

TAP Assessment of the R-Package Submitted by Cameroon

Independent TAP-Expert Review on the Self-Assessment Process and R-Package – 03 March 2019¹

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Purpose of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) expert review

The TAP assessment of the R-Package document “*Self-assessment of the REDD+ Readiness Phase by Stakeholders, Cameroon*”, dated February 25, 2019, assessed (i) the process of this self-assessment by the national REDD+ Commission), (ii) the results from the multi-stakeholder assessment of the Readiness process in the country, and (iii) the remaining challenges in the Readiness process. The review thus focused on determining whether a due process and approach was followed while performing the self-assessment and provides feedback to the REDD+ country Cameroon and the FCPF Participants Committee.

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Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review

A simple methodology has been applied which consists of the following steps:

- Step A: Review of the self-assessment process of REDD+ Readiness based on the report of Cameroon².
- Step B: Review of the results from the multi-stakeholder R-Package self-assessment process.
- Step C: Assess what still needs to be done to further develop the Readiness Process (issues still to address).

The assessment is based on the [FCPF Assessment Framework](#) and on the R-Package document provided by Cameroon, including the documents and URL linked as outputs within. An assessment of further needed achievements as basis for REDD+ implementation is also part of the present task.

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

This part of the TAP report provides a feedback on the multistakeholder self-assessment report and outcomes, including the summary of the multi-stakeholder process and discussions.

Review of the results of the multi-stakeholder assessment

Cameroon started the REDD+ readiness process in 2008 and indicated its interest in making REDD+ a national participatory process. It had its R-PP document validated in 2012 and its national REDD+ strategy validated in June 2018 by all stakeholders and the multi-sector Steering Committee (p. 15 & 17).

The R-Package is the result of broad consultations carried out in a participatory and inclusive process according to the evaluation framework recommended by FCPF. Intensive exchange already started as early as 2009. Identification of stakeholder groups was made through a stakeholder mapping, which resulted in an ever increasing and broad spectrum of profiles. It reflects the progress achieved so far. Indeed the self-assessment report concisely lists strengths, weaknesses, difficulties encountered and measures to be taken to strengthen the preparation process (p. 16).

The R-Package outlines the way the self-assessment process was run and lists the categories of stakeholders involved. The national self-assessment methodology was based on an 8-step approach through which the views of all major stakeholder groups was collected. About 275 people reviewed the achievements of the readiness phase and enabled the REDD+ technical unit to evaluate and prepare corrective measures (p. 17).

The report states Cameroon's willingness to implement REDD+ as a participatory process through the involvement of stakeholders in all activities, from design to implementation.

➔ The TAP notes a somehow unbalanced representation in the Steering Committee (2016 and 2017), the highest decision body in the REDD+ readiness process. This relates to the under-representation of indigenous peoples, represented by only one person out of 19 members, while decisions are

²Republic of Cameroon (2019). Self-assessment of the REDD+ Readiness phase by stakeholders. Report, February 19, 2019. Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development. REDD+ Technical Secretariat.

taken on a majority basis³. A report⁴ refers to the under-representation of indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups (such as the civil society and the private sector) in the SC and states that the under-representation of those key stakeholders might result in future in serious implementation problems of REDD+ throughout the country.

The aforementioned report (2016) also indicates that stakeholders from research and education institutions expressed a concern of not being fully recognized by other stakeholders. Indeed, they do not explicitly appear in the participatory identification as REDD+ process stakeholders.

The TAP recognizes the well-structured consultation process designed for the R-Package review. The self-assessment started with a two-day launching workshop (Douala, April 2018) attended by about 50 participants, representatives of key stakeholders attended with the aim of validating the methodological approach, developing a list of stakeholders to be consulted and other means required for the self-assessment process (p. 19).

Participants in the national self-assessment process were “mapped on the basis of their dependence on forest resources, their way of life that causes deforestation and forest degradation, their capacity to act in favor of REDD+ and their vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change” (p. 18). Among the identified stakeholders, those invited were those who met the following three criteria namely, (i) being a registered and designated representative of a category of stakeholder at the local level; (ii) having participated in several REDD+ activities on various themes, and (iii) being available during the consultation workshop period for self-assessment. The list of participants for the self-assessment was validated by stakeholders at the launching workshop.

→ The TAP notes that the pertinence of the criteria used to select participants for the self-assessment can be questioned. For instance, representatives from administration, research and educational institutions and the media do not necessarily meet the criteria identified. The obvious problem of the criteria chosen at the stage of invitation (especially criteria ii and iii) is that they required the stakeholders to fit in a relatively narrowly defined box.

A national self-assessment process and stakeholder consultation workshops were conducted in the 05 agro-ecological zones, complemented by two workshops designated exclusively to IPs. Following these consultations, a first draft of the document was distributed to stakeholders in preparation for the national consolidation workshop. A (quite complex) questionnaire was elaborated for the attention of workshop participants (see Annex 3 of the self-assessment report).

During that process, Cameroon also endorsed its National REDD+ Strategy after validation by the REDD+ Steering Committee at its 3rd extraordinary session held on 6th June 2018.

Section 3 of part 1 the R-Package provides summarized results that had been validated final Douala workshop held on 18 and 19 July 2018 (Table 4, p. 23-24).

The report indicates that REDD+ readiness is progressing well, but further development is required. Out of the 34 criteria of the methodological framework, 11 criteria (32%) were rated with green, 19 criteria (56) yellow and 4 criteria (12%) in orange color.

Tables 6 and 8 related to «Assessment of criteria» (p. 38 and 50) of the R-Package include a synthesis of the main views of stakeholders displayed according to the groups of stakeholders. The report notes

³ Étude en vue de l'élaboration d'un plan de consultation des parties prenantes dans le cadre du processus de préparation au mécanisme REDD+, janvier 2016, p. 24.

