step A.
 - Step C: Assess what still needs to be done to further develop the Readiness Process.
5. The purpose of the TAP's expert review is not to second-guess the country's self-assessment, as this is based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process that was guided by the FCPF's readiness assessment framework. The review should rather focus on determining whether a due process and approach was followed while performing the self-assessment, and provide constructive feedback to the FCPF Participants Committee.

³ Secretaria de REDD+ de Costa Rica, 2015. Documento del Paquete de la Preparación para REDD+, 12 September 2015: <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/r-package.pdf>. The full Readiness package is available on <http://reddcr.go.cr/es/centro-de-documentacion/paquete-de-preparacion-2015>.

⁴ WISE REDD+ and Conservation International, 2015. Informe del proceso de autoevaluación de las partes interesadas relevantes (PIR's) sobre la fase de preparación de la estrategia REDD+ Costa Rica: http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/autoevaluacion_pirs.pdf. This report contains summaries of the discussions with each of the five stakeholder groups but not the minutes of the stakeholder workshops. Annexes 1-3, which provide details on stakeholder participation can be found at: http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/anexos_1_a_3.pdf whereas the results (color scores) of the stakeholder groups' assessment are given in Annexes 4 and 5 on: http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/anexos_4_y_5.xlsx.

Box 1: Outlines of the Costa Rica R-Package Report and of the Stakeholder Self-Assessment Report (translated from Spanish)

Costa Rica R-Package Report

1. Introduction
2. Summary of the REDD+ Readiness Process by Component
Other themes: Calendar, Budget, Monitoring and Evaluation
3. Process and methodology of the participatory self-assessment
4. Report of the results of the participatory self-assessment
5. References

Annex 1: Definition of relevant stakeholders and social actors

Annex 2: Information provided during the process

Stakeholder Self-Assessment Report

- 1 Summary of the self-assessment process
2. Introduction
3. Methodology used for the self-assessment process
4. Results of the self-assessments for each of the five stakeholder groups (with the sections: Synthesis of Results, Characteristics of the stakeholder group; Participants in the self-assessment process; Description of the Process; Progress indicators per REDD Readiness sub-component)
5. Summary of the synthesis of the results of all stakeholder groups per REDD Readiness sub-component
6. Significant achievements
7. Conclusions
8. Recommendations

Annex 1. Didactic guide and Agenda

Annex 2. List of participants

Annex 3. Photos of the events

Annex 4. Results of the self-assessments done by the stakeholder workshops

Annex 5. Summary table of the stakeholder self-assessments

TAP Review Part A: Review of the Self-Assessment Process and the Documentation

This part of the TAP report provides feedback on the multi-stakeholder self-assessment report, including the summary of the multi-stakeholder process and discussions (Chapter 3 of the R-Package Self-Assessment report, and Chapter 3 of the Stakeholder Self-Assessment Report).

6. ***Self-Assessment process conducted according to the R-Package guidelines.*** Costa Rica's REDD+ Secretariat, in an effort to guarantee the impartiality of the stakeholder process for the self-evaluation, requested an outside party, the WISE REDD+ Project of Conservation International, to

facilitate the stakeholder self-assessment process.⁵ The self-assessment process was conducted in workshops with the five stakeholder groups (and their representation mechanisms, see Table 1) that have been active throughout the REDD+ readiness process, intensively used during the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment process (2011-2014) and formalized in the 2012 REDD decree: (i) Indigenous peoples; (ii) small and medium-scale farmers and agro-foresters; (iii) academics and NGOs; (iv) forest industry; (v) government.⁶ The stakeholder groups received workshop invitations through their designated focal points and then decided themselves who their representatives for different REDD+ workshops would be (« self-selection process»). A detailed list of the information on the REDD+ Readiness process provided to the stakeholder groups is in Annex 2 (pages 45-46) of the R-package self-assessment report.

➔ *The FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework was used conscientiously during the self-assessment process, enriched with other normative frameworks, as suggested by the FCPF framework itself.*

7. Well-Facilitated self-assessment process. The REDD+ Secretariat took charge of the logistics and communications related to the stakeholder workshops, and produced the initial draft methodology for the consultations. Conservation International was responsible for the facilitation of the workshops, and the adaptation of the draft methodology to each of the stakeholder groups, taking into account their specific circumstances. Costa Rica initiated the self-assessment process with a discussion of a first draft version of the methodology with Indigenous Peoples representatives on 27 March 2015. Apart from the FCPF readiness assessment framework itself, a number of other normative documents were used (as suggested by the FCPF framework), including the REDD+ social and environmental norms of CCBA/CARE International and the Participatory Governance Assessments of UN-REDD, among others.⁷ The self-assessment methodology was subsequently finalized⁸ and the logistical and technical preparation of the stakeholder workshops started in May 2015. Although only one five-hour workshop was planned for each of the stakeholder groups, it was decided to have two five-hour workshops each for the small-scale agroforestry producers (5 June and 17 July) and the Indigenous Peoples (27 March and 6 July), one to explain the methodology in detail, adapt it as necessary and assign initial color scores, and one to discuss the results of the first workshop and develop a consensual self-assessment result. The other workshops were held as follows: forest industry on July 8th; academics on July 24th and the government agencies on August 18th. Conservation International circulated meeting results to all stakeholder groups for comments and corrected the

⁵ Conservation International made available two facilitators: Ruth Martinez, Ecosystem Management Program and Ginnette Cruz, Widening Informed Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ (WISE REDD+) project.

