Republic of Ghana

PARTICIPATORY SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SYNTHESIS OF GHANA'S REDD+ READINESS PROCESS (R-PACKAGE)

JULY 2016

- Final Report -

GhREDD+
REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION IN GHANA

Forestry Commission

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CERSGIS	Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System
CCU	Climate Change Unit
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
ENRAC	Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council
ENREG	Environmental and Natural Resource Governance
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Emissions Reduction Programme
ER-PIN	Emissions Reductions - Programme Idea Note
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Programme
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FMT	Facility Management Team
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
FPP	Forest Preservation Programme
FSD	Forest Services Division
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HFZ	High Forest Zone
IKI	International Climate Initiative (of the German Government)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MESTI	Ministry of Environment Science, Technology and Innovation
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRWG	National REDD+ Working Group
NREG-TA	Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Technical Assistance
POC	Project Oversight Committee

PS	Private Sector
PwC	Price WaterhouseCoopers Ltd
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and conservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
FRL	Forest Reference Level
REL	Reference Emission Level
RL	Reference Level
RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
R-Package	REDD+ Readiness Package
SECO	Swiss Economic Cooperation Organisation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWG	REDD+ Sub Working Group
TCC+	Technical Coordinating Committee- Plus
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Introduction

REDD+ Readiness in Ghana is at an advanced stage, and Ghana is now in a position to submit the participatory self-assessment of its REDD+ Readiness Package (otherwise known as the R-Package) in fulfilment of one of the key requirements for REDD+ countries engaged in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) process. This R-package, in broad terms, signals Ghana's preparedness for undertaking and executing its REDD+ agenda in a manner that meets global expectations and consistent with national development goals. This is opportune at this stage as Ghana's makes a transition towards results-based actions on the ground.

This report integrates both parts of the Readiness Package i.e. (i) readiness preparation summary by component, and assessment results and (ii) the report of multi-stakeholder self-assessment process.

The assessment was guided by the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, which describes a participatory process and set of 35 structured guiding questions, which are to be used in carrying out the assessment. A series of meetings were held over a nine-day period in April 2016 with a cross-section of stakeholders and institutional representatives, all of whom had been directly involved in the readiness process. In total, 67 persons were consulted, from government, NGO/CSO and private sector organisations.

The assessment was facilitated by an independent, external consultant with a background in Forestry, REDD+ and Evaluation who was hired by the National REDD+ Secretariat with FCPF funds. The role of the consultant was made clear throughout the consultation process – namely to solicit inputs from stakeholders, encourage balanced discussion and ensure a broad-based input, rather than to provide expert judgment or evaluation assessments.

In undertaking this assessment, the external facilitator worked together with the NRS to identify a list of relevant stakeholders either as individuals representatives of institutions with a strong stake in the National REDD+ process or as small focus groups such as the NRWG and the thematic sub-working groups. This included members of key entities involved in REDD+ process, particularly the NRWG with membership drawn from relevant state institutions, NGOs and civil society organisations, forest-fringe communities, the private sector and development partners.

In each stakeholder group consultations, a presentation was given initially by the facilitator introducing the readiness assessment framework, its aims, objectives and the process adopted for undertaking the assessment, including the scoring system used. The “ground rules” were also spelled out clearly, including stressing the point that this was a self-assessment process, rather than an externally driven evaluation. The NRS also provided context and clarifications as needed, but not views or opinions on progress.

It was agreed that the assessment would concentrate on national level processes through engagement with representatives of institutions and organisations involved directly in REDD+ readiness, as well as representatives of constituencies whose interests may be impacted positively or negatively by the REDD+ process.

There is general consensus on progress made across the different stakeholder groups and clear (relative) trends can be seen between different components and sub-components. With regard to the assessment from civil society and private sector, overall a more critical view was given than by government stakeholders, but this is to be expected in a process that is largely

driven by government. However, at all times, the atmosphere was congenial, open and constructive, despite the difference in viewpoints. In general, there is agreement that while REDD+ readiness is progressing well at a technical level, there is a need to put significant efforts into deepening ownership at policy level beyond the forestry sector, and more work will be required to make reforms inkey areas such as tree tenure and benefit sharing.

Results of the Self-Assessment

1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements

Generally, there is good progress in terms of the institutional arrangements, accountability and transparency, cross-sectoral co-ordination, technical supervision, staffing and funds management. More work is needed to ensure that funding in the medium to long term is assured and that relevant ministries are fully engaged. Attention is also needed towards the operationalization of the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism.

1b. Consultation, Participation and Outreach

Excellent progress has been made in delivering a thorough communication campaign through a range of channels, and ensuring widespread consultation and participation in the design of key aspects of REDD+ readiness. Information has been shared widely and the inputs of consultative exercises are used to inform and strengthen the development of plans and proposals being developed at the national level.

2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance

Overall assessment of land use and land use change drivers was thorough and built extensively on earlier efforts. The process of developing the REDD+ Strategy encountered some initial setbacks, which have been addressed following concerted inputs from other stakeholders, which have led to a more robust version of the document. The linkages between drivers and strategy options are clear and logical. Work remains to be done to develop clear action plans on how some of the unresolved issues relating to tree tenure, benefit sharing, livelihoods etc. will be addressed in a concrete manner.

2b. REDD+ Strategy Options

The strategy options were selected through a participatory and inclusive process.In finalising Ghana's REDD+ Strategy, the strategy options were subjected to a thorough SESA process where potential impacts (both positive and negative) were assessed and measures proposed for their mitigation. The National REDD+ Strategy clearly articulates Ghana's Vision for REDD+ which is to "significantly reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation over the next twenty years, whilst at the same time addressing threats that undermine ecosystem services and environmental integrity so as to maximize the co-benefits of the forests".

Ghana's REDD+ Strategy is well-aligned with key national developmental strategies and policies. These include the National Climate Change Policy, Forest and Wildlife Policy, Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda GSGDA and Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to UNFCCC. The evolving Emissions Reduction Programme for the cocoa-forest landscape has been featured as one of the interventions that will be pursued to enable Ghana to meet its NDC target of reducing current national emissions by up to 45 percent by 2030. Together, these policies and strategiespoint to the pathway towards Ghana's vision for low emissions development.

The Emission Reduction potential was not comprehensively addressed in the National REDD+ strategy development process due to data paucity at the time it was being formulated, but has been well elaborated in the Emissions Reduction Programme Document focused on the cocoa-forest mosaic landscapes of Ghana.

2c. Implementation Framework

Good progress has been made in influencing key national policy development processes but these are yet to be translated into legally binding laws. More work is needed to clarify carbon and tree tenure, to agree on a final model for benefit sharing as well as REDD+ financing arrangements. Benefit sharing systems, while operating in the forest and wildlife sectors, are yet to be tested for REDD+.Ghana would like to prioritize operationalizing benefit sharing in the ERP area and use the lessons learnt for designing an agreeable national level benefit sharing arrangements applicable more broadly.During the first phase of REDD+ readiness, a consultancy was commissioned for the assessment of benefit sharing options for REDD+ implementation. However, this consultancy did not yield a specific benefit sharing arrangement for the ERP.

Currently, an implementation plan for the ERP is being finalized which will provide scope and clarity on the activities to be undertaken in the ERP area as well as their associated benefits. This plan will consequently provide the basis for the design of a benefit sharing framework for the Programme. The NRS therefore intends to commission a consultancy to develop a benefit sharing framework that builds on the initial work undertaken during the first phase of readiness and also take into cognizance the activities to be outlined in the ERP implementation plan.

2d. Social and Environmental Impacts

A thorough process was used for identifying potential impacts and risks associated with REDD+ related activities. Where significant negative impacts were identified, activities were either modified, removed or mitigation actions prescribed to reduce potential downstream impacts. The ESMF developed through the SESA process will be adapted to the ER program area and implemented to test its applicability.

3a. Forest Reference Level/Reference Levels

Significant work has been done on the REL/RL with the FCPF grant that builds on previous support including a major investment by the Japanese government under the Forest Preservation Programme which was implemented between 2011 and 2013.

Additional funding was provided bythe FCPF following the approval of Ghana's Mid-Term Report on REDD readiness that allow for completion of REL work at both national and sub-national level (covering the accounting area for the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme). The final product is expected to meet the requirements under IPCC and UNFCCC methodological guidance. A consultancy report on earlier work on REL/MRVundertaken during the first phase of REDD+ readiness is included in the annex.

4a. National Forest Monitoring System

The NFMS is yet to become fully operational, and is closely linked to the construction of the REL. The design of the system, which is in line with latest international thinking and meets IPCC/UNFCCC standards will be able to measure deforestation, degradation and enhancement of carbon stocks. Clear roles and responsibilities have been agreed regarding the operationalization of the NFMS. However, the system will require significant running budget, institutional support and capacity and none of these parameters have yet been fully tested.

4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards

Good progress has been made with regard to SESA in the design of REDD Strategy. The ESMF is finalized, but it has not been operationalized as the REDD+ implementation is yet to start.

Plans are at an early stage with regard to the development of a SIS with a view to complying fully with UNFCCC requirements.

Overall, the findings indicate good progress against all readiness criteria. Work remains to be done in three key areas:

- Finalising the design of key elements of readiness structures (such as the REDD+ Registry, NFMS and safeguard information system)
- Implementing (at least piloting and testing) key readiness structures
- Developing and Implementing costed and detailed workplans for REDD+ measures to clarify legal aspects relating to rights, tenure and benefit sharing.

Overall Scores

A summary score is presented below at sub component level based on the responses and scores of questions for each of the sub-components that were received from different stakeholder groups. Overall, the assessment identifies 6 green, 2 yellow and one orange score:

Component	Sub Component	Summary of scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	
	2c. Implementation Framework	
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	

This represents a significant improvement and progress since the MTR was undertaken in 2014, which identified only one green, seven yellow and one red score as presented below:

Component	Sub Component	Summary of scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	
	2c. Implementation Framework	
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	
Monitoring system for	4a. National Forest Monitoring	

forests and safeguards	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	

Actions Required and Next Steps

The assessment clearly points to a number of areas that require action if Ghana is to be fully REDD+ ready. These areas are presented below:

National REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan: The REDD+ Strategy has identified measures to address the policy and legal gaps or barriers to reducing deforestation and forest degradation or enhancing carbon stocks. What is outstanding is the need to develop a clear, realistic and costed action plan that defines roles and responsibilities for implementation.

An implementation plan has been developed for the ERPD, which provides detailed steps for achieving emission reductions in the cocoa landscape.

Forest Reference Level (REL)/Reference Level (RL): Complete the development of the national level FRL/RL now that the sub-national ERP accounting area FRL has been developed.

National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS): Once the FRL/RL has been finalised (and as necessary, submitted) there is a need to fully implement the NFMS, including targeting specific capacity development at institutions responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing information.

Safeguard Information System (SIS): To comply with UNFCCC requirements, it will be necessary to establish a national safeguard information system that will report periodically on how safeguards are being "respected and addressed". In line with the UN-REDD model for country-led safeguard development, it will be important to anchor this in existing legal and regulatory mechanisms and provisions for mitigating social and environmental impacts.

Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM): The FGRM needs to be operationalized starting from the sub-national level. Synergy with the FLEGT/VPA processes foraddressing complaints relating to timber validation may reduce costs and strengthen linkages between these two important inter-connected approaches to improving forest governance. Furthermore, given that REDD+ activities will be implemented initially within the cocoa / HFZ landscape, it would make sense to operationalize the FGRM starting from this area.

A consultancy has been commissioned to develop a position paper for the review and amendment of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act 2010 to include environmental issues and thereby serve as a pathway for resolving REDD+ disputes. In addition, the consultancy will lead to the development of operational modalities for the FGRM. This work is expected to be completed by August 2016.

REDD+ Registry: A consultancy has been commissioned for the design and set up of a REDD+ registry and is expected to be concluded by October 2016.This is expected to provide detailed information on stakeholder activities within the targeted landscapes and also facilitate anticipated carbon transactions in the coming years.

Funds Management of REDD+ Financing: Ghana expects to be the recipient of up to US$ 50 million in performance-based payments from the Carbon Fund once the ERPD gets approval and an ER Purchase Agreement is signed subsequently. Other potential sources of REDD+ financing such as the Green Climate Fund will be pursued in the near future. Robust systems will have to be put in place for ensuring that these funds are properly managed to fully benefit the intended beneficiaries including community groups (such as CREMAs) and farmers etc. whose actions contribute significantly to generating the emission reductions. Currently,

no design exists for this structure; however a consultancy for the design for such a structure has recently been commissioned.

Begin the design for Ghana's second ERP: The National REDD+ Strategy outlines plans for a second ERP in the northern Savannah zone that will address the needs of dryland woodlands and forests and the people who live there. Integration of wildlife, collection of non-timber forest products (such as shea butter) will both be important features of this programme. The design has yet to progress beyond the concept stage and additional thinking will be required to develop a coherent plan that could be submitted for further development to funding channels such as GCF.

Deepening the engagement with key Ministries: The assessment has highlighted the need to deepen engagement with non-forestry ministries whose actions have implications for land use and land-use change. This includes the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government and the mining sector (both within and outside government).

Continual engagement with partners and other stakeholders: Aside the core support being provided by the FCPF towards Ghana's REDD+ readiness efforts, related initiatives being undertaken by stakeholders from other government agencies, CSOs/ NGOs, the private sector and multilateral organisations have significantly strengthened the REDD+ preparatory processes in Ghana.

Local and International NGOs/ CSOs including IUCN, A Rocha, SNV and NCRC are undertaking initiatives which are exploring and enhancing the effective engagement of local level stakeholders including local communities and farmers in the REDD+ process. Key multilateral agencies, development partners and global foundations such as GIZ, FAO, the Japanese Government and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation have provided support for analytical studies and capacity enhancement on the use of remote-sensing based approaches for national forest monitoring.