⁴ Rapport individuel final sur le cadre institutionnel et les outils de gestion de la REDD+, 2017, p. 9.

that civil society and IP representatives assessed several criteria more critically (particularly those relating to information sharing, participation and benefit sharing).

The self-assessment report appropriately outlined the stakeholder assessment that was conducted, and the results achieved in all R- components. All the 34 criteria have been rated in the self-assessment process, the strengths and weaknesses highlighted and some activities to be carried out have been identified. No criterion was noted “Red” in the overall rating⁵ which demonstrates the country’s commitment as stated in the report. The TAP thus notes that significant progress has been made in the readiness process.

The TAP review concludes in respect to the process:

- The process has been well documented and described and led to a critical but well justified result. As the process conceded with other REDD+ processes (approval process of the national strategy, preparation process of the ER-PD), the TAP acknowledges the challenging task to conduct various processes in parallel.
- The R-Package presented properly presents a process of multi-stakeholder assessment, but it falls a bit short on information about the methodology applied to conduct the process, information about the stakeholders’ profiles and the type of documentation made at the disposal to the attendees to the workshops (e.g. it is not clear whether documents at disposal had been translated to local language(s) especially for participants from the indigenous peoples’ group or if the supporting tools used were understood by certain categories of stakeholders).
- A short analysis of the substantial discrepancies among the different stakeholders on the criteria assessed would have ensured a better comprehension of the issues at stake (e.g. by gender). Such an approach would have helped the process in defining suitable solutions and better address those issues for future implementation

Facilitation

The process of multi-stakeholder assessment had been conducted in a way that ensured a reliable process. The REDD+ Technical Secretariat benefited from technical assistance from the World Bank, GIZ and in prior phases IUCN and WWF, which ensured impartiality and methodological rigor and thus increased its credibility.

It is worth noticing that two specific workshops were particularly dedicated to indigenous peoples and organized with the support of the GIZ Pro-Forest Environment Programme (GIZ Pro-PFE) (p. 20). This facilitation is considered by the TAP as particularly important as IPs are a major stakeholder in REDD+ implementation frameworks.

Insufficient information has been given on the way how the rating (green, yellow, orange) was obtained through facilitation. The overall results of the rating do not show any red rated criterion, while this color appeared in the results separately of the stakeholders’ groups.

Participation, communication and information

The process was conducted in a participatory, inclusive and transparent manner with the stakeholders involved in the REDD+ process. The participation materialized through consultation including civil

⁵ Criteria 19 and 21 were rated red by the Technical and Financial partners in the rating per stakeholder groups.

society and private sector representatives, traditional authorities, local elected representatives, indigenous peoples, researchers to name but a few.

However, the report did not mention whether the documentation made available was adapted to the background of the participants (e.g. translated in local language for the indigenous peoples) and provided prior to the consultation workshops. The report also pointed out the lack of understanding of the process by certain participants as being the first difficulty encountered during the self-assessment workshop.

This raises the question as to whether this category of stakeholders will have the necessary motivation to fully participate in the planned REDD+ implementation stage. This weakness may be rectified through targeted capacity building and more appropriate communication defined in the additional work programme 2019/2020.

The report rightly recognizes that the REDD+ process related activities are intended to be transparent and a lot of documents are made available online. The REDD+ website www.reddcameroun.cm (although currently not accessible) allows access important information related to project achievements, exchanges with REDD+ project developers and information to stakeholders on the implementation of REDD+ projects activities (cf. p. 46). The report indicates also that final documents that include stakeholder views are published on the same REDD+ website for wide distribution and international consultation (p. 38). However, this URL is currently, when writing this TAP assessment, not functional or accessible...

Participation of women remains an important issue. The report indicates differences between the participation rates of women and men respectively 29.81% and 70.1%. The report views this figure (for women) « still very insufficient and far from the minimum 30% participation of women required. » Table 3 displays participation figures per stakeholder groups and one can see the low participation of women. However, the table does not show how many women were invited or expected. Besides, 29.81% is not far from 30%.... Nonetheless, one may wonder why the report considers 30% participation of women as the minimum while, at the same time, documents provided as annexes indicate the existence on legal instruments and a national policy aiming at « systematically eliminating gender-related differences at all levels »⁶.

→ In the TAP's view, despite of some weaknesses encountered, the self-assessment process was done with great care and in an inclusive way. The TAP recommends a continued and sustained effort to reach significant progress for the two-thirds criteria which still require further development. Involving more women is also necessary since they are said to be more dependent to forest products than men. Further analyses are necessary to understand why there are discrepancies among groups of stakeholders as regards the rating of criteria. A true multi-stakeholder involvement in the further development and implementation of the REDD+ strategy is primordial.

⁶ Strategy for the consideration of women in the REDD+ process (French document online : « Document de stratégie de la prise en compte des femmes dans le processus REDD+ au Cameroun », p. 15.)

TAP Review Part B: Summary of the REDD+ Processes - Strengths and Weaknesses of the R-Package

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 related to the corresponding 34 assessment criteria, and activities that address identified areas which require further work.