⁶ A detailed list of the comprehensive information on the REDD+ Readiness process provided to the stakeholder groups is in Annex 2 (pages 45-46) of the R-package self-assessment report.

⁷ Another framework used was the « Marco para la Evaluación y el Seguimiento de la Gestión Forestal del Programa sobre los Bosques »

⁸ See pages 35-36 of the R-package self-assessment report.

reports before integrating them in the Stakeholder process report.

➔ According to both the R-package report and the Stakeholder self-assessment report, the stakeholder process was well-facilitated. The use of an independent facilitator may well have enabled stakeholder groups to express themselves more freely, as intended by the REDD+ Secretariat. The discussion of the draft methodology with the Indigenous Peoples prior to launching the stakeholder self-assessment workshops proper is excellent and should be recommended as a good practice example to other countries. The continued engagement of the Stakeholder groups (despite the “consultation fatigue” noted below) is witnessed by the fact that they have asked the government to involve them in developing a Follow-up Plan to deal with remaining issues to be clarified for REDD+ Readiness. The REDD+ Secretariat has tasked the facilitators, Conservation International, to continue to work with the stakeholder groups on the development of this Follow-Up Plan.

Table 1. Stakeholder Groups and actors active in Costa Rica’s REDD+ process⁹

| Stakeholder Group | Institutional actor |
|---|--|
| Small and medium-scale agroforestry producers | National Forest Union (UNAFOR) National Forestry Office (ONF) Union of Small Costa Rican Agricultural Producers (UPANACIONAL) Platform of “referents” of the small producer sector |
| Indigenous Peoples | Central North Block Central Pacific Block Nagbe Block RIBCA Block |
| Academics, NGOs | Centre for Agricultural Research, Turrialba (CATIE) German International Cooperation Organization (GiZ) INBIO University of Costa Rica (UCR) |
| Forest industries | Costa Rican Chamber of Forests (CCF) National Forestry Office (ONF) |
| Government | College of Agricultural Engineers of Costa Rica (CIAGRO) Directorate of Climate Change (DCC) National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) National Meteorological Institute (IMN) National Protected Areas System (SINAC) |

8. **Consultation fatigue** – As noted in the Stakeholder self-assessment report, participants from some of the stakeholder groups are somewhat tired of these kinds of workshops, and they are doubtful about the usefulness or results. They feel they have been involved actively in many REDD+ activities, but have seen little or no evidence of the results of their inputs. They would

⁹ This is a translation of Annex 1 of the R-package report produced by Costa Rica’s REDD+ Secretariat. The term stakeholder groups is the translation for « Partidas Interesadas Relevantes », literally, Relevant Interested Parties. The detailed participants lists are included in the above-mentioned WISE REDD+ report on the stakeholder self-assessment process.

like to see stronger, more targeted communication efforts from the REDD+ secretariat to remedy these problems and accompany each stakeholder group according to their distinctive needs and contributions to the REDD program.¹⁰ In response to this critique, the REDD+ technical secretariat asked the Project WISE REDD+ Costa Rica to work with each of the stakeholder groups to help create a Follow-up Plan¹¹ to remedy these problems. The Follow-up Plan, once completed, will have to be approved by the REDD Secretariat.

➔ *The idea coming from the stakeholders of developing a Follow-up Plan to the self-assessment process to address their concerns about the REDD+ Readiness process is timely, and the support expressed by the REDD+ Secretariat for this idea is constructive. This is a good illustration of the value of the Secretariat's discussion to use an independent facilitator. The possible links between the Follow-up Plan and the other FCPF supported REDD+ activities in Costa Rica are further explored in the Conclusions and Recommendations section.*

9. ***Time frame and development of the Readiness Process in Costa Rica.*** Costa Rica has been actively involved in discussions on international mechanisms to link forests and climate change mitigation in the framework of the UNFCCC since 2005.¹² Costa Rica received a grant of US\$200,000 from the FCPF to prepare its Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) in June 2009. A supplementary grant agreement for US\$3.6 million to implement the R-PP was signed in June 2012. A supplementary grant agreement for US\$ 5 million has been approved by FCPF and the World Bank but has not yet been signed. A Letter of Intent (LOI) for the purchase of Costa Rican emissions reductions by the FCPF Carbon Fund was signed in September 2013 and gave the country access to US\$650,000 worth of technical assistance for developing the Emissions Reduction Program. Apart from the FCPF grants, the REDD+ Readiness process in Costa Rica also benefited from support provided by NORAD, GiZ, UN-REDD and the US State Department. The REDD+ Readiness Process started in 2011 and is planned to be completed in late 2015 with the consultation on the national REDD+ strategy, which is one of the main pillars of the country's broader "Forests and Rural Development Program".

➔ *The R-package report describes well the REDD+ Preparation and Readiness development since 2008. The documentation is complete and hyperlinks are provided to key documents such as the RPP and the 2012 REDD+ Decree, which are all posted on Costa Rica's well-designed REDD+ website.*

10. ***National implementation of REDD+ readiness over the whole of the country.*** Costa Rica, as one of the smaller tropical forest countries with a surface area of 5.1 million hectares, has chosen to implement its future

¹⁰ Stakeholder self-assessment report, page 5

¹¹ « Plan de Seguimiento »

¹² Of course Costa Rica's active involvement in promoting forest conservation through payment for environmental services (PES or PSA in Spanish) predates the UNFCCC efforts by 10 years, through the PSA program the country initiated through its 1996 Forest Law.