The government has also received support for the implementation of major environmental programmes including the Forest Investment Programme, FLEGT/ VPA and the Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Programme. These initiatives have enhanced the environmental policy and institutional framework and also provided an opportunity for field-testing of key practical approaches that will enhance environmental management in the country. These efforts will ultimately provide a positive enabling environment to support REDD+ implementation in Ghana.

Private sector support for REDD+ has been primarily premised on project-based approaches aimed at enhancing climate smart agricultural practices. The evolving cocoa-forest REDD+ programme thereby represents an important pathway for upscaling private sector support and investment in REDD+.

As Ghana transitions into full implementation of REDD+, it is imperative for these partnerships and collaborative efforts to be further enhanced and harnessed in a well-coordinated manner towards the attainment of the nation's REDD+ aspirations.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF FCPF SUPPORT

In March 2010, Ghana's REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) was approved by the Participants Committee of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. However, implementation of REDD+ Readiness activities began in May 2012 following the signing of the grant agreement and completion of all funding arrangements with the World Bank.

The Climate Change Unit (CCU) of the Forestry Commission serves as the National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS) and has responsibility for the coordination of Ghana's REDD+ Readiness process. Ghana has made good progress on activities under the four REDD+ Readiness thematic components of the FCPF namely:

- Readiness Organisation and Consultation
- REDD+ Strategy Preparation
- Establishment of a Reference Emission Level/ Reference Level
- Setting up of Monitoring System for Forests and Safeguards

The first phase of Ghana's REDD+ Readiness was successfully completed in October 2014 and, and in mid-2015, Ghana received approval for the additional sum of USD 5.2 million following the submission and approval of its mid-term report (MTR) and request for additional funding. This additional funding was considered as necessary to support Ghana in its efforts to fully develop all the frameworks, systems and structures required for effective engagement in the REDD+ mechanism. **Figure 1** (below) depicts the progress made in Ghana's REDD+ process.

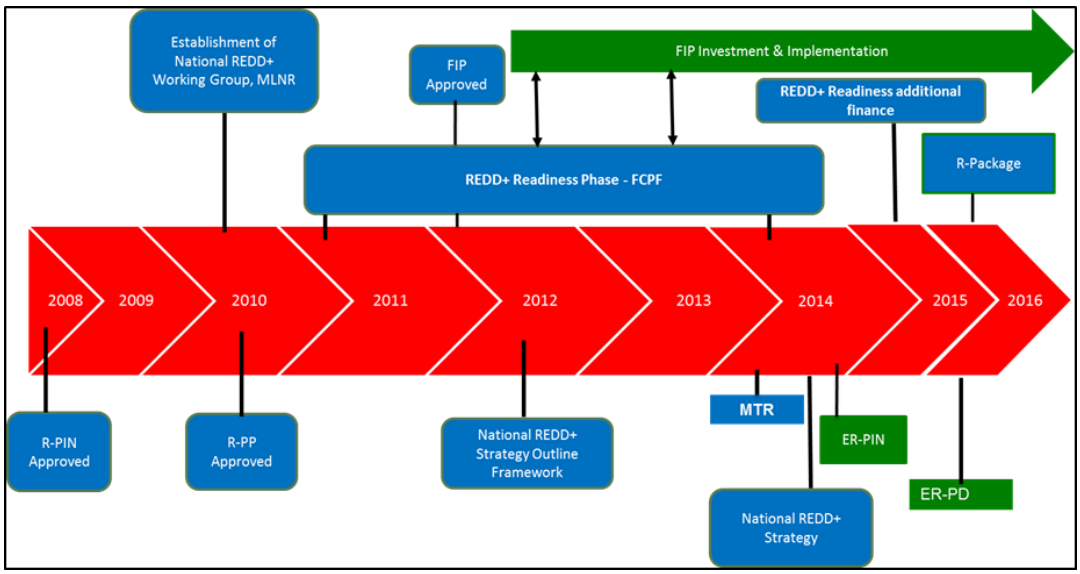

Figure 1: Key milestones of Ghana's REDD+ process

Ghana has also been selected into the pipeline of the FCPF Carbon Fund following the approval of an Emissions Reduction Programme Idea Note (ER-PIN) submitted in early April, 2014. In line with Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy, the Emission Reduction Programme (ERP) targets the cocoa and forests mosaic landscape within the High Forest Zone. The vision of the ERP is to reduce carbon emissions driven by cocoa farming practices and other agricultural drivers, whilst enhancing farmers' productivity and fostering a multi-stakeholder, public-private sector, collaborative effort across the program area.

REDD+ Readiness in Ghana is at an advanced stage, and Ghana is now in a position to submit the participatory self-assessment of its REDD+ Readiness Package (otherwise known as the R-Package) in fulfilment of one of the key requirements for REDD+ countries engaged in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) process. This R-package, in broad terms, signals Ghana's preparedness for undertaking and executing its REDD+ agenda in a manner that meets global expectations and consistent with national development goals. This is opportune at this stage as Ghana's makes a transition towards results-based actions on the ground.

This report summarises the results of the self-assessment process in line with the guidelines and assessment framework developed by the FCPF Facility Management Team (FMT)[1] and endorsed by the Participants Committee of the FCPF.

[1] The Readiness Assessment Framework was adopted at the 14th session of the FCPF PC, see Resolution PC/14/2013/1 and FMT Note 2013-1 rev and is available on the FPCF website (www.forestcarbonpartnership.org)

1.2. OTHER KEY DONOR-FUNDED PROJECTS WORKING ON REDD+

Ghana's REDD+ readiness process is being complemented by other closely-related initiatives in the forestry and environment sectors. Some of these initiatives are listed in Table 1, below:

Table 1: Other closely related initiatives in the forestry and environment sectors complementary to REDD+

Initiative	Overview
IUCN Pro-Poor Programme	Aims to test concepts of equitable benefit sharing and access to resources in the Wassa Amenfi district of Ghana.
A Rocha	• Enhanced protection of Atewa forest through advocacy, research and livelihood training; • Restoration of degraded mangroves at Muni Lagoon Ramsar site • Community based Forest Resources Management Project targeting communities surrounding the Mole National Park (Mole CREMAs)
SNV	• SNV supports the development of a country-led approach to safeguards, in line with UNFCCC requirements. • Supporting climate smart cocoa production in the Bia District. This project will contribute to Ghana's Cocoa-Forest REDD+ programme.
NCRC	• Technical support and training of CREMAs • Partners with the Forestry Commission to undertake REDD+ Finance tracking (REDDX) • Feasibility Assessment of climate smart cocoa production in Asumura
The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Support for stakeholder consultation and the development of a biomass map
Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	Support for analytical studies on REDD+ piloting through the REDDES project
Forest Preservation Programme (FPP) – funded by the Japanese Government	Support for assessing land-use change and forest biomass mapping
German Development Corporation (GIZ)	Support for the utilisation of remote sensing approaches for forest monitoring
Forest Investment Programme (FIP)	5 – year programme for piloting of REDD+ activities in the Western and Brong-Ahafo regions ofGhana
Voluntary Partnership Agreement/ Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT)	Partnership between government of Ghana and the European Union (EU) aimed at ensuring that timber and wood products exported from Ghana to the European market are legally sourced.
Natural Resources Environmental Governance Technical Assistance (NREG-TA)	A donor budget support programme for the environment sector in Ghana aimed at improving resource governance
Olam Ghana Limited	Climate smart cocoa production

Touton SA	Climate smart cocoa production

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

The terms of reference (Annex III) prepared for this assessment define the following key tasks:

1. Assessment of progress achieved to date (outputs and outcomes)–description of significant achievements and areas requiring further development related to the corresponding assessment criteria (using the 34 assessment questions as per the Guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework);
2. A report of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process;
3. Identification of key strengths in the readiness process and areas requiring further work;
4. Identification of additional actions that may assist Ghana to fully achieve the objectives outlined in its R-PP;
5. Identification of other information, as relevant, such as significant readiness work in progress or major constraints that could hinder progress;
6. Assessment of progress achieved in activities funded by the FCPF original grant and Additional Funding phase (second phase) and identifying any delays in the implementation of these activities. Identify the causes for the delay, and propose actions to address the causes of the delay;
7. Assessment of the overall sufficiency of available finances and plans to source resources for the overall Readiness preparation activities, including funds pledged by other development partners;
8. An assessment of the degree of national ownership of and participation of stakeholders in the Readiness activities;
9. Discussion of the synergies with REDD+ and relevant projects/programs in the country, particularly the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA).

1.4. PROCESS USED IN THE REVIEW

The assessment was guided by the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, which describes a participatory process and poses a set of 35 structured guiding questions, which are to be used in carrying out the assessment (See Annex III). Secondly, the process of the development of this synthesis report benefited greatly from the review of the R-Package reports from Costa Rica,[2] DRC[3] and Mexico[4], submitted in 2015 and in the case of Mexico in 2016.

The assessment was facilitated by an independent, external consultant with a background in forestry, REDD+ and evaluation. The role of the consultant was made clear throughout the consultation process– namely to solicit inputs from stakeholders, encourage balanced discussion and ensure a broad-based input, rather than to provide expert judgment or evaluation assessments.

[2]Cruz, G and R. Martinez. 2015. Self-Assessment Process Report of the Relevant Interested Parties Regarding The REDD+ Strategic Costa Rica Readiness Phase. Conservation International.
[3]Co-ordination Nationale REDD+. 2015. Participatory Self-Assessment of the REDD+ Readiness Package in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo
[4]CONAFOR. 2016. REDD+ preparation package document for the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Government of Mexico

In undertaking this assessment, the external facilitator worked together with the NRS to identify a list of relevant stakeholders either as individual representatives of institutions with a strong stake in the National REDD+ process or as focus groups such as the sub-working groups of the NRWG. This included members of key entities involved in REDD+ process, particularly the NRWG with membership drawn from relevant state institutions, NGOs and civil society organisations, forest-fringe communities, the private sector and development partners.

It was agreed that the assessment would concentrate on national level processes through engagement with representatives of institutions and organisations involved directly in REDD+ readiness, as well as representatives of constituencies whose interests may be impacted positively or negatively by the REDD+ process. This was for two main reasons:

- Firstly, local communities are adequately represented on the NRWG and there had been a significant amount of consultations at the community level already and theirviews and concerns had been well incorporated into proposals developed as part of the readiness process.
- Secondly, as the assessment is only evaluating "readiness", rather than actual implementation, the discussion is rather abstract and far removed from the realities of community-level concerns. However, the NRS through its extensive communication plans will relay relevant messages at the local level.

As specified in the FCPF Readiness assessment guidelines, a colour-coded system was used to evaluate progress on each of the questions for the self-assessment. Four responses were included as presented in the *Figure 2*.

Figure 2: Colour-coding score system used in assessment process

A short report on the self-assessment process is presented below in Section 1.5. Inputs were obtained either from plenary discussions, with differing viewpoints being agreed within the group, or in group sessions through which feedback was brought up for discussions at the plenary for final scores to be determined. The outcomes of the self-assessment exercises are presented in the main body of the text. Given the differences of opinions among different stakeholder groups, scores are presented to reflect such differences. The accompanying text provides an explanation or discussion for the reasons for any divergence of opinion.

1.5. REPORT OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A series of meetings were convened by the National REDD+ Secretariat over a 7-day period as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholder meetings held as part of the self-assessment process

Stakeholder group	Date of consultation	Objective of meeting
National REDD+ Secretariat	21st April, 2016	Participatory self-assessment
National REDD+ Working Group	22nd April, 2016	Participatory self-assessment
National REDD+ Sub Working Groups	25th April, 2016	Participatory self-assessment
NGOs, CSOs and private sector representatives	26th April, 2016	Participatory self-assessment
Development Partner representatives	27th April, 2016	Overall assessment of progress of REDD+ process
Cross-section of stakeholder groups	29 April, 2016	Validation and triangulation of initial findings from consultations

Questions clustered in four different categories were presented to different stakeholder groups for their inputs and assessment scores. In some cases, there was a deliberate process of targeting questions to individual target groups, where it was noted that certain issues would be more relevant according to the interests or expertise of that particular group being consulted.

During the final validation workshop, there was a process to review where significant differences of opinion were given and the underlying reasons for this discussed. Where a different interpretation of the same question by different stakeholder groups was identified (which generated different responses) a common consensus was gained on the specific question and in some cases the scores were adjusted. Where the question was understood in the same way, but different perceptions existed, no adjustments were made to the scoring.

In total 67 persons participated in the self-assessment process. About 80 individual stakeholders were expected to be part of the exercise but inevitably a few were unable to participate. Working with small groups facilitated greater interaction and participation than would have occurred for a larger plenary group. A summary of participation in the self-assessment from different stakeholders is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Stakeholder representation in the self-assessment process

Meeting	Representation			Gender	
	Govt	PS	NGO/CS	Male	Female
National REDD+ Secretariat	10	0	0	6	4
National REDD+ Working Group	10	2	3	13	2
National REDD+ Sub Groups	8	1	1	8	2
NGOs, CSOs and private sector reps	0	2	6	6	2
Development partner representatives	0	0	0	1	0
Validation workshop	19	3	1	19	4

Totals	**47**	**8**	**11**	**53**	**14**

In each workshop, a presentation was given initially by the facilitator introducing the readiness assessment framework, its aims, objectives and the process adopted for undertaking the assessment, including the scoring system used. The "ground rules" were also spelled out clearly, including stressing the point that this was a self-assessment process, rather than an externally driven evaluation. The NRS also provided context and clarifications as needed, but not views or opinions on progress.

There was some adjustment of the original generic questions presented in the FCPF assessment framework, to take account of local conditions and national circumstances. Ghana has for a number of years been supporting reforms to its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) framework, as part of its commitments under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed with the European Union. There are many overlaps between the REDD+ and FLEGT processes and this was specifically included in the questions under the assessment. Secondly, the Readiness Assessment Framework (RAF) pays limited attention to gender (other than reference to participation of women in consultation processes). As such, an additional question was included relating to mainstreaming of gender throughout the REDD+ readiness process. The complete set of questions can be found in Annex IV of this report.