Self-assessment of the readiness process

Table 1 of the report: Summary of R-Package overall valuation based on the self-assessment

Components	Sub Components	SA-Progress Status*	TAP Assessment
1. Organization and Consultation	1a. National Readiness Management Arrangement	Yellow	Yellow
	1b. Stakeholder Consultation and Participation	Green	Yellow
2. Prepare the REDD Strategy	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Forest Policy and Governance	Yellow	Yellow
	2b. REDD Strategy Options	Yellow	Yellow
	2c. REDD Implementation Framework	Yellow	Yellow
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	Green	Yellow
3. Reference emission level/reference level		Yellow	Yellow
4. Forest monitoring systems and safeguard measures	4a. National forest monitoring system	Yellow	Yellow
	4b. System of information on the multiple advantages, governance and safeguards	Yellow	Yellow

*summarized from Criteria assessment in the Self-Assessment Report of Cameroun

The self-assessment of the results achieved in the nine subcomponents of the readiness phase has been conducted in an inclusive way. The self-assessment report is well elaborated and the information laid-out in a pleasant way. It concludes overall that there is still important work to conduct in order to conclude the readiness phase. Out of the 34 criteria, the self-assessment has rated 11 criteria with essential progress (green), 19 criteria rated with more efforts required (yellow) and 4 criteria where a lot of efforts are still needing to fulfill the requirements (orange). The self-assessment thus reflects the present perception, which is expected to evolve substantially with the implementation of an additional workplan in 2019 and 2020. The TAP endorses overall the rating but has put some question marks behind some indicators that had been assessed with green. Overall, the TAP recognizes that good work has been done in all subcomponents, but that additional work is required to fulfill fully the respective criterion. Thus, in summary, the TAP assesses all 9 sub-components with “Yellow”.

Understanding of the REDD+ Readiness process

The R-Package document provides evidence that good foundations are up and running. The process is largely supported not only by FCPF, but by a significant number of other donors and technical agencies. There is high commitment in the readiness process by sectorial government representatives and international stakeholders. The buy-in from local stakeholders however still need some more efforts at the level of information sharing, communication and capacity building. The Self-assessment report openly pointed out not only the strengths, but also the weaknesses in the ongoing readiness process. The self-assessment report rightly spells out that there is still considerable work to do regarding the completion of the readiness process. This must be kept in mind when implementing the Action Plan 2019/2020 for completing REDD+ readiness and the preparation of a Phase-3 Results-based program.

Respect of the FCPF R-Package Guidelines

The R-Package document is complete and fulfills the FCPF requirements. The document provides the relevant references under Appendix 5 “Catalogue of documents produced under the Readiness phase” and hyperlinks to important information, which could only be partly assessed. The analysis of the progress on the components of the R-Package has been done with a critical eye on achievements, progress and short comes. Overall, the analysis followed closely the criteria set in the methodological framework.

Some minor observations:

- The links provided are functional except for the website (www.reddcameroun.cm) which was not functional during the time of the TAP review.
- The table “Catalogue of documents” produced under the Readiness phase contains 16 documents and the links to access them online. But when the link is opened, there is not one document but 21 among which some have their entire title in French; thus, some clearance needs to be done
- The assessment of criteria sometimes highlighted weaknesses but no actions were mentioned to address them
- It is not clear how the average criteria were rated (out of the separate stakeholder assessments)
- It would have been helpful to display the results of assessments per agro-ecological zone and also indicate how many women were identified and invited to the workshops.

Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

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

C1 – Accountability and transparency; C2 – Mandate and operational budget; C3 – Multi-sectoral coordination mechanism and inter-sectoral collaboration; C4 – Technical supervisory capacity (criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 [Yellow])

The decree No. 103/CAB/PM establishing the formal framework to manage the REDD+ readiness process and the REDD+ Steering Committee was signed on 13 June 2012 by the Prime Minister. It contains a multi-sectoral Steering Committee (SC), chaired by the Minister in charge of Environment. It is composed of 19 members (14 representatives of sectorial administrations; 1 representative of civil society; 1 representative of indigenous peoples; 1 representative of the private sector; and 2 local elected officials). It is the national REDD+ decision-making body that meets at least twice a year (p. 27-28). It is supported by the REDD+ Technical Secretariat (TS) also established by the aforementioned

decree. The TS is the technical and operational body, composed by the National REDD+ Coordinator, the National Focal Point of the UNFCCC, and a representative from the forest administration.

The REDD+ TS team ensures the planning, coordination and technical supervision of the implementation of REDD+ activities as approved by the SC and ensures the involvement of all stakeholders in the planned activities. REDD+ TS works closely with other structures with similar missions such as the National Observatory on Climate Change (ONACC) and the VPA/FLEGT Unit of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF).

The REDD+ TS holds monthly meetings with financial and technical partners involved in the REDD+ process (p. 29). It is supported by a group of experts in four technical units and one administrative and financial unit. This team of experts developed the national REDD+ strategy and contributed to the development of the investment plan for the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) and Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) initiatives, and to the development of the ERPD (P. 28).

Other stakeholders in the process have their own management and supervision bodies. Civil society has organized itself into a platform of networks of associations which brings together more than a hundred organizations. Indigenous peoples have come together in a network led by an indigenous women's organization. The technical and financial partners are grouped within the REDD+ Sub-Group of the consultation framework of MINEPDED and MINFOF.

In the view of the TAP, the REDD+ institutions and management arrangement as presented in the R-Package seems to meet the requirements regarding transparency and accountability. Even though the operational framework has been in place since 2012, the stakeholders' assessment noted that in spite of good progress, efforts are still required for criteria 1 to 4. The report suggests (i) that the REDD+ structures be decentralized so that accountability at the local level becomes effective, (ii) that the Steering Committee be reformed by improving the representation of traditional leaders and forest Indigenous Peoples to increase their participation in the decision-making processes (p. 38).