REDD+ strategy over its whole territory, with few, small exceptions (permanent cloud cover, open water, volcanic activity) accounting for less than 3% of the surface area. While this does no doubt fit well with the country's political priorities, such as achieving countrywide carbon neutrality in the not-too-distant future, it does increase the complexity of the Readiness process. For example, Costa Rica has 24 autonomous indigenous peoples with their own territory and government, and not all of these are favorably disposed towards REDD+.¹³ National-level implementation also creates challenges for the integration of REDD+ activities in the Reference levels, especially since these activities include enhancement of carbon stocks, which are harder to measure than avoided deforestation. As a consequence, the preparation of the elements necessary to access results-based payments (especially FREL, NRMS) was delayed – the Emissions Reduction Program was originally expected to start implementation in late 2013. This may well explain, at least in part, the frustration that some of the stakeholder groups expressed during the stakeholder self-evaluation process conducted by WISE REDD+ (see conclusions and recommendations below).

→ *Developing a nationwide REDD+ strategy and Emissions Reductions Program, while having some advantages (such as the absence of Leakage), also creates challenges, in terms of the need to involve all stakeholders in the whole of the national territory (including the reluctant ones) and of the technical issues to be addressed.*

11. The quality of the R-Package Report fell somewhat short of the expectations of the TAP reviewer. While the R-Package report provides a good summary of the REDD+ preparation process so far and of the self-evaluation process conducted, some key elements were missing, e.g. the minutes of the stakeholder consultation workshops. A clear summary of work that remains to be done on each of the 34 criteria (or even just the nine sub-components) to achieve REDD+ Readiness would also have been useful – though this will now be produced – in the form of a Follow-up Plan – in a sequel to the stakeholder self-assessment process, and at their express request.

→ *Adding a table documenting the strengths and weaknesses of Costa Rica's REDD+ Readiness process as well as a brief summary of what still needs to be done to achieve REDD+ Readiness (as was done on ten pages of DR Congo's R-package report¹⁴), would have better enabled the PC to form a solid opinion on where Costa Rica's REDD+ Readiness Process has got to and to provide Costa Rica with more specific guidance on next steps. The Follow-up Plan, in addition to helping to translate stakeholder concerns and aspirations about the REDD readiness process, will also be essential for creating consensus amongst all stakeholder groups and the REDD Secretariat on what still needs to be done to achieve Readiness. , In the opinion of the reviewer, it would have been clearer if a summary of the*

¹³ Currently, nineteen of the twenty-four distinct indigenous peoples groups are involved in the REDD+ Readiness Process and seventeen were involved in the R-package stakeholder self-evaluation process.

¹⁴ Auto-évaluation Participative du Dossier Préparatoire à la REDD+ République Démocratique du Congo, Rapport Final, <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/April/R-Package%20final%20version%2031%20mars.pdf>

results of the various stakeholder groups' self-assessments (as in Table 2 below, which is based on Annex 5 of the Stakeholder self-assessment report produced by WISE REDD) would have been annexed to Costa Rica's R-package report – accompanied if needed by a disclaimer that these data derived from an independently facilitated stakeholder process not controlled by the REDD+ Secretariat.

TAP Review Part B: summary of the REDD+ Processes – Strengths and Weaknesses of the R package as highlighted by Costa Rica's self-assessment

This part of the TAP review focuses on the self-assessment results; progress indicators (color scores) for the nine subcomponents, significant achievements and areas requiring further development.

12. Ample documentation was made available to assess Costa Rica's progress with REDD+ Readiness. While the R-package self-assessment report produced by the Secretariat provided a narrative description of all 34 assessment criteria, the narrative of the Stakeholder self-assessment report written by the independent process facilitator was organized according to the four components of REDD Readiness. The stakeholder self-assessment process "scored" the 57 questions grouped under the 34 criteria in three of the stakeholder workshops, but for the government and academics only scored the nine sub-components (see table 2 below). The R-package self-assessment report contains an impressive number of hyperlinks to REDD+ Readiness outputs, all of which can be accessed through the links. A number of additional documents consulted by the TAP Expert are listed in the final section of the document. In the following, R-Package components and sub-components are commented on the basis of the two afore-mentioned self-assessment reports.

➔ *Despite the small discrepancies in the structuring of the narratives of the R-package report and the Stakeholder self-assessment report noted above, together they give a good idea of REDD Readiness progress in Costa Rica.*

Table 2. Color scores for the 57 questions under the 34 criteria of the assessment framework, per stakeholder group¹⁵

| Stakeholder Group | Meeting date | GREEN | YELLOW | ORANGE | RED |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Small-scale farmers | | 0 | 4 | 22 | 20 |
| Indigenous peoples | | 12 | 17 | 19 | 0 |
| Academics | | nd | nd | nd | nd |
| Private Sector | | 0 | 13 | 31 | 13 |
| Government | | nd | nd | nd | nd |
| | | | | | |
| Totals | | 12 | 34 | 72 | 33 |

¹⁵ This information is summarized from Annex 4 of the previously cited WISE REDD+ stakeholder self-assessment report.

NB Based on data from Annex 4 of the Stakeholder Self-assessment report. The totals of the color scores per stakeholder group are not identical because some groups did not score all the criteria, as they felt they had too little information about them, as follows: small-scale farmers: 11; indigenous peoples: 9. Unfortunately, the color scores accorded for the 57 questions by the academics and the government were not given in the report, just the scores per sub-component.