Two challenges emerged during the self-assessment:

- Firstly, some of the questions are long, with multiple, or compound descriptors all of which need to be met if an overall score is to be given. In some cases, some or most of the descriptors were met, but one or more was not. In such situations there was divergence of views as to what overall score should be given.
- Secondly, some of the questions appeared to some participants to be encroaching on the realm of REDD+ implementation, rather than readiness. For example, for the feedback and grievance redress mechanism to be "operating at national, sub-national and local levels", results based actions would have to be implemented, potentially triggering feedback, grievance or redress processes. In the period of readiness it is impossible to achieve a green score for this and other questions (see for example similar concerns around the operations of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which is designed to identify and mitigate impacts generated during REDD+ implementation.

In general, there was consensus across the different stakeholders and clear (relative) trends can be seen between different components and sub-components. With regard to the assessment from civil society and private sector, a more critical view was given than by government stakeholders, but this is to be expected in a process that is largely driven by government. However, at all times, the atmosphere was congenial, open and constructive, despite the differences in viewpoints.

In the following sections, each of the FCPF sub-components is assessed in turn. For each sub-component, an overall report is given regarding progress made to date, and is followed by the results of the self-assessment. Results are presented by question and by stakeholder group. No attempt is made, at this stage to give a summary score – as this reduces the transparency and objectivity of the overall assessment process. Instead, where significant differences were observed between the groups, these areas were pointed out during the plenary validation session. Where, for example, different interpretations of the same question had been made, a process was used to get a common understanding and provide scoring that represented such understanding. Where the question was understood in the same manner by different groups, but different scores were given, no attempt was made to modify scores.

In the conclusion section of this report, an overall, summative assessment is given, based on the relative frequency of different scores across each sub-component identified by different stakeholder groups.

2. READINESS ORGANIZATION AND CONSULTATION

2.1. SUB-COMPONENT 1A: NATIONAL REDD+ MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

2.1.1. Progress and Major Achievements

Substantial efforts have been invested in developing national institutional infrastructure and management arrangements needed for the implementation of a multi-faceted mechanism such as REDD+. The entities (i.e. NRWG and NRS) involved in steering the REDD+ process have been working closely with key actors in defining national REDD+ policy, as well as coordinating and managing implementation in an effective manner. These key actors are drawn from civil society, the private sector, research and academic institutions, and inter-ministerial bodies.

The NRS is housed within the Forestry Commission of Ghana, and is directly responsible for the overall co-ordination of REDD+ activities in Ghana. The Secretariat has an organisational structure (Figure 3) with six (6) technical staff under the direct supervision of the Head of Unit, with two administrative officers and an accountant providing the necessary logistical, secretarial and financial management support respectively. Following some staff changes in 2015, the secretariat is now at full staffing capacity.

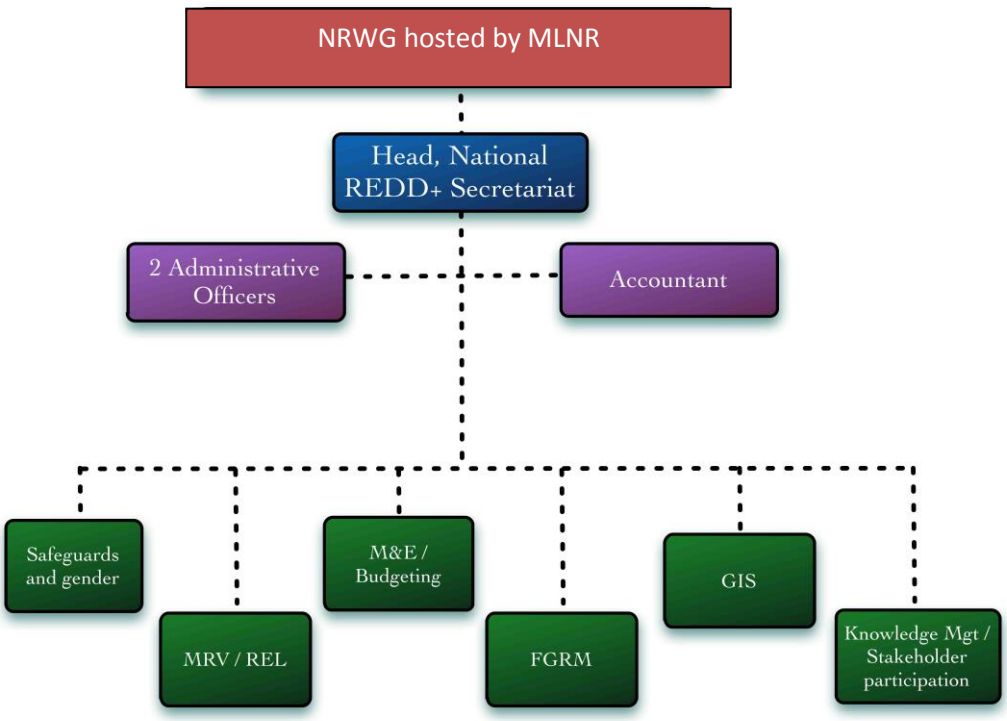

Figure 3: Structure of National REDD+ Secretariat

An overview of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the operational activities of the NRS is presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: SWOT Analysis of NRS

STRENGHTS	OPPORTUNITIES
• The Secretariat has a lean, nimble and cohesive team with a clear focus and mandate: • There is strong internal buy-in and support within the FC, at both the operational and leadership levels. • Great support from NRWG which has a diverse pool of expertise and experiences across several relevant agencies; and • Favourable policy environment that supports Climate Change initiatives/actions in Ghana.	• Institutional interconnectedness in the land-use sector at multiple levels via formal structures for inter-sectoral collaboration; • Strong partnerships forged with donors, private sector & CSOs; and • Strong linkage of REDD strategy to national development agenda
WEAKNESSES	**THREATS**
• Absence of the Climate Change Unit (which hosts the NRS) at Forestry Commission's Executive Management Team (EMT) level; • Challenges with technical capacity/logistics; • Lack of sustainable and predictable finance	• Weak law enforcement; as well as increasing rates of illegal mining and illegal logging activities; • Lack of sustainable and predictable funding

A National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) supports overall inter-agency co-ordination and provides oversight responsibility for Ghana'sREDD+ process. It has a total of 24 members drawn from government (including Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Forestry Commission, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Energy Commission, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana Cocoa Board), civil society (Tropenbos, Civic Response and National Forest Forum), traditional leaders (National House of Chiefs) and Private Sector (Ghana Timber Association and Ghana Timber Millers Organisation).

The NRWG meets at least once a quarter, to review work-plans, receive progress reports and provide inter-agency backing to the development of REDD+ readiness activities.

7 Sub-Working Groups (SWGs) have been established to work on more detailed aspects of readiness, such as safeguards and MRV. The Sub-working groups are advisory bodies, feeding recommendations upwards to the NRWG and ensuring quality assurance on the development of key outputs from the readiness process, by working alongside consultants or other service providers. The seven SWGs currently cover the following thematic areas:

1. Policy, Legislation and Governance;
2. Safeguards;
3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E);
4. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification(MRV)/Reference Emission Level (REL)
5. Consultation and Participation;
6. REDD+ Demonstration

7. Gender (formed in 2015 as a response to growing demands to prioritise and strengthen gender considerations)

The NRWG links to higher level inter-ministerial structures and bodies, such as the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council (ENRAC) which operates at cabinet level and is chaired by the Vice President, as well as the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). However, the ENRAC has not been active for some time as scheduling meetings for them has been a challenge. The inactivity of the ENRAC constrains the potential uptake of policy recommendations and reforms necessary for achieving the broad aims of REDD+. This challenge needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Funds from the FCPF are being administered by the Forestry Commission in line with established World Bank fiduciary guidelines for financial management and procurement procedures to ensure efficiency. In addition, the Government of Ghana Public Procurement Authority guidelines and Public Finance Management System are applied to the disbursement and management of funds. Staff of the FC from the NRS, the Finance and Administration Unit and the Procurement Unit continue to participate in periodic refresher training on the World Bank's guidelines for disbursement of funds and general procurement processes.

Financial audits are undertaken periodically by firms hired by the World Bank Country Office to ascertain whether funds have been applied in accordance with laid down financial procedures and regulations. All associated records are available at the FC.

As at the end of June, 2016, about 60 percent of the total funds of USD 8.6 million received by Ghana from the FCPF for REDD+ readiness had been fully disbursed. The remaining readiness fund will enable Ghana to finalise its Emissions Reduction Programme Document for submission to the Carbon Fund of the World Bank; support the coordination of the readiness process; and aid in the operationalisation of key frameworks including a REDD+ Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM), a national fund management arrangement, an information database for REDD+, a Safeguards Information System (SIS) amongst others. Ghana will therefore require further collaboration with key partners towards the development of very thorough and fully costed REDD+ strategic action plans, pilot key readiness frameworks, undertake legislative reforms and support early implementation of Ghana’s Cocoa-Forest REDD+ programme.

The Forestry Commission has put in place a Projects Oversight Committee (POC)to ensure that projects being implemented under its ambit perform well and deliver project objectives in an efficient and effective manner. The POC provides support projects through regularly monitoring so that corrective action where needed. This approach is important for institutional ownership, mainstreaming, and leveraging of the available pool of human and other resources in the FC. The Committee also helps with coordination and bridging gaps between projects in a major way. Through the POC, projects are able to benefit from institutional memory and deal with the problem of duplication of efforts and its associated inefficiencies. The POC is chaired by the Chief Executive of the FC, with Project Coordinators, Managers and Field Liaisons as members.

Institutional arrangements for the administration and management of carbon revenue accruing from emission reduction efforts within the boundaries of Ghana need to be firmly agreed and clarified as a fundamental requirement for a future performance-based REDD+ regime. Consideration for putting in place such an arrangement (National Fund Management Arrangement) is not reflected in Ghana's R-PP and is regarded as an additional critical step to be taken ahead of a full implementation of the REDD+ mechanism in Ghana. In particular, establishing the operational modalities for such an arrangement and putting it to the test to see how it will perform in terms of meeting acceptable accountability and transparency

standards is critical. To this end, a TOR has been developed for a consultancy for this important assignment.

Design of the REDD+ Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) has been undertaken[5] and endorsed by the NRWG and a desk established at the NRS to coordinate and support the implementation process. An implementation road map has also been developed but not yet operational since implementation modalities are still under development.

A sub-website on REDD+ under the FC official website has been developed and is functioning. The website (www.fcghana.org/nrs) is dedicated to REDD+ and related issues to facilitate access to information about the NRS and the REDD+ process in Ghana.

2.1.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Progressing well, but further development required.

The national REDD+ Secretariat has shown effective leadership in managing Ghana's REDD+ readiness process which is evidenced by the significant progress Ghana has made in transitioning from readiness to the current phase where a sub national REDD+ Emissions Reduction Program is being finalised for submission to the Carbon Fund of the World Bank. In addition, the institutional architecture for REDD+ in Ghana has been fully set up. The mandates of national REDD+ institutions are clearly established and mutually supportive with great cross-sectoral co-ordination including enhanced engagement with private sector actors. Civil Society's and NGOs interest in Ghana's REDD+ plans has moved from being resistant to supportive with a lot of collaborations taking place within the landscape for REDD+ implementation. The REDD+ Strategy has been finalised and ready to be launched and also a well-developed, comprehensive communications strategy has been finalized and is being implemented. Despite these positive strides, a key challenge which has been identified is the lack of sustainable and predictable funding for the National REDD+ Secretariat. In addition, Ghana presently lacks an operational Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) for REDD+. However, a consultancy assignment is currently ongoing towards the design of operational modalities for the FGRM. It is thereby expected that work towards the design of an operational FGRM for Ghana will be concluded by October, 2016.

Table 5: Self-assessment scores on national REDD+ management arrangements

	NRS[6]	NRWG[7]	SWG[8]	NGO/PS[9]
1. Accountability and Transparency				
How are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements demonstrating they are operating in an open, accountable and transparent manner?				
2. Operating mandate and budget				
How is it shown that national REDD+ institutions operate under clear mutually supportive mandates with adequate, predictable and sustainable budgets?				
3. Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration				
How are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements ensuring REDD+ activities are coordinated, integrated into and influencing the broader national or sector policy frameworks (e.g., agriculture, environment, natural resources				

[5]Marfo, E. Yaw Osafo and Nana Darko Cobbina, 2014. Development of Dispute Resolution Mechanism for REDD+ in Ghana. Forestry Commission of Ghana.
[6]National REDD+ Secretariat
[7]National REDD+ Working Group
[8]REDD+ Sub Working Group
[9]NGO/Private Sector

management, infrastructure development and land-use planning)?				
4. Technical supervision capacity				
How effectively and efficiently are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements leading and supervising multi-sector readiness activities, including the regular supervision of technical preparations?				
5. Funds management capacity				
How are institutions and arrangements demonstrating effective, efficient and transparent fiscal management, including coordination with other development partner-funded activities?				
6. Feedback and grievance redress mechanism				
What evidence is there to demonstrate the mechanism is operating at the national, subnational and local levels, is transparent, impartial, has a clearly defined mandate, and adequate expertise and resources?				
What evidence is there that potentially impacted communities are aware of, have access to, and the mechanism is responsive to feedback and grievances?				

In general, the self-assessment revealed satisfaction with the operations of the REDD+ institutions and structures and their overall level of transparency and engagement. Members of both NRWG and SWG indicated satisfaction with their level of involvement in reviewing work-plans and outputs of different consultant groups preparing key work-packages. Furthermore, the linkages and communication between the different REDD+ structures was reported to be generally working well.