The TAP concludes in regard to the implementation of C1-C4 as follows:

- ➔ Being the decision-making body, the Steering Committee would benefit from being more representative of the variety of stakeholders. The suggested reform seems to be justified as a part of the still required efforts to move up to the level of “significant progress”. For sake of transparency, information is provided via various forms of appropriate communication. The report rightly points out a certain lack of transparency regarding the SC meeting discussions.
- ➔ Decision-making process should become more transparent. As the Self-assessment report lays-out, minutes of the SC should be made available to all stakeholders. Stakeholders largely appreciated the fact that audits and annual work plans, and budgets were validated by donors and the Steering Committee. Still, the process needs to be enhanced. The report suggests that funding mobilization needs to be improved in order to have sufficient funds to implement all the planned activities, operate REDD+ management structures, operate the Steering Committee and ensure funding for IPs' organizations (p. 39).
- ➔ A number of suggestions made by stakeholder representatives are pertinent and should be implemented, including in respect to Criterion 3 the proposal that the sectorial administrations should ensure permanence in representativeness at the level of management bodies through a self-designation of focal services, an increase in the frequency of work and regularity in working

groups. Also commendable is the suggestion of self-designation of focal services and that of a wide distribution of cross-sector consultations reports.

With respect to the rating, the TAP observes:

- ➔ The overall progress indicator of the first four criteria hides discrepancies between stakeholders' groups rating. It would be useful to understand the reason why for one group (i.e. "Other") the rating is "Green" for all of the 4 criteria while for the four other groups, the rating is in two different categories. The TAP agrees however with the Yellow rating.
- ➔ The process leading to the national results of all stakeholders is not clear. The same applies for the discrepancies in regard to stakeholders' assessment from each of the 5 agro-ecological zones.

C5 - Fund management capacity (criteria 5) [Green]

For its preparation for the REDD+ process, Cameroon benefited from various financial supports, notably from the FCPF and the German Cooperation. Also, REDD+ funds of the PSFE Common Fund, a two-team mechanism has been set up to ensure effective governance of the funds, namely: the Technical Support Mission (MAT) and the Management Unit (UG). Audits have judged the management satisfactory and in compliance with the procedures (p. 33).

The related criterion was rated "green" at the national level. The report states that stakeholders found that this criterion has made substantial progress and appreciated the management of the readiness funds (p. 9). Besides, they requested that indigenous peoples and civil society organizations be accompanied and trained in the principles and procedures to manage donor funds. The FCPF additional funds will support the organizational capacity assessment and the elaboration of an organizational development roadmap for the REDD+/Climate Change and IPs platforms.

- ➔ What stands out in the results displayed per group of stakeholders is that the only group that rated the criteria "Yellow" is that of "Technical and Financial Partners". The TAP wonders why there is such a difference of appreciation.

C6 - Feedback and redress mechanism (criterion 6 [Orange])

According to the self-assessment report, there is no formal procedures for managing possible REDD+ conflicts in Cameroon. Customary arbitration remains the sole mechanism for settling conflicts related to natural resources. No substantial work has been undertaken as regards the complaints management and grievance redress mechanism except the preparation of a consultancy report which was validated in a national workshop in December 2017. A structure is proposed with a mandate to manage complaints and potential grievances related to REDD+ implementation. This means the mechanism is yet to be built up.

The REDD+ process stakeholders requested that more efforts be devoted to the development and testing of this mechanism because, as it stands, it would be difficult to give an opinion on such an important tool but for which there is no visibility as yet (p. 39).

The FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework suggests that assessment of this criterion be based on two groups of key metrics namely (i) the evidence that the mechanism is operating at the national, sub-national and local levels, its transparency and impartiality, has a clear defined mandate and adequate expertise and resources on the one hand and (ii) the evidence that the potentially

impacted communities are aware of, have access to and the mechanism is responsive to feedback and grievances.

- ➔ By referring to the above metrics, the rating is rather “red” instead of « Orange ». The TAP therefore recommends, *inter alia*, that efforts be focused on defining and implementing an efficient complaints mechanism as soon as possible.

Sub-Component 1b: Consultation, participation and outreach / awareness(Criteria 7-10)

C7 – Participation and engagement of key stakeholders (criteria 7) [green]

According to the report, Stakeholders are not in full agreement on whether the rating green is appropriate for this criterion. Even though substantial progress has been made, the report goes on to deplore that the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities is not optimal because of inadequate tools and methodology since they are not consulted in their respective localities in their local languages. It is also hoped that young people, local authorities and the private sector will be better involved in the process (p. 39). Insufficient participation of women was also observed earlier in the report (page 23 & table 3). The R-Package also points out weaknesses regarding either to the capacity or the opportunities of Indigenous peoples to take an active part in the national REDD+ process (e.g. only one representative in the Steering committee, illiteracy, etc.).

To address this issue, the report suggests «for those categories of stakeholders already engaged, coordination and collaboration problems within existing platforms (Indigenous Peoples, Civil Society Organizations) should be addressed, gender-based representation quotas instituted and made fully operational » (p. 39).

- ➔ In the TAP’s view and by reference to the FCPF assessment framework, efforts are still needed to achieve effective participation where marginalized groups and forests dependent women, youth, indigenous peoples (IP) and local communities will be fully involved in the REDD+ process. The participatory mechanism used needs to ensure that IP and forest-dependent communities have the capacity to effectively contribute to the REDD+ readiness and implementation. Particularly, the weakest stakeholders need to be informed and capacitated with the appropriate tools allowing them to have a say and/or claim their rights within the REDD+ process. The “Yellow” rating seems to be the more appropriate for this criterion.

C8 – Consultation process; (criterion 8) [Green]

The self-designation of stakeholder group representatives and the effective implementation of the consultation plan were much appreciated and enabled this criterion to make substantial progress. For this last point, they formulated wishes including that of increasing logistical support and resources to local organizations to promote local communication in communities through the use of local channels. The report also notes that « there are still efforts to be made to take gender into account in community representation » (p. 40).

It appears throughout the report that consultations took place from local to national level in all the 5 ecological regions during the self-assessment phase.

However, there is no clear evidence that this was the case since the launching of the REDD+ process. Furthermore, the consultation processes do not demonstrate a clear gender sensitivity (see above, part A, section « Participation, communication and information »).