13. The major discrepancies among the views of the main stakeholder groups on Costa Rica’s progress with regards to REDD+ Readiness are immediately apparent from Table 2, with the indigenous peoples taking a positive view (no red scores, majority of scores green and yellow) and small and medium scale farmers and the private forestry sector taking a negative view, with no green scores and the overwhelming majority of scores orange and red. The self-assessment report attributes the positive view of the indigenous peoples to the fact they have received dedicated accompaniment to provide inputs to the REDD+ Readiness Process through a US\$ 1.1 million grant from FCPF, whereas the small and medium scale farmers and the private forestry sector did not receive such support. We will come back to the implications of this situation in the recommendations section of this report.

14. While the average scores for the nine REDD sub-components in Table 3 below all show up as orange (“further development required”), with the exception of the Reference Emissions Levels (yellow meaning “progressing well, further development required”), the variation among the different stakeholder groups’ scores is considerable. For three sub-components they range from red to green (worst to best possible) and for one from red to yellow (worst to second best). There was only one sub-component where there was agreement among stakeholder groups on the score, 2c REDD Implementation Framework (orange), but this sub-component had three stakeholder groups abstaining from attributing a score for lack of information. The following section provides comments regarding the Self-Assessment for each of the sub-components of the R-Package.

➔ *The differences in the scores attributed by the five stakeholder groups to the various sub-components of REDD+ Readiness are considerable. This is not necessarily a sign of any misunderstandings of REDD+ Readiness or of the Self-assessment process on behalf of any the stakeholders, but rather may reflect genuine differences in REDD+ readiness of the different stakeholders, and possibly in the clarity of the roles and responsibilities they expect to take on in REDD+ implementation. This provides extremely important information for the REDD+ Secretariat for the future facilitation of the REDD+ Readiness process and beyond. The reasons for the divergences noted above could be further explored in the preparation of the Follow-up Plan.*

Table 3. Color scores for the 9 sub-components of REDD+ Readiness, per stakeholder group¹⁶

| REDD Readiness | Small | Indigen. | Academ. | Private | Govt. | Average |
|----------------|-------|----------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
|----------------|-------|----------|---------|---------|-------|---------|

¹⁶ This information is drawn from Annex 5 of WISE REDD’s previously cited stakeholder self-assessment report. Following the 2013 FCPF Assessment Framework Guide cited above, the meanings of the colors are as follows: Green “significant progress”; Yellow “progressing well, further development required”; Orange “further development required”, and Red “not yet demonstrating progress”.

| sub-components | Farmers | Peoples | | sector | | |
|--|---------|---------|------|--------|---|-----|
| 1.a National arrangements | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.b Consultation, outreach | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 2.a Land use, governance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| 2.b Strategy options | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.c Implementation framework | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.d Soc/Env impacts | 3 | 3 | n.a. | 2 | 2 | 2.5 |
| 3. Reference Emissions Levels | n.a. | n.a. | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.7 |
| 4.a National forest monitoring system | 2 | n.a. | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.3 |
| 4.b Benefits/safeguards information system | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1.6 |

NB Three out of five stakeholder groups did not score all the sub-components, as they felt they had too little information about some sub-components. This is indicated by the mention "n.a." (no color).

Component 1: Readiness, Organization and Consultation

Sub-Component 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements (Criteria 1-6, orange)

15. ***Institutional arrangements for REDD+***. The REDD+ Readiness Process in Costa Rica started in 2011 and is expected to be concluded in 2015 with the consultation on the national REDD+ strategy. The responsibility for elaborating and implementing the REDD+ strategy in Costa Rica was formally assigned to the Executive REDD+ Secretariat established within the National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) through Executive Decree No 37352-MINAET¹⁷ published in the Official Journal No 220 of 14 November 2012. The same Decree also established the REDD+ Executive Committee, with representation from small-scale forest producers, forest industries, banking sector, indigenous peoples, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Civil Society. The respective responsibilities of the REDD+ Secretariat and Executive Committee are clearly delineated in the Decree, as is the authority of the Minister for the Environment to approve the final REDD+ strategy. Each of the non-government stakeholder groups determine their own representation in the Executive Committee (and in the REDD+ process

¹⁷ The 2012 REDD+ decree, which is from the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications but is established under the authority of the Presidency of Costa Rica, is available on Costa Rica's REDD+ website at http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/decreto_37352-minaet_0.pdf

more generally) and their representatives commit themselves to function as a two-way conduit for information between the REDD+ process and the stakeholder group they represent. In addition, the government representatives in the Executive Committee have formed an Inter-institutional Commission, which has also incorporated other representatives of government institutions involved in REDD+, and academics and researchers. This Inter-Institutional Committee/Commission has in turn generated topical roundtables to address specific technical issues in the REDD+ process. All the reports of the Inter-Institutional Commission and the Technical Roundtables have been published on the Costa Rica REDD+ website.¹⁸

16. Though there has been a significant investment in inter-institutional coordination on REDD+ within the government, the coordination process has fallen short for some of the outputs produced by the REDD+ process. The lack of coordination between the REDD+ work done by SINAC (with support from GiZ) and that done by FONAFIFO (with support from the FCPF) is a case in point, despite various efforts made. The REDD+ Secretariat is currently attempting to correct this shortfall by involving all the key institutions involved (especially The National Forest Financing Fund FONAFIFO, The Protected Areas Authority SINAC and the Ministry of Agriculture) closely in the definition of the roles that different government institutions will play in the implementation of the REDD+ strategy and in the identification of related costs. Setting up a donor roundtable might also help to improve coordination among the various efforts.¹⁹