With regard to "accountability" of the NRS, while it was widely perceived to be accountable to the NRWG, MLNR as well as the Ministry of Finance and donors on financial accounting issues, some stakeholders outside government expressed the need for improvement in the accessing of information relating to financial management. However, there are measures in place that promotes financial transparency of the operations of the NRS through regular financial auditing as well as sharing of budgeted workplans and implementation progress updates with the NRWG on which the key relevant stakeholders including NGOs/CSOs are represented.

With regard to the Question 2 on financing, there was agreement that organisations work under mutually supportive mandates, but there was disagreement about the predictability and sustainability of budgets. In general, most groups were of the view that until Ghana receives results based payments (for emission reductions), financing of REDD+ will be subject to donor cycles and trends and in large measure, beyond the control of those managing the REDD+ process. Investments from government into REDD+ are relatively small, other than staffing, office space and other logistical services.

Stakeholders were of the opinion that cross-sectoral collaboration (Question 3) is strong, and there are structures in place to facilitate linkages among relevant institutions. However, some stakeholders (including the NRS) indicated that more work needs to be done to enhance the effectiveness of cross-sectoral collaboration in terms of actually generating change within institutions and sectors beyond forestry, such as land use planning.

There was general consensus that the NRS, NRWG and SWGs are all effective, performing well, with the required capacity and clear division of labour. However, members of the NRWG expressed the view that more work was needed to broaden the capacity beyond individuals directly involved in REDD+ to include key persons within other ministries, to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation are properly mainstreamed.

Most stakeholders consulted indicated that the NRS had played an important role in co-ordinating efforts – ensuring that different lines of work were linked to ensure synergy and that the work of different agencies was well integrated to avoid overlap.

The World Bank representatives consulted expressed satisfaction with the level of financial management. However, some criticisms were raised at the slow and bureaucratic processes involved in the disbursement of funds from organisations such as the World Bank and the complex procurement process (from both government and donors). With regard to the FGRM, there was general consensus that while a solid design had taken place, a road map was being developed for its establishment and resources were in place for it to be operationalized. At the very early stages of the design of the FGRM, some consultations were undertaken to solicit stakeholder input and further consultations are yet to take place towards the full implementation of the FGRM. This explains the red and orange scoring by different groups under this final question. Plans are afoot to operationalize the FGRM starting with the cocoa-forest ERP accounting area. A consultant has been commissioned for this assignment and work is expected to be completed by October, 2016. As part of the assignment, the consultant will design the FGRM operational modalities and also develop a position paper for the review and amendment of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act (ADR Act 2010) to include environmental issues. Although, the ADR Act has been recommended as a key option for addressing community-level grievances, the Act, in its current form, excludes resolution of environmental issues and by extension potential REDD+ disputes. The position paper to be developed by the consultant will therefore serve as a good basis for getting the requisite buy-in and support for amendment of the Act and its consequent utilisation to resolve potential REDD+ disputes.

2.2. SUB-COMPONENT 1B: CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION, AND OUTREACH

2.2.1. Progress and Major Achievements

Ghana's R-PP included a Consultation and Participation (C&P) Plan which set out the broad parameters and activities to guide REDD+ consultation, participation and outreach.

In 2013, this plan was supplemented and strengthened by the development of a National REDD+ Communication Strategy[10], which sets out an overall vision on how REDD+ communication will be conducted in Ghana and an action plan for the implementation of this strategy has been elaborated.

In finalising the Communication Strategy, an audit was undertaken which identified a number of key constraints with regard to communication on REDD+. One of the main issues identified included information sharing with a relatively limited range of stakeholders (involved in national REDD+ structures such as the NRWG and Technical Working Groups) for which reason the promotion of a more inclusive approach is needed.

Other concerns included potential negative impacts of REDD+ and public scepticism about the ability of the REDD+ mechanism to deliver concrete benefits. To address these concerns a number of communication channels were proposed to sensitize the public. These included the media (radio, TV and printed media); websites, flyers/brochures and public events. Key achievements made to date include the following:

- Use of a number of TV and radio shows, and the REDD+ Digest (a document that seeks to demystify REDD+ terms and concepts) to sensitize the public on REDD+ and Climate Change;
- AREDD+ Road-showwas organised in 2014 in four administrative regions of Ghana to educate local communities on the impacts of climate change and the role of REDD+ in mitigating climate change);

[10] Forestry Commission of Ghana. 2013. National REDD+ Communication Strategy. Mary AmaKudom-Agyemang, Communications consultant.

- Launch of the "REDD Eye" Campaign in November 2015 (a programme targeted at enhancing the awareness amongst the youth of Ghana on the need to address deforestation and forest degradation.[11]);
- The maiden National REDD+ Forum was held in November 2015to galvanise high level and public support for actions and measures targeted at addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The event attracted key high profile stakeholders. The keynote address was delivered by the former President, H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor(a UN Special Envoy on Climate change). Other speakers at the event included the World Bank Country Director and the President of the National House of Chiefs amongst others).The Communications Strategy was supplemented, in 2015, by the development and implementation of a plan for high-level engagement process targeting by private sector and state actors[12]. This plan is targeted specifically at building support within government and the business community for the Emissions Reduction Programme for the cocoa-forest mosaic landscape within the High Forest Zone.

A guiding principle of Ghana's REDD+ C&P plan is to ensure the effective engagement of relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups.

One of the positive examples of consultations between related initiatives is the on-going efforts to ensure synergy between REDD+ and FIP including VPA/FLEGT processes. All the Coordinators of these initiatives are members of the NRWG, which is a key decision-making body for all matters of REDD+ in Ghana. Valuable experiences were also drawn from the VPA stakeholder consultation process to enhance early REDD+ readiness activities.

In order to ensure broad-based consultation, the NRS has built a database of REDD+ actors for the purpose of enhancing networking, sharing of experiences, knowledge exchange, opening of feedback channels as well as assisting in the development of effective capacity building programmes.

The Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) of the FIP is expected to provide local communities with financial and learning resources to support their participation under the FIP, which significantly complements REDD+.

The NRS and NGOs have partnered closely to advance REDD+ in Ghana. CSOs are effectively engaged and have actively participated in key activities undertaken by the NRS. During the consultative meetings that informed the finalization of consultancy outputs to provide the requisite overarching framework for Ghana's REDD+ process, several CSOs were effectively engaged and provided rich feedback and inputs to strengthen the various outputs. One of the most significant milestones from the readiness process was the development of the National REDD+ Strategy.

The Strategy was prepared over a two-year period in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders across the country. These included technical experts, government officials from institutions whose activities are REDD+ related, civil society organizations, traditional leaders and landowners, community and farmer representatives, academia, private sector and international organizations. In developing the strategy, emphasis was placed on creating a gender-sensitive, participatory, and inclusive process. An initial draft of strategy options was generated, followed by an early draft of the Strategy that was subjected to two consultations hosted by the Forestry Commission (FC), with a wide range of stakeholders. A third consultation took place with a focus group of REDD+ experts, resulting in a more enhanced draft, but many gaps still remained. A final draft was presented to two consultation meetings,

[11] Forestry Commission, 2015. REDD+ Eye Campaign. Launch Report.

[12] Ishmael Yamson & Associates 2015. High level engagement with private sector and state actors on the Emission Reduction Programme. Forestry Commission of Ghana

one held in Sunyani and the other in Accra, involving representatives of all the main REDD+ stakeholders, including district forest fora and community members. Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy also benefited from and was built on the wide-ranging consultations and stakeholder engagements that occurred during the development of Ghana's R-PP, FIP and the drafting of the Emission Reductions Programme Idea Note (ER-PIN).

Civil society platforms like the Forest Fora, which operate at national, regional and local levels are important structures for consultation in the forestry sector, and have been used for dissemination of REDD+ information to grass-root forest communities and other stakeholders. Frontline staff of the FC from all ten regions of Ghana has also been sensitized on REDD+ readiness and their role in REDD+ implementation in Ghana.

Another process that benefited from the support of CSOs was the development of the REDD+ safeguard instruments, which included a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF). Three consultative regional workshops were undertaken to inform the finalization of these frameworks and the workshops were well-attended by CSOs from these regions. In addition, the consultative processes that led to the development of the REDD+ dispute resolution and benefit sharing mechanisms involved the active participation of civil society groups including IUCN, Tropenbos International, Civic Response, Rainforest Alliance, Abantu for Development and the National Forest Forum (NFF).

In addition to supporting on-going consultation processes, several NGOs engaged in various initiatives complementary to REDD+ are continually offering useful lessons and insights to guide and strengthen the REDD+ readiness process. For example, Conservation Alliance and NCRC-Ghana have conducted analytical studies and stakeholder consultations and training on climate smart cocoa production systems. Also, IUCN and A Rocha have worked within two distinct landscapes (i.e. High Forest Zone and Savannah respectively) on REDD+, and have communicated extensively across a range of stakeholders, with the aim of making REDD+ more pro-poor, inclusive and gender sensitive.

2.2.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. Excellent progress has been made in delivering a thorough communication campaign through a range of channels, and ensuring widespread consultation and participation in the design of key aspects of REDD+ readiness. Information has been shared widely and the inputs of consultative exercises are used to inform and strengthen the development of plans and proposals being developed at the national level. The utilization of a coherent consultative process has been evident during the development of Ghana's ER-PD. The planning and design of the ER-PD has benefitted immensely from the input and feedback from various stakeholders. Several consultative meetings were undertaken through cross-sector meetings, workshops, sensitization, capacity building, durbars conferences and training programs at all levels – local, district, regional and national level. Over forty (40) institutions from government, NGO, the private sector, civil society, research and the donor communities have actively participated in Ghana's ERP consultations whereas community consultations have been undertaken across the programme area. An important outcome of these consultations has been the expression of willingness of major private sector actors (Touton, Olam, Mondelez, Armajaro etc.) to participate and support Ghana's ERP implementation. Further consultation is underway to identify the likely risks, impacts and benefits from the proposed ER program interventions to ensure that the Cancun Safeguards are implemented with the participation and involvement of local communities.

Table 6: Self-assessment Scores on Consultation, Participation and Outreach

	NRS	NRWG	SWG	NGO/PS
7. Participation and engagement of key stakeholders				
How is the full, effective and on-going participation of key stakeholders demonstrated through institutional mechanisms (including extra efforts to engage marginalized groups such as forest-dependent women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities)?				
What are the participatory mechanisms being used to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities have the capacity to effectively participate in REDD+readiness and implementation?				
What measures have been taken to mainstream gender considerations across REDD+ readiness activities?				
8. Consultation processes				
What evidence demonstrates that consultation processes at the national and local levels are clear, inclusive, transparent, and facilitate timely access to information in a culturally appropriate form?				
What evidence is there that the country has used a self-selection process to identify rights holders and stakeholders during consultations?				
What evidence is there that Indigenous Peoples institutions and decision-making processes are utilized to enhance consultations and engagement?				
What evidence is there that consultation processes are gender sensitive and inclusive?				
9. *Information sharing and accessibility of information*				
How have national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements demonstrated transparent, consistent, comprehensive and timely sharing and disclosure of information (related to all readiness activities, including the development of REDD+ strategy, reference levels, and monitoring systems) in a culturally appropriate form?				
What evidence is there that information is accessible to stakeholders (e.g., in a format and language understandable to them) and is being received?				
What channels of communications are being used to ensure that stakeholders are well informed, especially those that have limited or no access to relevant information?				
10. Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes				
How are the outcomes of consultations integrated (fed into, disseminated, publicly disclosed and taken into account) in management arrangements, strategy development and technical activities related to reference level and monitoring and information systems development?				

Generally, there was consensus amongst stakeholders consulted that this sub-component is the best performing, albeit with some reservations from civil society that more needs to be done to deepen and broaden consultation and engagement to all parts of the country, and not just in priority areas such as the High Forest Zone, where the Emissions Reduction Programme (ERP) will be implemented which explains their 'yellow' ranking. Many agreed that NGOs have supported the process of strengthening participation, often using traditional or representative structures such as traditional authorities, village elders and Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) institutions. The National Forest Forum has been supported to build the capacity and engage with local level stakeholders across the country.

There was strong recognition of Ghana's efforts to mainstream gender considerations within the REDD+ readiness process. IUCN, through its Danida-funded Pro-Poor REDD+ project has

worked with the NRS and other organisations to develop a REDD+ Gender Roadmap, which was finalised in 2013[13]. This has been recently supplemented by the addition of a Gender Action Plan. In 2015, a Gender Sub Working Group was established under the NRWG. Gender has been a major consideration when undertaking planning and consultation meetings at the local level e.g. understanding when women are available to meet (outside times when domestic tasks mean they cannot leave the house), or undertaking focussed group discussions with women to ensure that their views are well captured.

There was general satisfaction with the range of approaches used in communication, including radio, non-printed media, "plain-language" guides (REDD+ Digest), and public events and even using local musicians to publicise and popularise the messages.

Ghana has a very well developed NGO sector working in the forestry sector, many of whom have historically been involved in the FLEGT/VPA negotiations – a process recognised for its attention to stakeholder participation and engagement. During the FLEGT/VPA process, a number of key networks were strengthened (such as National Forest Forum and Civic Response / Forest Watch Ghana). This provided a solid foundation for the REDD+ process – evidenced by the existence of strong and representative platforms, through which consultations on REDD+ could take place.

Finally, there was consensus that the process for engaging stakeholders in the development of key strategies, plans and building blocks of REDD+ was robust and genuine (Question 10). Feedback provided were duly taken into account and used to strengthen and improve specific outputs. A case in point is when work produced by some consultants did not meet stakeholder expectations, (for example, the work done in preparing the REDD+ Strategy and the FRL/REL), NRWG or SWG members were quick to respond with critical yet constructive comments.

Information on Ghana's REDD+ process is available on the REDD+ website which in turn is a sub-site in the Forestry Commission website.

[13]IUCN, WEDO, PDA. 2011. Roadmap for mainstreaming gender into REDD+ processes in Ghana.

3. REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION

3.1. SUB-COMPONENT 2A. ASSESSMENT OF LAND USE, LAND-USE CHANGE DRIVERS, FOREST LAW, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

3.1.1. Progress and Major Achievements

A significant body of work has been undertaken to assess the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. This has occurred at different points – starting with the preparation of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). This analysis, in turn, benefitted from a substantial amount of analytical work conducted under various natural resource management programmes in years prior to the R-PP formulation. This information was then updated during the process of developing the National REDD+ Strategy and a series of consultative processes undertaken to ensure general agreement with the identification of drivers. Given the high rate of deforestation in Ghana estimated to be above 2% per annum, much of the focus was on drivers of deforestation, with relatively less focus on carbon stock enhancement. As part of earlier efforts at the development of Ghana's FRL/RL, Indufor undertook further analysis[14] of the drivers, which also fed into the REDD+ strategy development process.

Furthermore, a range of studies were undertaken on issues such as tree and carbon tenure, benefit sharing, livelihoods and community based natural resource management institutions[15]. These studies identified existing legal gaps, barriers or opportunities to REDD+ implementation.

On land and tree tenure issues, the Ghana REDD+ process benefitted, in 2010, from work by Forest Trends, the Katoomba Group and NCRC, which built on years of existing work, to outline potential implications of the legal and policy framework for tree and forest carbon in Ghana. Building on this work, a country legal study was conducted by Forest Trends and the Katoomba Group, in collaboration with NCRC and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission in 2011. This was meant to review the existing legal (legislative and common law) framework relating to land and forest tenure in Ghana with a focus on Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) to identify promising platforms for ensuring secure rights and equitable benefit sharing to individuals, families, communities and traditional authorities responsible for generating carbon benefits. In addition, the implementation of FIP includes components expected to inform policy decisions on tenure and carbon rights e.g. "policy pilots" that tests new management and benefit sharing arrangements.

An Independent Assessment Report produced on Ghana's REDD+ Readiness at mid-term in mid-2014[16]notes that "there will be no simple solution to land tenure reform in Ghana. The persistence of traditional land tenure arrangements within the colonial era land tenure system has resulted in a complex dilemma for creating policy incentives for REDD+ at the national level.

Over the last couple of decades, the democratization process in Ghana has led to a greater level of respect for the rule of law and a conducive climate for open, unrepressed discourse

[14]Indufor Oy. 2015. Development of Reference Emissions Levels and Measurement, Reporting and Verification System in Ghana. FC/FCPF/MRV/REL/RFP/01/2013.Final Report

[15] See for example: Foli, E.G. and William K. Dumenu. 2015. Assessing Options for Benefit Sharing Mechanisms for REDD+ Implementation in Ghana. Draft Consultancy Report. Scientific and Industrial Research, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana. For other reports, refer to Annex II of this report.

[16]Graham, P. 2014. Independent Mid Term Evaluation of REDD+ in Ghana.

on various issues of citizen rights. This development has emboldened various sections of society that are calling for land and tree tenure reforms which is important for the successful implementation of REDD+ in Ghana. The current Forest and Wildlife Policy[17] provides a clear indication of a shift in the posture of Government regarding tree tenure rights.

Under the on-going Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Technical Assistance (NREG-TA), a National Expert Consultation on Allocation of Terrestrial Carbon Rights is focusing on the implications of current land and tree tenure arrangements for the allocation of carbon rights, and will advise on any changes to legislation that are likely to be required to operationalise carbon rights. This process is also taking into account the risks in the current tenurial context, which undermine community and business interests, and find ways to mitigate those risks. REDD+ in Ghana has received the highest level of political commitment and cross-sectoral endorsement from all levels of government. Ghana's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2014-2020): An agenda for Transformation[18], outlines a statement by the president that: "Government will tackle deforestation as part of Ghana's REDD+ strategy to deal with climate change and also integrate water security and climate resilience into development planning processes".

REDD+ is nested within the national management architecture, demonstrating the breadth and depth of commitment to the programme. Support to REDD+ builds off of the previously existing ENRAC, ENREG, and TCC+ bodies, which were established in 2007 to provide cabinet, ministerial, and technical level support, guidance and coordination to environmental and natural resource management projects and programmes. The programme also benefits from the direct oversight of the National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) and the NRS. The inter-sectoral Technical Coordinating Committee-Plus was established to oversee and guide the policy and institutional coordination of environmental and natural resource governance across the various government institutions.

3.1.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. Overall assessment of land use and land use change drivers was thorough and built extensively on earlier efforts. The process of developing the REDD+ Strategy encountered some initial setbacks, which have been addressed following concerted inputs from other stakeholders, which have led to a more robust version of the document. The linkages between drivers and strategy options are clear and logical. Work remains to be done to develop clear action plans on how some of the unresolved issues relating to tree tenure, benefit sharing, livelihoods etc. will be addressed in a concrete manner.

Table 7: Self-assessment scores on assessment of land-use, policy and law

	NRS	NRWG	NGO/PS
11. Assessment and analysis			
Does the summary of the work conducted during R-PP formulation and preparation present an analysis of recent historical land-use trends (including traditional) and assessment of relevant land tenure and titling, natural resource rights, livelihoods (including traditional/ customary), forest law, policy and governance issues?			
12. *Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement*			
How was the analysis used to prioritize key direct and indirect drivers to be addressed by the programs and policies included in the REDD+ strategy?			

[17]Forest and Wildlife Policy 2012 section 5.4.1 sub-section 4.1.1b

[18]GoG 2014. Ghana's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2014-2020): An agenda for Transformation, by H.E. John Dramani Mahama. http://www.presidency.gov.gh/coord.pdf

Did the analysis consider the major barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement activities (if appropriate) to be addressed by the programs and policies included in the REDD+ strategy?			
What evidence demonstrates that systematic links between key drivers, and/or barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement activities (as appropriate), and REDD+ activities were identified?			
14. Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance			
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 relatedto specific REDD+ programs, outline further steps and identify required resources?			
15. ***Implications for forest law and policy***			
Does the assessment identify implications for forest or other relevant law and policy in the long-term?			
16. Links between REDD+ and VPA/FLEGT			
How effective are the linkages and learning between national REDD+ readiness activities and those related to FLEGT within the context of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed with the European Union, and what specific measures (if any) have been taken?			

In general, there was broad agreement that despite some setbacks in terms of the quality of the initial draft of the National REDD+ Strategy, the process was robust and well linked from identification of drivers to strategy options and then a final identification of proposed activities. Further steps need to be taken to develop concrete action plans for addressing issues around natural resource rights, tenure and governance. Tree and natural resource tenure is a long-standing, complex and highly contested problem in Ghana, and it is critical that plans set in motion to address this challenge are pursued to their logical conclusion and with the sense of urgency.

The REDD+ strategy provides an overall framework and direction for moving towards results based actions, but does not (as yet) go into sufficient detail in describing how specific actions will be undertaken. An action plan is therefore needed to describe, how for example, benefit sharing will be implemented, how tree tenure will be strengthened in legal reviews and how this will be linked at the field level to supporting broader measures around FLEGT.

3.2. SUB-COMPONENT 2B: REDD+ STRATEGY OPTIONS

3.2.1. Progress and Major Achievements

Ghana's REDD+ Strategy presents a 20-year vision to be revised at five-year intervals with a clear set of over-arching activities and priorities for addressing deforestation and forest degradation. The main thrust of the strategy is the nesting of projects within large-scale sub-national programs that follow ecological boundaries and are defined by major commodities and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Initial work towards the development of Ghana's REDD+ Strategy commenced during the formulation of the R-PP in 2010. During the preparation of the R-PP, a screening process was undertaken to rank and prioritise13 proposed strategy options based on a set of six transparent and agreed criteria, namely social (including gender and youth considerations); environmental benefits (including the approximate emission reduction potential of different options); economic benefits; legal, policy and regulatory considerations; political risks and institutional aspects.

- This process resulted in the 13 strategy options being condensed into 3 priority strategic interventions i.e. Improving land-use and socio-economic development in the HFZ and cocoa growing areas
- Addressing wood harvesting and agricultural practices in the savannah woodland zones
- Policy and legislative reforms

Also 3 programmatic approaches have been identified based on ecological zones and the drivers of deforestation and degradation associated with them, and these programmes will be developed in the coming years in furtherance of Ghana's emission reduction ambitions.

These are;

- ER Programme for Transitional Forest Landscape
- ER Programme for Coastal Mangroves
- ER Programme for Togo Plateau

In finalising Ghana's REDD+ Strategy, the interventions were subjected to a thorough SESA process where potential impacts (both positive and negative) were assessed and measures proposed for their mitigation. Some of the priority recommendations that emerged include the need to support community-based forest management within CREMAs; partnerships with traditional authorities, the need for a comprehensive resettlement policy for unplanned settlements within forest reserves and the need to diversify livelihoods of forest dependent households. Many of the recommendations from the SESA have been incorporated into the ERPD. Clearly the REDD+ Strategy development process was well synchronised with the SESA process, allowing for the two processes to inform each other.

Ghana's REDD+ Strategy is well-aligned with key national developmental strategies and policies. These include the National Climate Change Policy, Forest and Wildlife Policy, Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda GSGDA and Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to UNFCCC. The evolving Emissions Reduction Programme for the cocoa-forest landscape has been featured as one of the interventions that will be pursued to enable Ghana to meet its NDC target of reducing current national emissions by up to 45 percent by 2030. Together, these policies and strategies point to the pathway towards Ghana's vision for low emissions development.

The Emission Reduction potential was not comprehensively addressed in the National REDD+ strategy development process due to data paucity at the time it was being formulated, but has been well elaborated in the Emissions Reduction Programme Document focused on the cocoa-forest mosaic landscapes of Ghana.

3.2.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment:**Significant Progress Achieved**. The strategy options were selected through a participatory and inclusive process. In finalising Ghana's REDD+ Strategy, the strategy options were subjected to a thorough SESA process where potential impacts (both positive and negative) were assessed and measures proposed for their mitigation. The National REDD+ Strategy clearly articulates Ghana's Vision for REDD+ and is well-aligned with key national developmental strategies and policies. The Emission reduction potential was not comprehensively addressed in the National REDD+ strategy development process, but has been well elaborated in the Emissions Reduction Programme Document focused on the cocoa-forest mosaic landscapes of Ghana.

Table 8: Self-assessment scores on REDD+ strategy options

	NRS	NRWG	NGO/PS
17. Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options			
Were the expected emissions reduction potentials of interventions estimated, where possible, and how did they inform the design of the REDD+ strategy?			
18. Feasibility assessment			
Were REDD+ strategy options assessed and prioritized for their social, environmental and political feasibility, risks and opportunities, and analysis of costs and benefits?			
19. Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies			
Have major inconsistencies between the priority REDD+ strategy options and policies or programs in other sectors related to the forest sector (e.g., transport, agriculture) been identified?			
Is an agreed timeline and process in place to resolve inconsistencies and integrate REDD+ strategy options with relevant development policies?			
Are they supportive of broader development objectives and have broad community support?			

All stakeholders agreed that the strategy options were identified and selected in a thorough and detailed manner, and that furthermore, the process used to screen, prioritise and select appropriate interventions was done transparently and with good levels of participation.

The yellow scores across the second part of question 17 were given because the key strategy options identified in the National REDD+ Strategy were not subjected to a thorough analysis of ER potential. This was due to the fact that not much progress had been made on biomass data analysis for the determination of reference levels for deforestation and forest degradation at the time the strategy document was being developed.

It was observed that during the SESA process, options were subjected to the Ghana Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) tools developed by the EPA and the strategy options were ranked and tested using the sustainability and compatibility matrices. It was also noted during the self-assessment that thorough analysis of costs and benefits was lacking, as by that time, the World Bank had yet to issue operational guidance on how this could be accomplished.

For question 19, the general assessment from different stakeholder groups was broadly similar. There was agreement that REDD+ has been well recognised within emerging policy reforms that have taken place over the past five years (most notably the Climate Change Policy and the Forest and Wildlife Policy). Furthermore, there was agreement thatwhile the REDD+ strategy identifies where inconsistencies exist between different programmes or sectors (such as mining), these are yet to be further elaborated into “an agreed timeline and process” through which specific action can take place. However, at the level of the cocoa landscape and within the context of the ERP, more detailed work has been undertaken to reconcile REDD+ objectives with the current expansion of agriculture in forested areas, through identification of land use options such as shade-grown cocoa and the introduction of conservation agriculture. It is well-acknowledged though that work remains to be done in reconciling REDD+ goals with those of the mining sector, land use planning, and sustainable agriculture for non-traditional crops.

The Forest and Wildlife Bill is currently under debate by parliament. Various actors in the environmental sector are keenly lobbying on issues of tree tenure and benefit sharing. This will have important implications for the effectiveness of natural resource management institutions such as CREMAs, which are being promoted by NGOs such as IUCN and A Rocha.

3.3. SUB-COMPONENT 2C: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

3.3.1. Progress and Major Achievements

During the REDD+ readiness phase, a number of key achievements have been made in this area. Perhaps the most significant achievement to date is the promulgation of the Forest and Wildlife Policy of 2012 and the formulation of the National Climate Change Policy of 2013, both of which recognize the importance of REDD+ as a pathway for emissions reduction in the land use sector. As a result of inputs provided by the REDD+ Secretariat, as well as NGOs working in the environment and natural resources sector, the Forest and Wildlife Policy now reflects the broader aspects of forest use – including both consumptive and non-consumptive uses, as well as strengthening the role of CREMAs in managing forest and wildlife resources. With regard to the National Climate Change Policy, the REDD+ Secretariat and members of the Policy, Legislation and Governance SWG worked closely with the National Climate Change Committee to provide inputs to various drafts. The policy outlines Ghana's mitigation, adaptation, and low carbon growth agenda, and includes REDD+ as a fundamental component. Efforts are also currently underway to develop a Low Carbon Development Strategy for Ghana, with a series of national level stakeholder consultations already conducted. The National REDD+ Secretariat was also represented on the technical team constituted to develop Ghana's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (I-NDC) to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions under the UNFCCC, and this made it possible to feature REDD+ prominently in Ghana's NDC.