→ Based on these observations, the TAP questions the “Green” rating. The TAP suggests that more efforts be made so that inclusiveness, culture affiliation and gender issue are fully considered in all phases of consultation.

C9 - Dissemination of information and access to information (criterion 9) [green]

The self-assessment report observes that diversification and multiplication of communication channels enabled to make substantial progress under this criterion. However, these channels are still reserved for a specific elite and are not very well adapted to population in general.

To address this issue, the self-assessment report suggests more efforts to be made by administrations towards indigenous peoples especially in intensifying the use of traditional media and social media, improving the REDD+ website and using organizations as local relays for local communication.

- In the TAP’s view, some of the suggested solutions are good ideas only at first sight. Social media and REDD+ website for instance are not the right channels of communication towards grassroots populations. Emphasis should first be placed on communication through traditional means of communication (and in a language understandable to the recipient of the information).
- In the TAP’s view, criterion 9 would have been rather rated “yellow” given the weakness identified.

C10 – Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes (yellow)

The self-assessment observed that in spite of the good progress made, reports are not systematically made available to stakeholders down to the local level in real time. The report notes that going forward, engagement with government at the policy and strategic levels with a view to fostering institutional linkages for the implementation of REDD+, as well as engagement with the private sector is required. The TAP agrees with the self-assessment and refers to the views outlined under C9.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

Sub-Component 2a: Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use change drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance (criteria 11-15)

C11 - Assessment and analysis [yellow]

Stakeholders find that the analytical work in preparation of REDD+ has made good progress. They require that the results of the study of drivers of Deforestation/Degradation (DD) be forwarded to public decision-makers for policy consideration. They also find that the studies have not sufficiently updated existing sectoral strategies to manage new REDD+ induced land issues (p. 51).

Based on the FCPF Guidance on Applying the Assessment Framework, the diagnostic question asked here is whether the summary of the work conducted during R-PP formulation present an analysis of recent historical land-use trends and assessment of relevant land tenure and titling, natural resource rights, livelihood, forest law, policy and governance issues.

The answer is affirmative, but the information is not found in the R-Package but in the R-PP document where the historical development of forest/land-use and its trend and links to people's livelihoods is described. The topic is developed through a 24-page chapter with the support of many references to scientific literature. It also shows how farming practices led to a loss of forest cover, which remains an important deforestation driver. Several studies were carried out to better understand (i) the situation and dynamics of the forests, (ii) the sectors involved and the sectoral policies and measures necessary for REDD+ (Agriculture, Wood-Energy, Conservation, Forestry/Reforestation, Land-use planning), (iii) the legal framework, regulatory and economic framework of the REDD+ and (iv) land use, customary and traditional rights. These studies identified and characterized the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the five agro-ecological zones of the country. URLs to the reports, documents and studies are provided in the reference section of the R-Package.

C12 - Prioritization of direct and indirect favorable/unfavorable elements for forest valorization

[yellow]

There has been good progress on this criterion, but the stakeholders have found some aspects of prioritization missing, notably the analysis of the impacts of the different drivers on the national economy (p. 51).

Regarding Criterion 12, the FCPF Guidance suggests that two questions be answered namely (i) how the analysis was used to prioritize key direct and indirect drivers to be addressed by the programme and policies included in the REDD+ strategy and (ii) whether the analysis considered the major barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement activities and REDD+ activities were identified. The information can be found in the "National REDD+ strategy" (final version, June 2018) the link to which is provided in Appendix 5.

C13 – Link between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities [green]

The self-assessment report indicates that stakeholders felt that the links between the drivers of DD and the proposed activities were well established. This criterion has therefore made substantial progress. However, they requested that the study on projects and programmes with REDD+ potential be updated.

→ The TAP agrees with the stakeholders rating but finds the request not relevant since a lot of study provided in the appendix 5 and related to the issue are recent. E.g. The final version of the National REDD+ strategy (2018), In-depth analysis of the DD drivers (2017).

C14 – Action plan to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance [yellow]

According to the stakeholders' assessment, this criterion has made good progress, but efforts must be made to develop a timetable for REDD+ actions. Stakeholders would like the action plan to be owned by the grassroots and be regularly updated (p. 51).

The FCPF Guidance put the following question: « Do action plans to make progress in the short, medium and long term towards addressing relevant land-use, land tenure and titling natural resource rights livelihoods, and governance issues in priority regions related to REDD+ programs outline further steps and identify required resources? » The affirmative answer can be found in the « National REDD+ strategy » provided in appendix 5.

- In the TAP's view, the issue of natural resource rights, land tenure, titling, etc. as stated at this criterion cannot be effectively addressed before a grievance mechanism is in place and functional (see supra, criterion 6).

C15 Impacts on forest law and policy [orange]

On the basis of the self-assessment, this criterion is among those for which several efforts are still required to fulfill the requirements (p. 51).

- The TAP notes that, although several studies on policy and legal issues have been carried out regarding the subcomponent 2a, there is still a need to translate results effectively into appropriate actions in the field. In the TAP's view, at least a short summary of the results of the analysis of the studies on property and governance could have been presented. The TAP agrees with the orange rating on this criterion.

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

C16 – Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategic options; C17 – Feasibility assessment; C18 – Impacts of policy options on existing sectoral policies (criteria 16, 17 & 18, [Yellow])

Currently, the government's efforts are simultaneously addressing the three phases of REDD+ (readiness, investment/demonstration and performance-based payments) under the supervision of the National REDD+ Coordinator. As stated in the report, to foster cross-sectoral coordination, the REDD+ Steering Committee will be moved into the Prime Minister's Office and the secretariat of the Steering Committee will be broadened to include non-forestry ministries whose agenda have direct implications for forest and land use such as agriculture, land use planning and land affairs (p. 29).

