

## Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN): External Review Template

**Guidelines for Reviewers**

Select a mark from the following scale: NA: Not Addressed. 1: Inadequately addresses criterion. 2: Barely addresses criterion. 3: Average, or adequately addresses criterion. 4: Good job of addressing criterion. 5: Excellent job of addressing criterion.

<b>1) Country submitting the R-PIN: GABON: Summary TAP Review</b> <b>2) Date of Review: 4 July 2008 - REVISED VERSION, July 7</b>	
<b>I. Summary Assessment of the Quality and Completeness of the R-PIN:</b> <i>Note with value of 1 – 5</i>	<b>Mark (score):</b>
<b>Criterion (i): Ownership of the proposal by both the government and relevant stakeholders:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Criterion (ii): Consistency between national and sectoral strategies and proposed REDD Strategy:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Criterion (iii): Completeness of information and data provided:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Criterion (iv): Clarity of responsibilities for the execution of REDD activities to be financed:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Criterion (v): Feasibility of proposal and likelihood of success:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SUMMARY SCORE: add scores above and enter sum into box on right</b>	<b>SUM = 20</b>
<b>Improvements the country could make to R-PIN, and any TA needs for it:</b> <i>The proposal should link more on the particular situation of the country as a forest-rich country with great potential to restore existing forest carbon stocks and to commit forests as carbon reservoir through an integration valuation approach for forest goods and services. The narrow REDD approach does not apply to the country as current deforestation rate is low. The fact that this might change in future is not an argument to develop a national RED scheme in the narrow sense.</i>	
<b>II. Participants Committee Selection Criteria: Information</b>  Relevance of country in REDD context: Priority to countries with: (i) substantial forest area and forest carbon stocks; and (ii) relevance of forests in economy, including livelihoods of forest dwellers and Indigenous Peoples:  <i>The country dispose of a substantial forest area and very high carbon stock. Gabon is a country that would have to be considered from the viewpoint of maintaining existing carbon pools and addressing carbon sinks through reducing degradation and promoting forest restoration.</i>	

<p><b>Geographic and biome balance:</b> across the world's main forest biomes.</p> <p><i>Represents one of the few tropical countries in the rainforest area that have high forest endowment and low deforestation rate (together with Guyana, Suriname, Estado do Amazonas in Brazil and some other countries). This is mainly due to low population pressure and relatively high income from the exploitation of other resources such as mineral oil and mining.</i></p>	
<p><b>Variety of approaches:</b> Proposed innovative approaches to tackling deforestation and degradation; methods; testing new mechanisms and distribution of REDD revenues; and/or regionally important leadership.</p> <p><i>Scenarios of future deforestation for commercial use (agro-industry, energy) is preempted in the R-PIN. Nevertheless, such conversion will happen if government policies would create the conducive investment environment for it. The entire argumentation on deforestation is not very convincing, however efforts at the level of degradation/forest restoration and developing the carbon potential of sustainable (yield) (forest) management should be more explored.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>III. Detailed Review of R-PIN Responses to Template Questions:</b></p> <p><i>Please review the R-PIN quality and completeness in terms of addressing the major questions in the FCPF R-PIN template.</i></p>	
<p><b>1. Government focal point, and ownership and consultation in producing the R-PIN:</b></p> <p><i>Clearly defined focal point: Direction Générale de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature" in the Ministry for Environment, Rural Development, Nature Protection and Disaster Risk Management". The Directorate responsible is also the focal point of the UNFCCC in the country.</i></p> <p><i>Consultative process has been wide-reaching and comprehensive. Broad ownership of different State Agencies and Institutions, including the Forest Service. Broad ownership of international actors active in Gabon's forest sector, including the French Cooperation (AFD) and international NGOs (WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)). No participation of private sector or local civil society/community organizations in the preparation of the R-PIN.</i></p>	
<p><b>2. Identification of institutions responsible for: a) forest monitoring, b) law enforcement, c)conservation, and d) coordination across forest, agriculture and rural development:</b></p> <p><i>Clearly identified for a), b) and c) as the specialized services under MEFEPA (Ministry for Forest Economy, Water, Fishery and Aquaculture). A clearer link between the different ministries and stakeholder groups listed should be provided under d).</i></p>	
<p><b>3. Current country situation:</b></p> <p><b>Where do deforestation and forest degradation occur, main causes, estimates of greenhouse gas emissions, data available? Key issues in forest law enforcement and forest sector governance?</b></p> <p><i>Well described chapter. For the time being, the deforestation rate is very low, due to macroeconomic conditions that deter large-scale deforestation, rather than from law enforcement. Deforestation is mainly linked with urban development and mining. Degradation is linked with timber harvesting, particularly in the 60% of production forest areas that are exploited without management plans.</i></p> <p><i>There are yet no data available on GHG emissions but coordinated efforts are underway with support of COMIFAC (forestry commission for Central Africa). There is informative section on institutions, tools and datasets available or not for generating estimates of deforestation.</i></p> <p><i>The key issues in respect to forest law enforcement and governance are well described. Forest tenure, small scale harvesting without management prescriptions and the lack of inventory data for effective monitoring are some of the key challenges mentioned.</i></p>	

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

*The R-PIN remains short on information on indigenous peoples and forest dwellers. There is little data provided on forest dwellers (mainly Pygmy communities) on land potentially targeted for REDD and where Pygmy community find there living space.*

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

*The proposal presents clear information on the major strategies/policies in place. There exist a well-established dialog in the forests between the different stakeholder groups through the National Commission for Sustainable Development (CNDD). This commission could also have a function in respect to REDD.*