Institutional arrangements for the administration and management of carbon revenue accruing from emission reduction efforts within the boundaries of Ghana need to be firmly agreed and clarified as a fundamental requirement for a future performance-based REDD+ regime. However, consideration for putting in place such an arrangement (National Fund Management Arrangement) was not reflected in Ghana's R-PP and is regarded as an additional critical step to be taken ahead of a full implementation of the REDD+ mechanism in Ghana. In particular, establishing the operational modalities for such an arrangement and putting it to the test to see how it will perform in terms of meeting acceptable accountability and transparency standards is critical. To this end and as part of the REDD+ readiness process, a consultancy will be commissioned to facilitate the process for the design and set-up of a national fund management arrangements for REDD+. Terms of Reference for the assignment have been developed and the consultancy work is expected to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2017.

With regard to benefit sharing guidelines, studies commissioned by NRS, IUCN and other partners have highlighted a number of existing options that have the potential to incentivize smallholder, household and community action to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, as well as increase carbon stocks at landscape levels[19]. The benefit sharing options recommended are applicable to the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA), the Modified Taungya System (MTS) and Commercial Forest Plantation Development (CFPD). All three benefit sharing options have been tried and tested in Ghana in recent years and all show promising signs with regard to generating social, economic as well as environmental outcomes. Further studies, conducted recently provide more detailed analysis of these three options and how they can contribute to climate change mitigation

[19]Foli, E.G. and William K. Dumenu. 2015. Assessing Options for Benefit Sharing Mechanisms for REDD+ Implementation in Ghana. Draft Consultancy Report. Scientific and Industrial Research, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana

through REDD+[20,21, 22]. Furthermore, and as mentioned in Section 2.1.2, national guidelines have been issued and adopted for feedback and grievance redress mechanisms).

3.3.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Further development required. Good progress has been made in influencing key national policy development processes but these are yet to be translated into legally binding laws. More work is needed to clarify carbon and tree tenure, to agree on a final model for benefit sharing as well as REDD+ financing arrangements. Benefit sharing systems, while operating in the forest and wildlife sectors, are yet to be tested for REDD+. Ghana would like to prioritize operationalizing benefit sharing in the ERP area and use the lessons learnt for designing an agreeable national level benefit sharing arrangements applicable more broadly.

Table 9: Self-assessment scores on implementation framework

	NRS	NRWG	NGO/PS
20. Adoption and implementation of legislation/ regulations			
Have policies, legislation and/or regulations related to REDD+ programs and activities been adopted?			
What evidence is there that these relevant REDD+ laws and policies are being implemented?			
21. Guidelines for implementation			
What evidence is there that the implementation framework defines carbon rights, benefit-sharing mechanisms, REDD+ financing modalities, procedures for official approvals (e.g., for pilots or REDD+ projects), and grievance mechanisms?			
22. Benefit sharing mechanism			
What evidence is there to demonstrate benefit-sharing mechanisms are transparent?			
23. National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities			
Is a national geo-referenced REDD+ information system or registry operational, comprehensive of all relevant information (e.g., information on the location, ownership, carbon accounting and financial flows for sub-national and national REDD+ programs and projects), and does it ensure public access to REDD+ information?			

With regard to question 20, there was widespread agreement that the policy development process was positive, supportive to REDD+ and had been influenced by the broader REDD+ readiness process. However, these policies have yet to be backed by supportive legislation or regulations. A key area that remains unresolved and subject to debate is the issue of tree and carbon tenure. Furthermore, while the Forest and Wildlife Policy provides policy direction towards strengthening CREMAs to manage forest and wildlife resources, they are still left without legal rights with which to operationalize this at local levels. However, efforts are

[20]Blomley, T. 2016. Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA) in Ghana. A review of lessons learned with recommendations for scaling up and integration within the national REDD+ process. Final Draft. Acacia Natural Resource Consultants Ltd and IUCN.
[21]Blomley, T. 2016. Incentive and Benefit Sharing Models in Ghana and Opportunities for scaling up at landscape levels with particular reference to the Modified Taungya System (MTS) and Commercial Forest Plantation Development (CFPD). Final Draft. Acacia Natural Resource Consultants Ltd and IUCN.
[22]Asante, W. 2014. Operational Guidance and Standards for National and Subnational REDD+ Programs in Ghana

underway to provide the necessary legal backing for CREMAs through the wildlife bill, which is currently before parliament.

With regard to Question 21 on implementation guidelines, proposals on benefit sharing (drawn from existing practices in the forest sector) have been made, but to date these systems have only operated with regard to the sharing of forestry royalties in on and off-reserve areas, and have yet to be tested with regards to carbon financing from REDD+. As such, giving an assessment of transparency is not possible (Question 22). Ghana has contracted a consultant to develop a data management system (REDD Registry) for the ERP and this assignment is expected to be completed by September 2016. This database system will be a repository for data on project proponents; their activities; specific geographical locations where interventions are expected to be implemented; and emission reductions attributable to these interventions etc. It will also incorporate data from forest monitoring, safeguards, and key implementation criteria that inform understanding of impacts and benefit sharing. All information collected into this system will also be uploaded into Ghana's National Climate Change Data Hub, which is operated by EPA and hosts data from various sectors of the national economy, including Agriculture, Forestry and other Landuse (AFOLU). Also, adocument was prepared in 2013 through support from Forest Trends to identify and examine various possible models for the development and implementation of a REDD+ registry[23] for Ghana

3.4. SUB-COMPONENT 2D: SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.4.1. Progress and Major Achievements

A key output under this sub-component has been the completion of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) Report[24]and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)[25]. This assignment was done concurrently with development of the National REDD+ Strategy to ensure that linkages between the two processes were strong and evident.

Wide-ranging consultations across different parts of the country ensured that all relevant issues related to safeguards were identified through a participatory and inclusive process. The SESA consultants carried out initial consultations with selected stakeholders in the Western, Central, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Northern and Upper East Regions. The 6 regions were selected to cover the major ecological zones (High forest, Transition and Savannah).

At the community level, three separate meetings were held: (i) meeting for men/boys (ii) meeting for women/girls (iii) plenary meeting for all persons. This approach was adopted in order for the consultant to clearly appreciate gender issues related to REDD+ at the community level. The communities were selected based upon interaction with the Regional/District Forest Services Division (FSD) managers with regard to potential impacts of REDD+ related actions.

Over 500 community members were consulted during the SESA exercise, with care taken to ensure a balanced cross-section of community members were included (men, women, youth,

[23] Asare, R. A., Kwakye, Y., and Foli, E. 2013. Ghana's REDD+ Registry: Pathways to Development. Forestry Commission, NCRC, Forest Trends and Norad.
[24] SAL Consult Ltd, 2014. REDD mechanism in Ghana. Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA).Final Report Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.
[25] SAL Consult Ltd. 2014. REDD+ mechanism in Ghana: Environmental And Social Management Framework (ESMF). Final Report. Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Republic of Ghana.

elders). In addition, over 100 representatives of national and local government, national as well as international NGOs were consulted as part of the SESA / ESMF exercise.

In addition to the SESA and ESMF reports, a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)[26] was developed to respond to the World Bank's operational policy 4.12 on involuntary resettlement.

A number of other concerns relating to clarification of forest tenure rights, the need for community level engagement, gender mainstreaming and environmental protection were also recognised.

3.4.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. A thorough process was used for identifying potential impacts and risks associated with REDD+ related activities. Where significant negative impacts were identified, activities were either modified, removed or mitigation actions prescribed to reduce potential downstream impacts. The ESMF developed through the SESA process will be implemented starting from the ER programme area.

Table 10: Self assessment scores on social and environmental impacts

	NRS	NRWG	NGO/PS
24. Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues			
What evidence is there that applicable social and environmental safeguard issues relevant to the country context have been fully identified/analysed via relevant studies or diagnostics and in consultation processes?			
25. REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts			
How were SESA results and the identification of social and environmental impacts (both positive and negative) used for prioritizing and designing REDD+ strategy options?			
26. Environmental and Social Management Framework			
What evidence is there that the ESMF is in place and managing environmental and social risks/potential impacts related to REDD+ activities?			

In general, there was satisfaction among all groups consulted that the SESA and ESMF processes were well facilitated, technically competent and had strong levels of involvement from both state and non-state actors. Importantly there was a universal recognition of the clear links between the outcomes of the SESA and the selection of strategy options within the National REDD+ Strategy. However, on Question 26, there was consensus across all groups consulted that the ESMF was not "managing risks" as it has yet to be operationalized, given that activities are currently focusing on readiness and not implementation. It was explained that the ESMF will be fully implemented starting from the ERP area (sub-national level) and scaled up to the national level. There were gaps identified in the SESA and ESMF reports and comments were submitted from the World Bank for further revision to these safeguards tools. There have been further elaborated in sub-component 4B.

[26] SAL Consult Ltd, 2014. REDD mechanism in Ghana. Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF). Final Report. Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Republic of Ghana

4. REFERENCE EMISSION LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVEL

4.1. SUB-COMPONENT 3A. REFERENCE EMISSIONS LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVELS

4.1.1. Progress and Major Achievements

The development of a Forest Reference Level (FRL) has built significantly on earlier works in this field such as the development of a country biomass map produced through a collaborative effort between Forestry Commission, Katoomba group, NCRC and Oxford University; as well as the completed carbon estimation study conducted under the Forest Preservation Programme (FPP), which was funded by the Japanese Government.

Under the FPP, high-resolution LiDAR satellite imagery and LANDSAT/ DMC and ALOS imagery were procured. After ground verification, the satellite imagery were analysed and processed into wall to wall Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) maps for Ghana for 3 periods: (1990, 2000 and 2010).

Also, under the FPP, various remote sensing hardware (such as servers, workstations and printers), software (such as ArcGIS and ERDAS) and survey equipment (GPS, tree measurement tools etc.) were procured and installed primarily at the Resource Support Management Centre (RMSC) of the Forestry Commission. Two (2) weeks of training in GIS/ Image Processing and LiDAR/ Forest Inventory and Biomass Estimation was also undertaken for 38 staff of the Forestry Commission in April, 2012.

A tailor-made module-based training programme on biomass data analysis and geo- spatial information production for Ghana's MRV system and setting of a FRL/ RL for Ghana was undertaken for 45 staff from the REDD+ Secretariat, EPA, Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System (CERSGIS) and IUCN. The training, which commenced in October, 2013 and completed in April, 2014 was organized by CERSGIS, in collaboration with the University of Twente, KNUST and the Forestry Commission of Ghana.

Significant inputs to the FRL were also obtained under a tendered contract awarded to Indufor. The outputs of this study provided a FRL based on deforestation data (but not degradation or enhancement of carbon stocks), a design for the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), to guide future work, in line with prevailing UNFCCC and IPCC best practice[27]. Using additional funds after preparation of the MTR report, Winrock International (WI)was engaged to complete the FRL, taking into account historical deforestation, forest degradation and carbon stocks enhancement (reforestation and forest restoration). Two additional time epochs (2012 and 2015) were incorporated in the establishment of the FRL bringing the total time-series to four (2000, 2010, 2012 and 2015) in line with IPCC guidelines. Furthermore, a tool for estimating carbon emissions as a result of selective logging in the High Forest Zone was developed in 2015[28].

Ghana has adopted a stepwise approach towards the development of a national FRL starting with the ERP accounting area, which covers most of Ghana's High Forest Zone. Presently, the FRL for the ERP accounting area has been established and the national FRL is expected to be developed by December2016. The reference period for the construction of the reference level is from 2000-2015.Emission estimates for the FRL has been done mainly using country-

[27]Indufor Oy. 2015. Development of Reference Emissions Levels and Measurement, Reporting and Verification System in Ghana. FC/FCPF/MRV/REL/RFP/01/2013. Final Report

[28]Winrock International. 2015. Methodological Documentation for Estimating Emissions from Selective Logging for Ghana.

specific datasets. A plan for the completion of Ghana's national FRL is outlined in Table 11 below:

Table 11: Plan for completion of national FRL

ACTIVITY	PERIOD	RESPONSIBILITY	REMARKS/ QUESTIONS
1. National multi-stakeholder review of Ghana's preliminary FRL	June – August, 2016	National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS), Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) sub-working group and Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC)	
2. Constitution of field teams for data collection for national FRL/ Refresher training of field teams	September, 2016	NRS, RMSC, consultants	
3. Potential refinement of sub-national reference level based on TAP review of Ghana's Cocoa-Forest REDD+ programme	September - October, 2016	NRS, RMSC, consultants and MRV sub-working group	TAP in-country visit to Ghana is scheduled for September, 2016
4. Data collection for national FRL	October, 2016	NRS, RMSC, Forest Services Division (FSD)	
5. Analytical work towards calculating national FRL.	November, 2016	Consultants, NRS	
6. Stakeholder review and validation of Ghana's FRL	1st week of December, 2016	MRV sub-working group, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NRS	
7. Communication of Ghana's national FRL to the UNFCCC	2nd week of December, 2016	EPA, NRS	

Following Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy, the definition used for Ghana's FRL is a minimum of 15% canopy cover, minimum height of 5 meters, and minimum area of 1 hectare, based on thresholds set by the IPCC for these structural parameters and the Marrakesh Accord. This

definition is in line with the definition used in the most recent National Greenhouse Gas inventory.

The development of the FRL and MRV is divided into steps based on the three key activity types namely; Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Carbon Stocks Enhancement (Figure ***4***). In addition, degradation is broken down further into four separate activities: degradation from legal timber harvest, illegal timber harvest, woodfuel collection, and forest fires.