Stakeholders observe that the selection and prioritization of REDD+ Strategic Options requires an outreach of the strategic options and an evaluation of the reduction potential of each option. Their position is that economic aspects should also be considered in the prioritization of strategic options, which should be based on the assessment of opportunity costs and the cost-effectiveness analysis of each option (p. 51-52).

The report states that despite the implementation of REDD+ pilot activities in the field to test strategic options, these are not mature enough to allow an assessment of the feasibility of these options. For this reason, the criterion deserves more effort, e.g. through carrying out mid-term evaluations of projects in order to capitalize on their results (p. 52).

As for the implications of REDD+ strategy options on existing sectoral policies, stakeholders believe that more efforts should be made to consider the impact of strategic options on certain sectors which are not directly part of the natural resource management sectors, but which will be affected by them. They agree that there is a need to move from potential impacts on sectoral policies to real impacts. To this end, they recommended improving coordination and cross-sector collaboration of REDD+ activities in order to accelerate land and forest policy reforms (p. 52).

Many documents referenced in the R-Package (and provided in appendix 5) offer a global view of the whole REDD+ process, the steps to be taken and identify possible conflicts. A risk of overlapping rules is for example perceived as regards land tenure, which is mostly governed by customary law. The existence of a dualistic system for land management is mentioned on p. 45 of the report (statutory and

customary). A 54-page document (National reflections on carbon rights and land tenure/droits fonciers et « droits carbone » au Cameroun) and a foresight study related to impacts of policy options on existing sectoral policies (i.e. Study for the harmonization of sectoral policies and laws for an effective implementation of REDD+) are both provided in Appendix 5.

The self-assessment report does not further refer to inconsistencies and how they will be tackled.

- In the TAP's understanding, it is too early to apprehend the impacts of the REDD+ process on the existing sectoral policies. Impacts have yet not been assessed even though some work has taken place. These reflections are important for defining the REDD+ strategic options for phase-3 implementation. The yellow rating is justified.

Sub-Component 2c: Implementation framework (criteria 19-22)

C19 – Adoption and enforcement of laws and regulations; C22 – National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities (criteria 19 and 22, [Orange])

These two criteria have been identified in the self-assessment process as areas where more work is required for completing the readiness. Stakeholders consider that there is very little evolution outside the studies carried out. They believe that for an effective implementation of REDD+, the establishment of a legal framework (laws, bills, decree, etc.) specifically dedicated to REDD+ is necessary.

The report states that the National REDD+ Registry and Monitoring System of REDD+ Activities still requires much effort despite the fact that the certification procedure has already been developed. The non-existence of the national REDD+ registry tool prevents from having access to all the information related to REDD+ projects (p. 53)

- In the TAP's view, a clear definition of the pitfalls and barriers to the adoption of laws related to REDD+ process is necessary. Thus, the orange rating in the self-assessment is correct.

C20 – Guidelines for implementation; C21 – Benefit sharing mechanism (criteria 20 & 21) [yellow]

Some stakeholders observed that the lack of testing of the proposed mechanisms and frameworks does not allow to make substantial progress towards REDD+ implementation. They propose that these options should be tested through pilot projects in order to learn and be adjusted if necessary. They should be made known to all stakeholders, particularly at the local level.

The benefit sharing mechanism seems to be mainly happening as public discourse. As far as the TAP is aware, relevant studies related to the definition of the benefit-sharing mechanism have not been carried out so far, nor have any study been made available for the public.

The R-Package document does not provide any information related to the way the benefit sharing mechanism will be carried out and what will be the safeguards (e.g. inclusiveness, fairness, criteria for allocation, etc.).

- To provide a detailed assessment about the benefit sharing, the TAP would require additional information and/or materials such as draft documents. The TAP agrees on the yellow rating.

Sub-Component 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts (criteria 23, 24 & 25)

C23 – Analysis of the issues related to social and environmental safeguards; C24 – REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts; C25 – Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) (criteria 23, 24, 25, [Green])

The three criteria were rated “green”. Criterion 23 because stakeholders believe that issues relating to environmental and social safeguards have been sufficiently considered through the assessment and proposal of environmental and social management measures. Criterion 24 because they found that the criterion has made substantial progress and criterion 25 because they appreciated that the proposed environmental and social management frameworks are consistent with World Bank operational policies and have included marginalized groups.

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) process and ESMF⁷ aim at creating a sustainable institutional structure that ensures effective management of social and environmental issues beyond the Readiness phase. The report does not refer to any SESA result as stated in the FCPF Guidance.

→ The R-Package document does not explicitly refer to the FCPF assessment framework. It does not mention ongoing activities those to be carried out. Since neither challenges nor activities to be carried out are identified, the TAP concludes that this analysis is yet to be completed, thus the TAP questions the “green rating”.

Component 3: Reference Emission Levels/Reference Level (Criteria 26-28)

C26 – Demonstration of the method (Methodological basis for the establishment of Reference Level Criterion 26) [yellow]

In its submission to the UNFCCC, Cameroon proposed that its historical reference level is doubled by adjustment factors related to development projections to take into account national circumstances. Cameroon proposed a new definition of forest (10% crown cover, 0.5 ha, 3 m) that sets thresholds for parameters to be taken into consideration for determining land use strata and assessing carbon stocks. The result is that now about 65% of the national territory is covered by forests.

That it is noteworthy that Cameroon has introduced a specific forest definition for the purpose of REDD+. The definition maximizes the country’s forest area and giving the grounds for classifying Cameroon as a *high-forest/low deforestation (HFLD) country*. This finally gives also the ground that Cameroon can apply for an adjustment of its reference level beyond the historical average. Before introducing such a new definition, and according to a previous definition, the country had reported about 45% of forest cover (ITTO 2011, FAO 2015), clearly ruling out its qualification as an HFLD country, and therefore also ruling out an adjustment of its RL above the historical average. Cameroon used previous definitions for preparing its two national forest inventories, they were apparently not designed specifically with a view on maximizing the country’s potential to access results-based finance, but they were arguably chosen as most representative of the country’s forest resource overall. This should be kept in mind when defining an ER-Program at national level.