➔ *Activities to improve inter-institutional coordination should be explicitly included in the Follow-up Plan, e.g. involving key government agencies in the definition of roles and responsibilities during the implementation phase, and facilitating a donor round table.*

- 17. Feedback and grievance redress mechanism (criterion 6).** Costa Rica has a long-standing experience with feedback and grievance redress mechanisms, ever since the Ombudsman Office (“Defensoría de los Habitantes de la República” (DHR) was established in 1992. This Office operates under the authority of the National Assembly and verifies whether public sector institutions have carried out their mandates appropriately and legally, in response to complaints received from any inhabitant of Costa Rica, whether of Costa Rican or foreign nationality. In addition to this mechanism, which applies to all public policies and institutions, the REDD+ Secretariat has established a dedicated mechanism for dealing with requests for information, for providing inputs and for complaints about process violations and requests for corrective action. The system can be accessed by mail, by telephone and on-line.²⁰ The handling of the complaints is overseen by

¹⁸ The most recent report of an Inter-Institutional Committee meeting on the Costa Rica REDD+ website, however, dates back to October 9th 2013, <http://reddcr.go.cr/es/centro-de-documentacion/comision-interinstitucional>

¹⁹ Costa Rica R-package self-assessment report, pages 12 and 13.

²⁰ The on-line system can be accessed through <http://reddcr.go.cr/es/mecanismo-de-informacion-retroalimentacion-e-inconformidades>

FONAFIFO's auditor, which is supervised by the National Planning Ministry not the Environment Ministry, thus guaranteeing the independence of the mechanism. For the REDD+ implementation phase, it will be important to budget for the handling of information requests and complaints, not just by FONAFIFO but also by other responsible entities, such as SINAC, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Indigenous Peoples' governance structures.

→ *The discussion of the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the feedback and grievance redress mechanism during the implementation phase should also feature in the Follow-up Plan.*

Sub-Component 1b: Consultation, Participation and Outreach (criteria 7-10, orange)

- 18. Inclusion of stakeholders through an extended consultation, information and participation process (criteria 7, 8 and 10).** The five stakeholder groups and their key institutional actors are summarized in Table 1 above. All five key stakeholder groups, including small and medium-scale agroforestry producers and indigenous peoples, are represented in the REDD+ Executive Committee, which meets every month, and have been active in the REDD+ Readiness Process in a number of different ways. Forest industries are represented through the National Forest Office and the Chamber of Foresters. Academics have been actively involved through the Inter-Institutional Commission and the Technical Roundtables. Overall, more than 180 workshops involving more than 2,000 participants have been held during the REDD+ Readiness Process.²¹ Special care has been taken to include groups whose representation might be challenging. Indigenous commissions have been formed to maintain the dialogue. As far as small-scale producers are concerned, the REDD+ Secretariat has not just invited UNAFOR, a national platform with 230 member organizations divided into five regional chapters, but has also contracted ACICAFOC, an agroforestry NGO, to hold six stakeholder workshops in 2013 to mobilize other civil society organizations that were not UNAFOR members. The next step will be the last phase of the REDD+ Readiness consultation process, with the dissemination of and dialogue on various REDD+ outputs, in particular the REDD+ strategy, and the identification of the critical path for addressing the themes of special concern to the Indigenous Peoples, among others.
- 19. Information sharing and accessibility of information (criteria 9).** Costa Rica's REDD+ Secretariat has made a major effort to share information with different stakeholder groups in appropriate ways, despite problems highlighted below. Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) has been incorporated in Costa Rica's REDD+ Readiness Process and "cultural mediators" have been recruited from among the Indigenous Peoples and trained to communicate with their brethren about REDD+ in culturally appropriate terms. Small and medium scale agroforestry producers have not received the same level of attention, and have been critical about what

²¹ Costa Rica R-package self-evaluation report, page 19.

information was shared with them and how (see recommendations section below).

➔ *There should be a thorough discussion of how the needs of the small and medium scale agro-forestry producers for more intensive accompaniment during the final phases of the REDD+ Readiness process (and beyond) could best be met. This is a topic that is of interest to many donors, and it should be relatively easy to mobilize funding for it.*

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

Sub-Component 2a: Assessment of land use, land use change drivers, forest law, policy and governance (criteria 11-15, orange)

20. ***Analysis of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.*** The assessment of land use change started with a study carried out by FUNDECOR in 2010. Prior to the start of the REDD preparation and readiness processes, academics and researchers carried out a number of deforestation studies, but because the definitions, methodologies and scope they used were different, these could not be used for determining reference levels that would be acceptable to normative frameworks such as Voluntary Carbon Standard/Jurisdictionally Nested REDD (VCS/JNR) and FCPF. Therefore, an international consortium²² was hired with FCPF funding to generate a reliable time series of Costa Rica's land use changes, which was completed in March 2015. The REDD Secretariat plans to hire Carbon Decisions International to carry out a spatially explicit analysis of deforestation drivers and establish the Reference Emissions Level (see below) on the basis of this information and the above-mentioned time series. The process of getting the information from all the different institutions involved and synthesizing it took much longer than expected.

➔ *Protocols for information sharing could usefully be included in the Follow-up Plan. More structural measures to facilitate information sharing, e.g. mechanisms to guarantee data compatibility among the different government agencies involved with land use may need to be tackled during REDD+ implementation.*

21. ***Natural resources rights, land tenure, governance and implications for forest laws and policies.*** The REDD+ Readiness process in Costa Rica has touched repeatedly and explicitly on rights and governance issues, and their implications for laws and policies. The agenda of the Indigenous Peoples participating in REDD+ Readiness, for example, is very much focused on securing the land rights they have acquired by law in practice on the ground – and this objective has been integrated in the REDD+ Strategy.²³

Sub-Component 2b: REDD+ Strategy options (criteria 16-18, orange)

²² AGRESTA-DIMAP-UCR-UPM (ADUU).