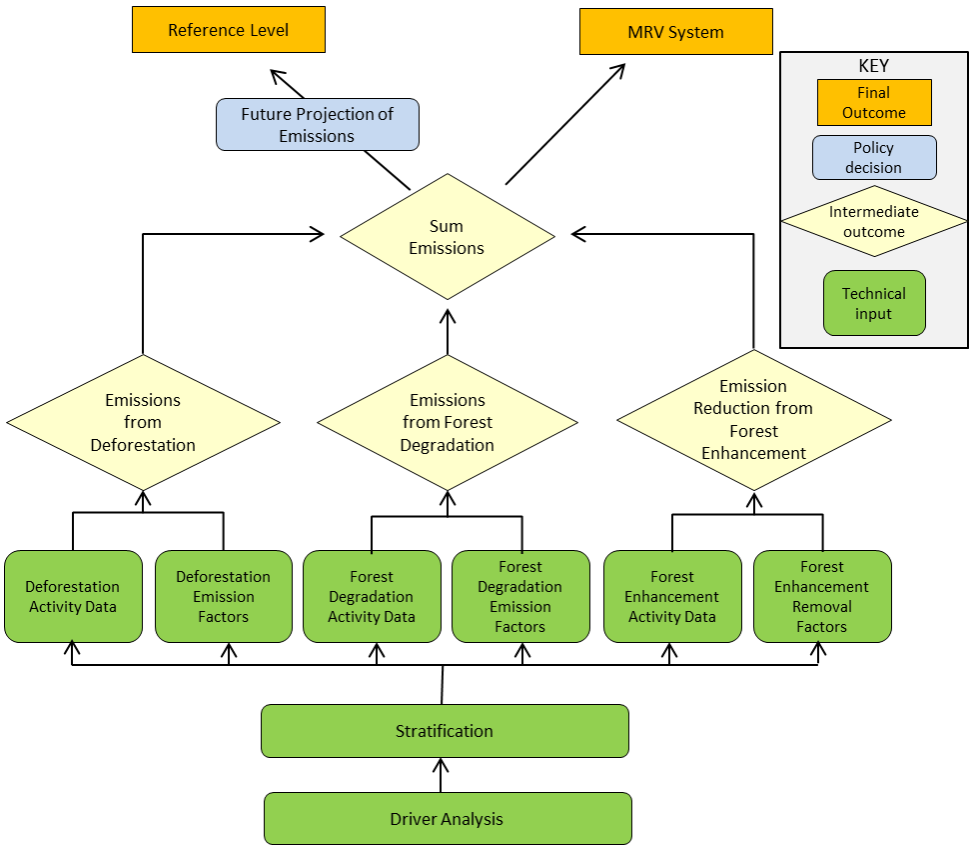

Figure 4: Framework for the National Forest Monitoring System to provide key inputs into the historical emissions for Reference Level Development and the Measuring, Reporting, and Verification System

The average annual emissions from 2000-2015 for the ERP accounting area were 37.1 million $tCO_2e\ yr^{-1}$. The breakdown of emissions estimates from the various activities is tabulated below:

Table 12: Emissions estimates from the various activities for the ERP accounting area

Activity	Percent of Total
Deforestation	76.82%
Logging	9.22%
Illegal Logging	12.35%
Fire	0.13%
Fuelwood	2.43%
Enhancements (Removals)	-1.42%

4.1.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. Significant work has been done on the REL/RL with the FCPF grant that builds on previous support including a major investment by the Japanese government under the Forest Preservation Programme which was implemented between 2011 and 2013. Additional funding was provided by the FCPF following the approval of Ghana's Mid-Term Report on REDD readiness that allow for completion of REL work at both national and sub-national level (covering the accounting area for the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme). The sub-national FRL has been established for the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ programme area. The sub-national FRL has been submitted to the Carbon Fund of the World Bank. The National FRL will be completed by December, 2016.

Table 13: Self assessment scores on FRL/RL

	NRS	SWG
27. Demonstration of methodology		
Is the preliminary sub-national or national forest FRL or RL presented (as part of the R-Package) using a clearly documented methodology, based on a step-wise approach, as appropriate?		
Are plans for additional steps and data needs provided, and is the relationship between the sub-national and the evolving national reference level demonstrated (as appropriate)?		
28. Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances		
How does the establishment of the FRL/RL take into account historical data, and if adjusted for national circumstance, what is the rationale and supportive data that demonstrate that proposed adjustments are credible and defendable?		
Is sufficient data and documentation provided in a transparent fashion to allow for the reconstruction or independent cross-checking of the FRL/RL?		
29. Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines		
Is the FRL/RL (presented as part of the R-Package) based on transparent, complete and accurate information, consistent with UNFCCC guidance and the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, and allowing for technical assessment of the data sets, approaches, methods, models (if applicable) and assumptions used in the construction of the FRL/RL?		

There was general consensus between the NRS and SWG members that while some challenges had been faced with regard to the development of the FRL, additional funding provided from FCPF has meant that this subcomponent is now well on track to deliver a national FRL by December, 2016.

5. MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS

5.1. SUB-COMPONENT 4A: NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING SYSTEM (NFMS)

5.1.1. Progress and Major Achievements

The overall objective of Sub-Component 4 is to develop a monitoring, reporting and verification system that allows for transparent accounting of emissions and removals of CO2 through time that can be compared against the projected reference scenario. The outcome of this component will be a functional system capable of MRV of the performance of REDD+ interventions in Ghana. Although progress on this subcomponent is relatively limited, the basis for developing the NFMS is clear. A workable approach, including the definition of institutional arrangements for the operations of NFMS has been designed. All relevant institutions and centres of expertise within Ghana were mobilised under this sub-component and a thorough consultation process was undertaken.

Ghana's MRV system spreads responsibilities across three main institutions based on their established mandates and technical capacities. However, monitoring and evaluation support will be provided by research institutions and external MRV experts (Figure 5)

- The Climate Change Unit/NRS will have overall management and oversight responsibilities for MRV. Its role will be to monitor UNFCCC guidance, oversee the process of assessing the SOPs and results and plan for improvements.
- The Forestry Commission's Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC)will provide technical expertise for forest monitoring and measurement including day to day operations, implementation of SOPs, and management of improvement processes in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- The EPA will play the lead role in reporting emissions internationally, contracting and managing third party QA/QC services, contracting technical assessments and third party verification, and producing Ghana's National Communications, while also collating requirements for the improvement of the SOPs over time.
- Research and development partners including research and academic institutions will help to monitor and evaluate data, methods and outputs as they are generated.

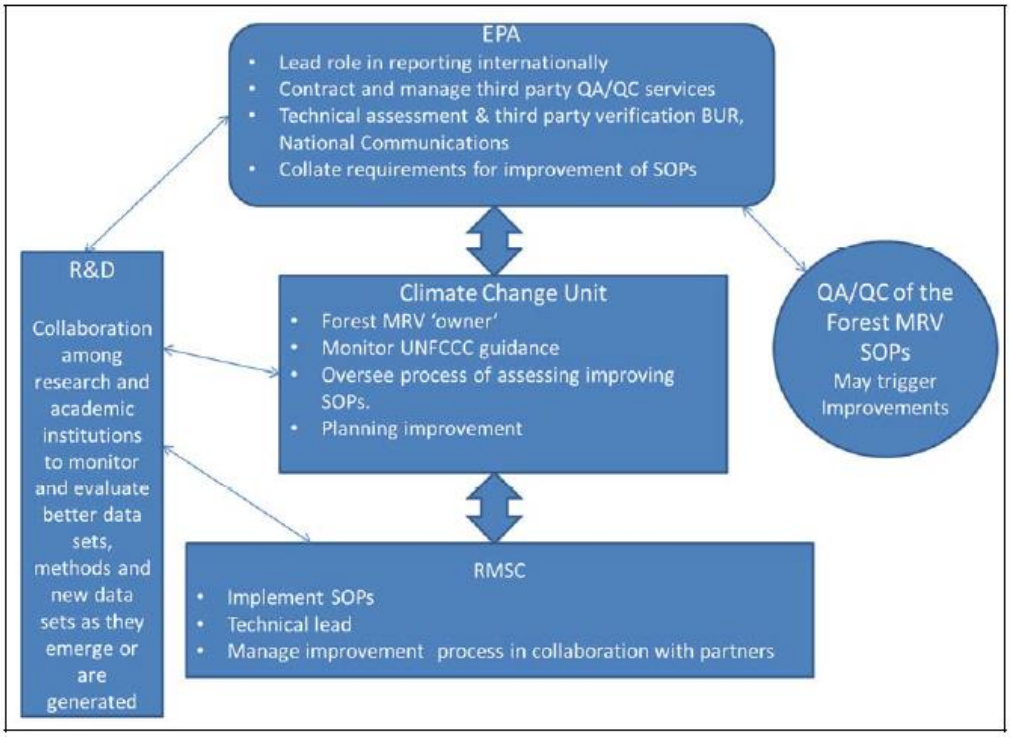

Figure 5: Institutional roles and responsibilities of Ghana's MRV system

Ghana's approach for measuring, monitoring and reporting against the reference level is outlined below;

Deforestation

Estimated emissions from deforestation for the monitoring period will be based on the emission factors developed for the reference level and updated changes in forest cover per the identified strata. Emission factors will remain constant until carbon stocks are updated by new forest inventories (envisioned prior to reference level renewal). Activity data will be captured using analysis of Landsat imagery biennially. This analysis will be in line with the remote sensing undertaken for the national GHG inventory.

When methodologies utilized for carbon stock inventories are updated and utilized in-country to generate better data to such a level that it contributes significant differences compared with what was used for the reference level, then there will be the need for renewal of the reference level.**Degradation from legal logging**

Estimated emissions from degradation for legal timber harvest for the monitoring period will be based on the emission factors developed for the reference level and yearly reporting of extracted timber volumes. Emission factors will remain constant until such a time that new field data are gathered or it is demonstrated that logging practices in-country are significantly altered (reassessment prior to reference level renewal).

Degradation from illegal logging

Country-specific emission factors have been estimated for illegal timber harvesting for Ghana and will remain constant throughout the monitoring period unless a significant change in illegal logging practices is observed and/or updated biomass inventories are conducted.

Concerning activity data, district rangers currently report timber harvest from intercepted illegal logging, which can serve as a framework to monitor volume extracted from illegal logging during the monitoring period. However, it is generally accepted that the data

currently reported underrepresents the true scope of illegal logging practices. A system is being developed by the RMSC to address this shortcoming.

Degradation from woodfuel collection

For the historical reference period, emissions from forest degradation as a result of woodfuel harvest were estimated using the WISDOM approach. Estimates of non-renewable biomass for the year 2009 were produced by modeling demand and supply dynamics. The estimates were produced as part of a pan-tropical study (Bailis et al. 2015)[29]and thus stepwise improvements can be realized through country-specific data collection and re-modeling of supply and demand dynamics to better reflect unsustainable woodfuel collection practices in Ghana.

Monitoring that could be done includes: surveys of household and industrial woodfuel use to determine volume of wood being burned annually, surveys of number of households/families using woodfuel, surveys of any change in woodfuel stoves by rate of adoption and type e.g., surveys of amount of woodfuel being supplied through deforested areas and non-forest areas such as agricultural lands, plantations, and agroforestry, and/or field inventories to determine growth rates of natural forests.

There are opportunities for stepwise improvements to the emission estimates by integrating more spatially explicit or country-specific data inputs to the WISDOM model. Furthermore, the emissions estimated for the FRL represent those for the year 2009, and thus updated data to apply to the WISDOM model will be necessary for tracking emissions during the MRV period. Annual updates on woodfuel-related datasets from the Forestry Commission, Energy Commission and Ghana Statistical Service will also be utilized during the monitoring period. These datasets include results of periodic surveys of household and industrial woodfuel used to determine volume of wood being burned annually; and surveys of number of households/families in rural communities. **Degradation from fire**

Measurement of fire will continue on an annual basis as the MODIS burned area product is released allowing for updated activity data. Emission factors will remain constant until carbon stocks are updated by new inventories during the program's lifetime (expected prior to reference level renewal). For each biennial monitoring and reporting event, annual averages of burned area and emissions will be calculated from the annual monitoring data.

Carbon stock enhancements

For the historical reference period, removals from National Forest Plantation Development Programme (NFPDP) activities were estimated by combining annual records of forest planting with removal factors derived either from published literature or from IPCC defaults reflecting the carbon content of forest plantations in Africa. Removals were assumed to be committed to facilitate accounting, but failure rates were applied, based on data collected and reported by the NFPDP. During the MRV period, removals will also be assumed to be committed in the year plantations are established, but failure rates will be applied to discount removals for plantations that ultimately do not successfully sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

During the MRV period, removal factors will be consistent with those applied in the development of the reference level where they represent the long-term average carbon stocks of forest plantations (reflecting carbon stocks across multiple harvest cycles, under the assumption that forest plantations in Ghana will undergo rotational harvest).

[29]Bailis et al. (2015).The carbon footprint of traditional woodfuels. Nature and Climate Change 5, 266-272.

2.1.3. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. The NFMS is yet to be operational, but is closely linked to the design of the FRL and will follow the same methodology. The design of the system, which is in line with latest international thinking and meets IPCC/UNFCCC standards will be able to measure deforestation, degradation and enhancement of carbon stocks. Clear roles and responsibilities have been agreed regarding the operations of the NFMS. However, the system will require significant running costs, institutional support and capacity and none of these parameters have yet been fully tested.