⁷The ESMF 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.

→ Overall, the TAP agrees with the “yellow rating” under C26 but would like to see a better justification of the chance on forest definition of the country.

C27 - Use of historical data, adjusted for national circumstances (criterion 27) [yellow]

National Historic data 2000-2015 have been used in the development of the NRF in accordance with the UNFCCC guidelines and the FCPF methodological framework. However, neither weaknesses, nor activities to be carried out are mentioned to a sufficient degree (or referred to) in the R-Package.

On the technical ground, the TAP noted that Cameroon seems to have opted to use a global data product as activity data on deforestation, the so-called Hansen data (University of Maryland, UMD). This choice was made although, as the R-Package points out, nationally produced historical forest cover data have been available. The R-Package however did not give any reasons for this choice. It would be interesting to know whether such nationally produced historical data followed the forest definition used in the country’s NFIs or the one specifically adopted for REDD+ reporting (see above).

The TAP further notes that using a global data product as activity data will reduce the need to build national capacity for collecting such data, provided the global data product continues to be available. In case of the Hansen data, and given the relatively short time frame of the FCPF Carbon Fund, this does not seem unlikely. Consistency issues might occur in case the UMD decides to update its methods or data sources. There could also be difficulties in verifying datasets and methods that are not effectively under Cameroon’s control, since verifiers would not have access to primary data.

→ In the TAP’s view, there remain a number of open questions that should be clarified under C27; thus, the YELLOW rating is justified.

C28 - Technical feasibility of methodological approach and compliance with UNFCCC guidelines and IPCC recommendations (Criterion 28) [green]

As the R-Package describes, forest degradation was estimated using the Impact Toolbox CarbEF module, developed by the Joint Research Center of the European Commission to estimate CO₂ emissions from deforestation and forest degradation processes. This module exploited forest loss maps over two time periods 2000 and 2015 to develop degradation maps for the same period.

The TAP notes that there are two separate datasets being used for deforestation and for forest degradation. From the information available, it is not immediately clear how these could deliver a set of coherent estimates and how overlaps between the two methods for estimating forest degradation and deforestation areas could be avoided.

In the TAP view, there is very little information here about the approach for quantifying forest degradation. Much more attention has been dedicated to deforestation. One might have expected the opposite considering the importance of natural forest timber exploitation (not all under sustainable management schemes) in Cameroon. Cameroon’s forest sector has received large attention from the international cooperation and its forest concessions regime is sometimes even seen as a partial success. One might expect to see more attention on experience obtained here and focus, in the respective agro-ecological zone, on avoiding forest degradation.

The R-Package showed that a concept for the reference level was developed with a strong emphasis on the agricultural sector as agriculture is the main driver of deforestation. The logical framework is simple: the evolution of demand for agricultural products within and outside of the country will determine their level of production in the future and that have impacts on the forest.

While the issue of deforestation is well explained, in the TAP questions from a development policy perspective, if there shouldn't be more focus on avoiding forest degradation - rather than deforestation? In the TAP's view, modeling emission trends over the period 2015-2035 from an agricultural expansion that has not even yet started (cf. deforestation rate of about 0.12%) seems to be somewhat adventurous. The TAP also notes that the methodological framework of the FCPF requires that such future trends are already observable and not guesswork.

→ For above outlined argumentation, the TAP questions to "GREEN" rating under this criterium and proposes to change in "YELLOW" and request to justify further the approach chosen.

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for forests, and safeguards

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

C29 - Documentation of monitoring/tracking approach (Criterion 29) [green]

C30 - Demonstration of early system implementation (Criterion 30) [yellow]

C31 - Institutional arrangements and capacities (Criterion 31) [yellow]

The surveillance system and the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (S-MRV) is yet not available, although considerable work has been done e.g. production of historical maps of forest cover change for the period 2000 to 2015 in the ten regions of the country. Also, a guideline document for the MRV in Cameroon has been prepared and widely shared with the stakeholders. However, these guidelines have yet not put into implementation. In addition, stakeholders have proposed to add in the MRV an appropriate community monitoring tool. The latter has yet not been developed.

It is however difficult for the TAP reviewer to relate the discussion in the section about the NFMS to the discussion in the section about the reference level. Naturally, the activity data for programme monitoring must be fully consistent with the activity used for establishing the reference level. But at the current state, it is hard to infer this consistency from the text. There is no mention any more of the Hansen dataset or of the JRC's forest degradation module. The text reads as if the reference level and the forest monitoring system are disjoint. However, the logical link between the two sections is crucial for the development of an adequate results-based payment scheme in the future.

The R-Package further notes that in addition to satellite imagery, field data on the human activities that led to the changes will be provided or collected from member institutions of the institutional arrangements for the MRV, according to a collaborative protocol that still needs to be put in place.

On this, the TAP notes that there are many details provided on such human activities to be monitored. However, it remains unclear what such data would be used for. Maybe they would be a basis for benefit sharing plans? In any case, this information is not a needed part of the approach to reporting results or to setting the reference level.

→ In the view of the TAP, the MRV system of the R-Package document would have benefited by presenting direct hyperlinks to relevant documents and reports in the respective sections of the document. The link between the FREL and the MRV system have not been made. Thus, the TAP questions the GREEN rating for criterion 29 and proposes to assess the entire sub-component 4a with the rating YELLOW.