²³ See the comments on sub-component 2b below for the impact of the REDD+ Readiness work on the legal and regulatory framework of Costa Rica's Payment for Environmental Services program.

22. **Early and late versions of Costa Rica's REDD+ strategy.** In order not to slow down the REDD+ Readiness process, in particular the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment and the establishment of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), a rough draft REDD+ strategy was developed on the basis of the R-PP and of previous deforestation studies. This allowed the identification of a number of potential social, environmental and political impacts and risks. It also enabled the analysis of the existing policy and legal framework for REDD+ implementation and the identification of the need to create new regulations, especially for dedicated Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanisms for small-scale farmers and Indigenous Peoples.²⁴ In so doing, it provided useful input for the ER-PD that will be submitted to the FCPF for approval shortly. A more complete draft REDD+ Strategy has been published on July 31st 2015 for consultation purposes.²⁵

➔ *Many countries involved in REDD+ Readiness went through the process of creating an early draft REDD+ strategy, e.g. to facilitate stakeholder consultations and enable work on environmental and social safeguards to be carried out. It might be interesting to capture the experience gained with different methods for formulating early draft strategies by countries such as DR Congo and Costa Rica and share it with other REDD+ countries*

Sub-Component 2c: Implementation Framework (criteria 19-22, orange)

23. **Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations (criteria 19 and 20).** The national legal framework for REDD+ is based on the citizens' right to enjoy a healthy, ecologically balanced environment, and on the state's obligation to guarantee this right, established in Article 50 of the Constitution – and reinforced since by numerous laws as well as international treaties that Costa Rica has ratified. Costa Rica already has a number of modern laws, such as the ones on Environment (No. 7554, 1996), Forestry (No 7575, 1996, which introduced Payment for Environmental Services (PES), a precursor for REDD+ which is equivalent to carbon PES) and on Biodiversity (No 7788, 1998), and no new law is deemed necessary for REDD+ implementation. The content of the 2012 REDD+ Decree has been described under Component 1 above. The draft text of a new decree for the implementation of REDD+ was mentioned in the R-package but was not yet posted on the national REDD website. Various legal and regulatory reforms necessary for implementing REDD+ have been identified, e.g. the constitution of dedicated Payment for Environmental Services mechanisms for small-scale farmers and Indigenous Peoples, see the discussion of Sub-Component 2a above.

➔ *The topic of the changes needed in the legal and regulatory framework of Costa Rica for REDD+ implementation is well-described in the R-package.*

²⁴ PSA campesino and PSA indigena, respectively.

²⁵ see http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/estrategia_reddcr.pdf

24. **Benefit sharing mechanism (criterion 21).** There is no agreed benefit sharing mechanism yet, nor is there a consensus on what it should look like. The REDD+ Secretariat has produced a note that is hyperlinked in the R-package report and that proposes a four-step approach for defining the mechanism: (i) identification of legal and institutional gaps or duplication; (ii) political agreement to define functions and responsibilities of public actors with regards to institutional rules for clarifying the process of recovering and administering financial resources from ER generated by the REDD+ strategy; (iii) policy dialogue with relevant stakeholder groups; (iv) publication of an Executive Decree to enshrine the agreed benefit sharing mechanism in law.²⁶

➔ *Given the fact that the subject of benefit sharing is a cause for concern of quite a few of the stakeholder groups, it would be useful to table the above-mentioned four-step approach proposed by the REDD+ Secretariat in discussions on the Follow-up Plan and build consensus with the stakeholders on the way to take this topic forward..*

25. **National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities (criterion 22).** The national REDD+ Registry will have to be embedded in Costa Rica's Carbon Neutral program led by the Directorate for Climate Change. The registry that FONAFIFO has for PES would not cover all REDD+ strategy options (especially the forestry production ones), but would provide useful guidance for the development of the REDD+ Registry nevertheless. Apart from the Registry, Costa Rica's ERPD proposes a number of rules to avoid double counting (or claiming) of emissions reductions.²⁷

➔ *The national REDD+ registry is a key element of the performance-based payments that Costa Rica aspires to, but appears to need quite a bit more work. It would be important to address this in the Follow-up Plan.*

Sub-Component 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts (criteria 23-25, orange)

26. **SESA, ESMF and National Environmental and Social Standards.** The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) process and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF²⁸) aim to ensure effective management of social and environmental issues, continuing into the REDD+ Implementation phase. The SESA process has been conducted from 2011 to 2014, with broad participation of stakeholders. The ESMF was developed on the basis of the SESA in 2014-2015. It respects not only the World Bank safeguard policies but also national laws and the UNFCCC safeguards agreed at Cancun. The SESA and ESMF processes played an important role in rethinking Costa Rica's REDD+ Strategy and ER-PD. The

²⁶ http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/plandb_v1.pdf

²⁷ See ERPD, page 190 on <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/erpd.pdf>

²⁸ The ESMF (or MGAS in Spanish) sets out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures to assess potential environmental and social impacts and risks, and contains measures to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset adverse environmental and social impacts and enhance positive impacts and opportunities of said projects, activities, or policies/regulations.