*Several national forest management programs are being conducted and are described, including on forest concession management, national parks, community forestry, environmental code, code on mining and forest certification and legality in the wood chain. These programs are conducted nationally and partly also regionally through COMIFAC and a collaboration with Global Forest Watch of the World Resources Institute.*

*REDD could be inscribed in this ongoing national and regional process.*

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

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

*At present, deforestation is not an issue in Gabon because population pressure on the forests resources is low and the government development policy is partly based on forestry. The argument is made that policy can be changed over time and lead to conversion of forests for commercial agriculture and energy crops. Forest degradation is an issue where timber harvesting is done without management plans. As long as there is a clear policy on sustainable forest management, there is no need for the narrow focused program on reducing deforestation. Urban development will happen and thus deforestation is needed for that kind of development. It would be an illusion to tackle that kind of deforestation with a REDD incentive scheme. The issue is rather one of an extended REDD approach, that includes how to keep existing high carbon stocks intact and how to restore degraded carbon stocks to full carbon stocks, in both, production forests and conservation forests.*

*The country, however, proposes to strengthen and expand its protected areas system, its area of forest under sustainable management and a variety of resource extraction categories, and concrete action in the zones of rapid forest conversion. All of these are well-articulated and justified.*

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

*Assistance is mainly provided through regional initiatives and closely linked with the French Cooperation Program, initiatives of WWF and support from the World Bank. The COMIFAC REDD workshop held in Paris in March 2008 is considered as a main driver to develop REDD activities in Gabon. Gabon has been very active in Coalition of Rainforest nations and the UNFCCC processes. In many ways, Gabon has already been preparing for readiness investment, and the institutional environment seems receptive of the general strategy.*

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

*The country would use existing dialog mechanism (e.g. the CNDD) with the various stakeholder groups to further REDD as a new national approach. The proposal offers a detailed description of the processes envisioned, at different levels. There has not been any particular dialog with local stakeholders on REDD yet, for obvious reasons.*

*In respect to rural communities, the R-PIN affirms that the rural communities are not organised without mentioning any effort done so far or to be done to include indigenous and local communities in REDD. Such statement might lead to the conclusion that indigenous and local communities on whose land REDD projects will be executed will not be stakeholders and beneficiaries being of a future REDD programme. The paragraph on this issue need revision to state exactly how indigenous and local communities will be involved and benefit from REDD.*

*The IP reviewer proposes a wide consultation process for indigenous communities, including sensitization and*

*capacity building to implement REDD- to clarify objectives and advantages of REDD. Preferably this should result in a separate plan on REDD for indigenous forest dweller communities in cooperation with indigenous representatives and organizations. The sub plan should involve indigenous representatives and or organizations.*

**8. Implementing REDD strategies: challenges to introducing effective REDD strategies, and how might they be overcome? Would performance-based payments through REDD be a major incentive for implementing a more coherent strategy to tackle deforestation?**

*The REDD strategy is developed as a forward-looking approach to respond to an increased development pathways in agriculture and bio-energy as predicted in the agricultural sector strategy. The challenge will be to distinguish between "acceptable" deforestation and "undue" deforestation. More emphasis should be given on reducing degradation in existing forest stands and valorization of forests goods and services as a valid option to render forest management more attractive from the economic view point.*

*There are some ideas on performance based payments, however it is specified that such mechanism need further consideration and a payment system would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

**9. REDD strategy monitoring and implementation:**

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

*The proposal highlights the current lack of local capacity that would be needed for all aspects of a REDD strategy, from estimating CO2 emissions to conducting high quality and regular forest inventories. The lack of monitoring data and instruments, together with the difficulties in data acquisition in that part of the world (cloud cover, lack of calibrated models, etc) need also be overcome. Capacity building is considered as the most important challenge to create and maintain effective monitoring.*

*The REDD strategy would focus on mapping and inventory (forests, biomass, carbon) at national level and help to develop infrastructure and human capacities.*

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

*Due to the vast extent of forests, there is a rich biodiversity and the country is considered as a hot spot area for wildlife and rainforest vegetation. Until today, the country does not have a nationally based system to monitor biodiversity, but regionally, on a case-by-case basis, well established monitoring systems. A REDD programme would help to develop further national biodiversity monitoring.*

*The R-PIN overly focuses on an existing program by an international NGO (WCS's People and Parks Program) to address the social issues in relation to rural livelihoods. Also, it only mentions the socio-economic development programs of forest concessionaires as a way to deal with rural livelihoods. These approaches are not sufficient when addressing a wider REDD approach at the national and local levels. The country would need to develop clearer national concepts on how it would address the social issues in a future REDD program. This section of the R-PIN is the weakest part of the proposal.*

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

*The request to the FCPF includes:*

- *Consultative process*
- *Prospective studies on future land-use to contribute to reference scenario development and generation of deforestation trends; studies on incentive mechanisms and the integration of the country into a regional deforestation and degradation study;*
- *The development of a REDD strategy based on a set of flexible mechanisms (which need to be further explained)*

- *The installation of an effective forest based/REDD monitoring system, including regular forest inventories*
- *Pilot interventions on REDD.*

*As a set, the requested assistance is logical and supportable. Nevertheless, there is need to further develop on the REDD strategy in respect to degradation and committing existing carbon stocks as reservoir.*

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

*An impressive group of donors and multilateral NGOs are supporting the forest sector in Gabon and are interested to be involved in REDD (France, Germany, E.U., GEF, WWF, WCS besides others). Reference could be made to the upcoming GEF investment in REDD/Sustainable Forest management under the Congo Basin Initiative, to avoid duplication.*

**13. Country's Potential Next Steps and Schedule:**

*The R-PIN mentions an impressive number of future activities and a schedule of the implementation of these activities is given in Annex 5.*

**14. Attachments and their usefulness:**

*Short but useful and informative attachments*