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

C32 - Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues (criteria 32) [green]

According to the R-Package, the strength of this criterion appears to be based on the identification and mapping of the multiple benefits of REDD+. Stakeholders have supported the prioritizing of non-carbon benefits. Based on the potential speed of the impact, direct socio-economic benefits have been put on first place. This is also explained by the context of relative poverty of some beneficiaries who are waiting for the opportunity to improve their living conditions. They are followed by indirect socio-economic benefits despite the very slow pace of their occurrence, followed by benefits related to governance and finally environmental benefits.

→ In the TAP's view, the "GREEN" rating is not justified and should be rather "YELLOW". While the TAP recognizes considerable work has been done, it should not be underestimated that the work on the dissemination of the results of the study and the implications for implementation is still considerable and will need time, organization skills and financial resources.

Monitoring, reporting and information sharing (criteria 33) [yellow]

As the REDD+ registry, the Safeguard Information System and the NFMSs are still under development. Further efforts are needed to fully comply with this criterion. Thus, in the view of the TAP the yellow rating is justified.

Institutional arrangements and capacities (criteria 34) [yellow]

Based on the assessment in the R-Package, there is still some work to undertake in order to clarify the mandates of the different institutions in respect to the valorization of non-carbon benefits. In particular there is need to consider IPs' structures when developing participatory MRV, enhance the capacities of stakeholders and enhance local knowledge and community monitoring. The yellow rating thus is justified.

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

Objectives of Cameroon Self-Assessment report based on the R-Package achieved

Based on the R-Package, version February 22, 2019, as well as on the analysis of some, but not all links and documents referred, the TAP reviewer concludes that **the enumerated accomplishments described in Cameroon's Self-Assessment report and based on the R-Package have been effectively achieved, although that a number important elements remain to be finalized, including through an**

additional grant for REDD+ readiness completion in 2019/2020. In the view of the TAP, in spite of the complex and diverse enabling conditions in the country, Cameroon has reached a significant level of preparation for REDD+ that lays out the basis for a forthcoming REDD+ Phase 3 Program once the major issues have been resolved.

Further actions to conclude the readiness process

The R-Package presents a comprehensive description and outline of “Action steps to be undertaken to conclude proposed activities” (Table 17 of the report) that also contains a timeframe for the activities to be completed in the period between 2019/2020 (although some proposed activities go beyond that proposed timeline). The lion share of the proposed activities is to be financed by the additional donation from the FCPF of around \$ 5 million, but also other sources are mentioned to be reached.

Some issues still need to be addressed to strengthen the Readiness Process

Cameroon has done considerable progress in its REDD+ readiness. As assessed by the stakeholders in the self-assessment process, several activities still need to be conducted to consolidate the Readiness phase. These issues can be solved in the proposed 2-years’ time frame. The main comments made by the TAP have been highlighted in the respective sections (→ in red), including *inter alia*:

- For component 1 overall, while substantial efforts were made, the participation of all stakeholders and communication should be further improved. The self-assessment report pointed out the insufficient capacity of civil society to take an active part in the national REDD+ process and the lack of a clear approach in respect to the feedback and redress mechanism. A validated communication strategy should be used to ensure effective and efficient information sharing on readiness outcomes to all relevant stakeholders, particularly IPs.
- For component 2, the self-assessment underlines some remaining critical criteria that need to be addressed in the additional two years of readiness implementation: linking REDD+ to laws and regulations, legal and policy implementation arrangements of REDD+ and designing and putting in place the REDD+ registry for the country. Overall the analytical basis for REDD+ implementation is assessed as sufficient and the REDD+ strategy appropriate overall.
- In respect to component 3, some methodological approaches will need further refinement or justification. E.g. the TAP notes that the forest definition used has altered prior data on forest extent (obtained by forest inventories) significantly. There are two separate datasets being used for deforestation and for forest degradation. From the information available, it is not immediately clear how these could deliver a set of coherent estimates and how overlaps between the two methods for estimating forest degradation and deforestation areas could be avoided. Also, modeling emission trends over the period 2015-2035 from an agricultural expansion that has not even yet started is seemingly not to be in accordance with the methodological framework of the FCPF.
- In respect to component 4, it would be important to make a direct functional link between the NFMS and elements presented in the section about the reference level. Naturally, the activity data for programme monitoring need to be fully consistent with the activity used for establishing the reference level. But at the moment, it is hard for the TAP to infer this consistency from the text.

To summarize, the Self-Assessment process and the analysis of progress of the readiness phase has been clearly presented in the R-Package documents and its various annexes/URLs (as much as they could have been consulted). The TAP expert therefore commends the Cameroon REDD+ Team for the huge effort undertaken. The TAP noted that while important work to finalize the readiness process is still ongoing, the country is embarking with enthusiasm in the preparation of a FIP programme and a phase-3 results-based program in a carefully chosen jurisdictional area in the Southern Plateau.

As well pointed out in the Self-assessment Report, additional work is required. The TAP is fully in accordance with the recommendations made in the Self-assessment Review. The additional work program 2019/2020 to complete REDD+ readiness, needs to take into consideration, *inter alia*, the following elements:

- Review participation, information sharing and increase capacity efforts at local level under consideration of language complexity to make information available and accessible.
- Develop on the feedback and regress mechanism
- Develop the Safeguards Information System
- Prepare an implementable REDD+ Registry for Cameroon;
- Finalize the National Forest Monitoring System;
- Complete the development of the national FRL/RL considering deforestation and forest degradation; and
- Develop the link between FRL and NFMS (reference level and monitoring).

The TAP endorses the findings made in Self-Assessment report by Cameroon's REDD+ stakeholders that additional efforts are needed to guarantee the ownership of REDD+ at policy level, particularly beyond the forestry sector. Thus, more policy work will be required to make reforms in key areas such as land tenure, tree tenure and benefit sharing to make REDD+ implementation happen.