SESA and the ESMF were both published in August 2015²⁹. The ESMF includes relevant safeguards screening tools and social frameworks, such as a Resettlement Process Framework and an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, in compliance with the World Bank safeguard policies.

Component 3: Reference Emissions Levels/Reference levels (criteria 26-29, yellow)

27. Methodological basis for the establishment of Reference Level developed.

For the development of the RL, Costa Rica used land use change data over the period 1987 – 2010 and analyzed a time series of seven points: 1987, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2008, 2011 and 2013. The RL includes conservation of carbon stocks, defined as forests present in 1987 still standing in 2010). It excludes small geographic areas, such as areas with permanent cloud cover, areas of volcanic activity and the Isla del Coco, totaling less than 5% of the surface area. The Reference Emissions Level (REL) includes CO₂ and non-CO₂ emissions from biomass fires. Further details of the methodology are included in the Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) that is hyperlinked in the self-assessment report.³⁰ The RL will be recalculated after 2020, to take into account new circumstances and technologies, and REDD+ implementation experience. Ten government institutions and a number of academics reviewed the work of FONAFIFO and Carbon Decisions International on the RL and helped to improve it. Costa Rica's RL is the furthest developed of all REDD+ Readiness sub-components, according to the stakeholder self-evaluation report, which scores it "yellow", whereas all the other sub-components are scored "orange" (see Table 3).

28. **Use of historical data, no adjustment for national circumstances.** For determining its reference level, Costa Rica uses historical deforestation data, without any adjustment for national circumstances.

Component 4: Monitoring systems for forests and safeguards

Sub-Component 4a: National forest monitoring system (criteria 29-31, orange)

29. **The national forest monitoring system (NFMS)** is under preparation, and will serve both national (e.g. forest law enforcement, National Forest Development Plan implementation) and international agendas.³¹ Monitoring is expected to be done with the help of Landsat imagery, and the plan is to create full vegetation cover maps and land use change matrices of the

²⁹ See <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/sesa.pdf> and <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/mgasymarcos.pdf>, respectively.

³⁰ Costa Rica's ER-PD can be accessed on <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/erpd.pdf>

³¹ According to the self-assessment report, the National Forest Monitoring System will be completed by October 2015 ; according to the ER-PD by December 2015.

country every two years. Despite the fact that the NFMS is not yet operational, REDD+ monitoring needs are already partly covered by the National Forest Inventory that was first carried out in 2012-2013, the results of which are expected to be published in November 2015.

➔ *Given the fact that responsibilities for land use and forest monitoring in Costa Rica are somewhat fragmented, and given the challenges of bringing about effective institutional coordination and collaboration among some of the government institutions involved, this aspect deserves extra attention if REDD Readiness is to be concluded successfully.*

Sub-Component 4b: Information system for multiple benefits, other impacts, governance, and safeguards (criteria 32-34, orange)

- 30. Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues (criterion 32).** Costa Rica, through its Payment for Environmental Services program, implemented since 1996, has a long-standing experience in the identification and monitoring of multiple benefits of forests. During the REDD+ preparation process, and in particular the SESA, the Secretariat has helped key stakeholder groups, especially indigenous peoples and small and medium scale farmers, identify the main social and environmental issues of concern to them, and improve their capacity to monitor these issues. The ESMF plans for six-monthly reports on safeguards issues and social and environmental impacts (both positive and negative) resulting from REDD+ Implementation.
- 31. Monitoring, reporting and information sharing (criterion 33).** A transparent system for periodically sharing consistent information on non-carbon aspects and safeguards has been integrated in the ESMF. It will use the **Safeguards Information System** to share culturally appropriate information with key stakeholder groups such as Indigenous Peoples. Further capacity building activities will no doubt be needed to facilitate the provision and use of information by key stakeholder groups.
- 32.** The Safeguards Information System (SIS) and the implementation of the ESMF will create the capacity to process information from the development of safeguard plans and feed this back to improve the social and environmental dimensions of public policies related to conservation and management of natural resources, in particular the results of the national REDD+ Strategy implementation. The SIS will be integrated in the newly established National Environmental Information System (SINIA), which will be administered by the National Geo-environmental Information Center (CENIGA). A 150 page document entitled “Design of a national REDD+ Safeguards information system: norms, institutional responsibilities, information and indicators” is hyperlinked in the self-assessment report.³²
- 33. Institutional arrangements and capacities (criterion 34).** One of the highest priorities under this chapter is the reinforcement of governance

³² See <http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/propuestasis.pdf>

capacity of the Indigenous Peoples' own governments in Costa Rica. FONAFIFO plans to carry out an institutional capacity audit to assess the extent to which these governments are able to comply with World Bank safeguard policies, with a view to identify further capacity building activities. The criteria and indicators to be used for the audit will be agreed with the key stakeholders before the audit starts.

TAP Review Part C: Summary Assessment and Recommendation to the PC

34. Based on the documents consulted, and interactions with some of the REDD+ stakeholders in Costa Rica, the **TAP reviewer is of the opinion that the combination of the R-package self-assessment report (produced by the REDD+ Secretariat) and the Stakeholder self-assessment report (written by the independent process facilitator, Conservation International) provides an accurate picture of REDD+ readiness progress in Costa Rica. Apart from documenting considerable progress in a number of REDD+ Readiness elements, the country's self-evaluation process also seems to have served as a timely reminder of how much work still needs to be done, and how important the quality of the accompaniment of the different stakeholder groups will be in bringing all of them on board for the finalization and implementation of a nationwide REDD+ strategy and Emissions Reductions Program (ERP).**
35. **There is a strong contrast between the obvious and well-documented progress that Costa Rica has made in REDD+ Readiness (Highly structured stakeholder involvement and representation of all stakeholder groups in REDD Readiness process oversight, completion of SESA and ESMF, of draft REDD+ Strategy and draft ER-PD, significant progress with RL, among others) and the highly critical judgments expressed by all stakeholder groups, with the partial exception of the Indigenous Peoples – who were the only stakeholder group to attribute “green” scores to some of the REDD+ Readiness sub-components.³³** According to the Stakeholder Self-assessment process report (pages 32-39), there are three main reasons for the negative opinions expressed by stakeholders: two to do with process and one with substance. One reason is that **most stakeholder groups feel they have little clarity about the roles and responsibilities they would have to assume in REDD+ strategy and ER Program implementation and about the benefits they could expect.** Another is that some of the stakeholder groups, especially the **small and medium scale agroforestry producers, feel that their specific circumstances and capacities to contribute to REDD+ strategy elaboration and implementation have not been sufficiently taken into account by the REDD+ Secretariat, and that they need a more tailored**

³³ As noted by self-assessment process facilitator Conservation International, this may be due in part to a US\$1.1 million grant the Indigenous Peoples received from the FCPF to organize themselves and structure their participation in the REDD+ Readiness process, see <http://www.bankinformationcenter.org/es/feature/redd-en-costa-rica/>

accompaniment (as the Indigenous Peoples received through a dedicated FCPF grant) to make their participation effective. A third reason is that some stakeholder groups feel there is too little attention in the REDD+ Readiness work for the need to devise mechanisms to support sustainable forest management (SFM) to produce wood and other forest products and services from natural forests, both primary and secondary, allowing for an increase in production, generation of employment and reduction of poverty.

36. Some of the process shortcomings noted above are almost inevitable when developing a complex plan with a number of highly technical components, in a participatory manner with a diversity of stakeholder groups with widely diverging capacities and aspirations. The fact that REDD+ is uncharted territory and therefore takes more time, in combination with high expectations about size and timing of REDD+ benefits with some stakeholder groups, will no doubt have increased their frustration and explains some of the “consultation fatigue” noted above. Nevertheless, the **recommendation resulting from the stakeholder self-evaluation process to develop a Follow-up Plan (“Plan de Seguimiento”) to address the shortcomings in the REDD+ Readiness process highlighted by the five stakeholder groups would be extremely helpful in improving the quality of the participatory process.**
37. The REDD+ Secretariat’s proposal to **translate this Follow-up Plan (which it will have to approve) into a detailed, costed work program as soon as the Plan will have been completed, so that the necessary efforts can be budgeted, and additional human and financial resources mobilized if needed is an excellent one.** This exercise could be usefully aligned with the Secretariat’s ongoing work with Terra Global Capital on developing a financing plan for the REDD+ Strategy and the ER Program.³⁴ In the opinion of the TAP reviewer, the process for arriving at the REDD+ Strategy budget described in Terra Global Capital’s note is essential, as it will help the REDD+ Secretariat identify the detailed costs to be incurred by different public and private implementing partners and have very concrete, result-oriented discussions with the small-scale farmers and forest industry stakeholder groups. This would address the stakeholder process problems noted above in a direct and constructive manner.
38. The concerns about the **lack of mechanisms for promoting Sustainable Forest Management in natural primary and secondary forests highlighted by the independent process facilitator merit further discussion with the key stakeholder groups,** given the potential role that the latter could play in its implementation, and the considerable stakeholder engagement and social co-benefits that it might generate.

³⁴ In June 2015, Terra Global Capital produced a technical note for the development of the REDD+ Strategy and ER Program Financing Plan, entitled “Descripción y Proceso del Programa Financiero de Planeación para la Reducción de Emisiones en Costa Rica”, see page 30 of the R Package report and http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/descricion_del_proceso_de_costeo_redd_cr.pdf.

39. The national forest monitoring system (NFMS), which is currently under preparation, is a key element of Costa Rica's ER Program, which will be implemented nationwide. **Given the fact that responsibilities for land use and forest monitoring in Costa Rica are somewhat fragmented, and given the challenges of bringing about effective institutional coordination and collaboration among some of the government institutions involved, this aspect deserves extra attention if REDD Readiness is to be concluded successfully.**
40. All this is not to say that Costa Rica should refrain from starting implementation of its proposed national Emissions Reductions Program (ERP). On the contrary, many of the remaining uncertainties about the critical elements of REDD+ would actually be served by moving forward with the ERP, as long as practical (and if necessary temporary) solutions can be found to the most pressing problems. As with all complex natural resource management issues involving multiple stakeholders, "learning-by-doing" is indispensable – not all issues can be resolved through studies or in meeting rooms. Also, given the existence of "consultation fatigue" among many stakeholder groups, an action-oriented approach will be essential to reignite stakeholder energy for REDD+. **Linking the above-mentioned Follow-up Plan explicitly to the ERP preparation process would no doubt also help to maintain a results focus and renew the engagement of key stakeholder groups in the process. The additional US\$5 million readiness grant Costa Rica is set to receive from FCPF, once the agreement will have been signed, could also help to support the implementation of the Follow-up Plan.**

Additional Documents consulted

(other than the R package submitted and the documents for which hyperlinks were provided in the document)

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http://reddcr.go.cr/sites/default/files/centro-de-documentacion/hoja_de_progreso.pdf

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https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/May/MTR_CostaRica_v2.pdf

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