Table 14: Self-assessment scores on National Forest Monitoring System

	NRS	SWG
30. Documentation of monitoring approach		
Is there clear rationale or analytic evidence supporting the selection of the used or proposed methodology (combination of remote sensing and ground-based forest carbon inventory approaches, systems resolution, coverage, accuracy, inclusions of carbon pools and gases) and improvement over time?		
Has the system been technically reviewed and nationally approved, and is it consistent with national and international existing and emerging guidance?		
Are potential sources of uncertainties identified to the extent possible?		
31. Demonstration of early system implementation		
What evidence is there that the system has the capacity to monitor the specific REDD+ activities prioritized in the country's REDD+ strategy?		
How does the system identify and assess displacement of emissions (leakage), and what are the early results (if any)?		
How are key stakeholders involved (participating/ consulted) in the development and/or early implementation of the system, including data collection and any potential verification of its results?		
What evidence is there that the system allows for comparison of changes in forest area and carbon content (and associated GHG emissions) relative to the baseline estimates used for the FRL/RL?		
32. Institutional arrangements and capacities		
Are mandates to perform tasks related to forest monitoring clearly defined (e.g., satellite data processing, forest inventory, information sharing)?		
What evidence is there that a transparent means of publicly sharing forest and emissions data are presented and are in at least an early operational stage?		
Have associated resource needs been identified and estimated (e.g., required capacities, training, hardware/software, and budget)?		

There was general agreement that progress had been made in the design of the NFMS, but is yet to be tested as implementation of on-ground REDD+ activities are yet to commence. Concerns were raised by some members of the SWG that although the system is designed and that roles are well understood among the different players, the capacity of key government institutions such as FC and EPA for effective forest monitoring is yet to be put to the test. There was a general sentiment that this component could be more advanced if the REDD+ demonstration phase (Phase 2 of REDD+ Readiness) had taken place to test the degree to which different models and approaches within the complex land use patterns found in Ghana could be applied.

It was also observed that while stakeholders were well consulted during the design phase, the role of local level (i.e. community) stakeholders in monitoring is as yet not clear as most of the measurement and monitoring depends on technology available only at national level (such as satellite images and GIS data).

5.2. SUB-COMPONENT 4B: INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR MULTIPLE BENEFITS, OTHER IMPACTS, GOVERNANCE, AND SAFEGUARDS

5.2.1. Progress and Major Achievements

The SESA/ESMF process was able to identify key social and environmental safeguard issues as well as identifying where capacity gaps exist. Since the preparation of the R-PP was done before the clarification within the UNFCCC on safeguard requirements (specifically the Cancun and Durban agreements regarding the establishment of a safeguard information system (SIS) that is able to report on how safeguards are "addressed and respected"), no funds were included within the budget for the establishment of a SIS. However, during the MTR, a provision was included within the budget for the development and operationalization of a SIS, which would meet the UNFCCC requirements.

A consulting firm has therefore been engaged to undertake Analysis of Environmental and Social Impacts of the Emissions Reduction Programme and the development of a REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards Information System (SIS). The Consultant outlines the following steps in designing the SIS:

- Study relevant existing database/information systems especially within the domain of the Forestry Commission, EPA, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and key NGOs.
- Design and develop a pilot database/information system for safeguards
- Engage relevant stakeholders on the pilot database/information system
- Improve upon and finalize the database/information system for safeguards
- Develop a User Manual on the SIS for stakeholders
- Train relevant Forestry Commission Staff and other stakeholders on the SIS

Furthermore, the Consultant will review, identify and fill in any gaps in the previous SESA consultancy report, review, identify and fill in any gaps in the previous ESMF as necessary and undertake stakeholder/community consultations on any new conclusions or proposed initiatives to strengthen the SESA and ESMF.

The assignment is expected to be completed by October, 2016. This overlaps with other key deliverables of the assignment such as updating the SESA/ESMF and RPF based on the comments received from the World Bank.

Furthermore, the Dutch NGO, SNV with funding from the German International Climate Initiative and in collaboration with KASA Ghana with technical support from Climate Law and Policy (CLP), is assisting with work on the development of Country-led Safeguards Approach (CSA), which meets both international and national commitments to address and respect safeguards[30]. In addition, the project will support south-south learning (between Ghana, Vietnam and Peru), facilitate the establishment of a SIS as well as sub-national low emission development plans. Participatory carbon monitoring will also be supported. This support from

[30]International Climate Initiative. 2015. Project proposal to the Federal Ministry for the Environment and Nuclear Safety (BMUB). Operationalising National Safeguard Requirements for Results-based Payments from REDD+ submitted by The Netherlands Development Organisation, SNV

SNV is intended to complement and build upon the on-going consultancy on designing the SIS.

A capacity building workshop was recently organized for the Safeguards sub-working group on designing a CSA and SIS and this was facilitated by CLP in collaboration with the NRS and SNV.

A Legal Specialist has been hired and trained by CLP to undertake legal (policies, laws, regulations, plans and programmes) and institutional (Institutions and Institutional arrangements) analysis. The Legal Specialist is expected to submit a report synthesising the findings of both legal and institutional analysis and provide recommendations to address gaps and weaknesses identified.

The NRS is working closely with SNV to avoid duplication of efforts in this important piece of work

5.2.2. Results of Self-assessment

Overall assessment: Progressing well, but further progress required. Good progress shown with regard to producing a SESA and ESMF, but it has not been operationalized as the REDD+ implementation is yet to start. Plans are at an early stage with regard to the development of aSIS with a view to complying fully with UNFCCC requirements.

Table 15: Self-assessment scores on Information system for multiple benefits and impacts

	NRS	SWG
33. Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issue		
How have relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental safeguard issues of REDD+ preparations been identified? Are there any capacity building recommendations associated with these?		
34. Monitoring, reporting and information sharing		
What evidence is there that a transparent system for periodically sharing consistent information on non-carbon aspects and safeguards has been presented and is in at least an early operational stage?		
How is the following information being made available: key quantitative and qualitative variables about impacts on rural livelihoods, conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services provision, key governance factors directly pertinent to REDD+ preparations, and the implementation of safeguards, paying attention to the specific provisions included in the ESMF?		
35. Institutional arrangements and capacities		
Are mandates to perform tasks related to non-carbon aspects and safeguards clearly defined?		
Have associated resource needs been identified and estimated (e.g., required capacities, training, hardware/software, and budget)?		

In general, there was consensus between the two groups who undertook the self-assessment on this sub-component. With regard to Question 34, there was a view that much information had been generated on the issues of livelihoods, ecosystem services, governance and safeguards but currently, this information is dispersed and not consolidated within a single system that is accessible to interested parties.

Some differences appeared regarding the interpretation of Question 35. In one group (NRS) the question was considered in the context of the broader issue of safeguards, including both

the SESA/ESMF approach favoured by the FCPF, but also the Cancun and Durban agreements under the UNFCCC regarding the establishment of a SIS (scoring the questions as orange). The SWG, however, considered this question within the context of the FCPF requirements only and scored Question 35 as orange. The different approaches and their relative state of progress in the Ghana context explain the difference in relative scoring. However, in the final validation meeting, it was agreed that this question should be considered with the wider consideration of considering both World Bank and UNFCCC requirements – hence both agreed to change the score to yellow.

6. TOWARDS RESULTS-BASED ACTIONS

In an effort to set in motion the Demonstration phase (Phase 2) of the REDD+ process in Ghana, a call for proposals for REDD+ pilots was advertised in 2011 and interested actors responded including private sector actors and NGOs. Through this process a final shortlist of 7potentially viable REDD+ pilot projects were identified based on a predetermined set of criteria. However, the anticipated financial support for the implementation of the pilots did not materialize and hence Phase 2 did not take off. The inability of some of the selected pilots to take off represented a missed opportunity to test approaches for benefit sharing, safeguards and the demonstration of actions designed to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

Notwithstanding this challenge, 3 out of the 7 pilot projects had initiated some early actions. The proponents and implementers of these pilots are IUCN, Portal Forest Estate Limited and Vicdoris Limited. The International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Country Office secured funding from the Danish government to implement its REDD+ pro-poor pilot project in the Wassa Amenfi West District (Western Region), which has been valuable for testing various approaches to benefit sharing and local institutional models.

Currently, the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) is pursuing on-the-ground REDD+ implementation within two political administrations regions in Ghana i.e. Western and Brong Ahafo Regions. The objective of Ghana's FIP is to improve forest and tree management practices across the cocoa production landscapes, CREMA communities to reduce forest loss and degradation in the target regions. The overall goal of the FIP-financed activities in Ghana is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while reducing poverty and conserving biodiversity. FIP funds for Ghana are being channelled through three multilateral financial institutions; these are the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank); the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Another initiative that is being developed towards a transition to results-based actions is the Emission Reductions Programme focusing on the cocoa-forest mosaic landscapes in the High Forest Zone of Ghana, with the support of the FCPF Carbon Fund. Ghana was selected into the pipeline of the FCPF Carbon Fund following approval of an Emissions Reduction Programme Idea Note (ER-PIN) by the Carbon Fund in early April, 2014. Ghana's draft ERPD which was formulated through an extensive consultative and inclusive process involving multiple stakeholders has recently been submitted to the FCPF and a decision on it is expected by early 2017. Ghana's ER Programme conservatively anticipates that it could produce 18.5 MtCO2e of emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation in the first 5 years (2017–2021) of the programme. In return, Ghana would expect the Carbon Fund to purchase up to US$50 million worth of ERs produced up to 2021, after which it is expected that other buyers would follow suit, with their interest possibly stimulated by the Carbon Fund's early support.

7. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

7.1. SUMMARY OF OVERALL PROGRESS

A summary of progress is presented below:

1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements

Generally, there is good progress in terms of the institutional arrangements, accountability and transparency, cross-sectoral co-ordination, technical supervision, staffing and funds management. More work is needed to ensure that funding in the medium to long term is assured and that relevant ministries are fully engaged. Attention is also needed towards the operationalization of the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism.

1b. Consultation, Participation and Outreach

Excellent progress has been made in delivering a thorough communication campaign through a range of channels, and ensuring widespread consultation and participation in the design of key aspects of REDD+ readiness. Information has been shared widely and the inputs of consultative exercises are used to inform and strengthen the development of plans and proposals being developed at the national level.

2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance

Overall assessment of land use and land use change drivers was thorough and built extensively on earlier efforts. The process of developing the REDD+ Strategy encountered some initial setbacks, which have been addressed following concerted inputs from other stakeholders, which have led to a more robust version of the document. The linkages between drivers and strategy options are clear and logical. Work remains to be done to develop clear action plans on how some of the unresolved issues relating to tree tenure, benefit sharing, livelihoods etc. will be addressed in a concrete manner.

2b. REDD+ Strategy Options

The strategy options were selected through a participatory and inclusive process. In finalising Ghana's REDD+ Strategy, the strategy options were subjected to a thorough SESA process where potential impacts (both positive and negative) were assessed and measures proposed for their mitigation. The National REDD+ Strategy clearly articulates Ghana's Vision for REDD+ which is to "significantly reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation over the next twenty years, whilst at the same time addressing threats that undermine ecosystem services and environmental integrity so as to maximize the co-benefits of the forests".

Ghana's REDD+ strategy is well-aligned with key national developmental strategies and policies. These policies include the National Climate Change Policy, Forest and Wildlife Policy, Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda and Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to UNFCCC. As a result of the close linkage between the REDD+ Strategy and Ghana's NDC, the Emissions Reduction Programme for the cocoa-forest landscape has been featured as one of the interventions that will be pursued to enable Ghana to meet its NDC target of reducing current national emissions by up to 45 percent by 2030.

The Emission reduction potential was not comprehensively addressed in the National REDD+ strategy development process, but has been well elaborated in the Emissions Reduction Programme Document focused on the cocoa-forest mosaic landscapes of Ghana.

2c. Implementation Framework

Good progress has been made in influencing key national policy development processes but these are yet to be translated into legally binding laws. More work is needed to clarify carbon and tree tenure, to agree on a final model for benefit sharing as well as REDD+ financing arrangements. Benefit sharing systems, while operating in the forest and wildlife sectors, are yet to be tested for REDD+. Ghana would like to prioritize operationalizing benefit sharing in the ERP area and use the lessons learnt for designing an agreeable national level benefit sharing arrangements applicable more broadly. During the first phase of REDD+ readiness, a consultancy was commissioned for the assessment of benefit sharing options for REDD+ implementation. However, this consultancy did not yield a specific benefit sharing arrangement for the ERP.

Currently, an implementation plan for the ERP is being finalized which will provide scope and clarity on the activities to be undertaken in the ERP area as well as their associated benefits. This plan will consequently provide the basis for the design of a benefit sharing framework for the Programme. The NRS therefore intends to commission a consultancy to develop a benefit sharing framework that builds on the initial work undertaken during the first phase of readiness and also take into cognizance the activities to be outlined in the ERP implementation plan.

2d. Social and Environmental Impacts

A thorough process was used for identifying potential impacts and risks associated with REDD+ related activities. Where significant negative impacts were identified, activities were either modified, removed or mitigation actions prescribed to reduce potential downstream impacts. The ESMF developed through the SESA process will be adapted to the ER program area and implemented to test its applicability.

3a. Forest Reference Level/Reference Levels

Significant work has been done on the REL/RL with the FCPF grant that builds on previous support including a major investment by the Japanese government under the Forest Preservation Programme which was implemented between 2011 and 2013.

Additional funding was provided by the FCPF following the approval of Ghana's Mid-Term Report on REDD readiness that allow for completion of REL work at both national and sub-national level (covering the accounting area for the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme). The final product is expected to meet the requirements under IPCC and UNFCCC methodological guidance. A consultancy report on earlier work on REL/MRV undertaken during the first phase of REDD+ readiness is included in the annex.

4a. National Forest Monitoring System

The NFMS is yet to become fully operational, and is closely linked to the construction of the REL. The design of the system, which is in line with latest international thinking and meets IPCC/UNFCCC standards will be able to measure deforestation, degradation and enhancement of carbon stocks. Clear roles and responsibilities have been agreed regarding the operationalization of the NFMS. However, the system will require significant running budget, institutional support and capacity and none of these parameters have yet been fully tested.

4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards

Good progress has been made with regard to SESA in the design of REDD Strategy. The ESMF is finalized, but it has not been operationalized as the REDD+ implementation is yet to start.

Plans are at an early stage with regard to the development of a SIS with a view to complying fully with UNFCCC requirements.

Overall, the findings indicate good progress against all readiness criteria. Work remains to be done in three key areas:

- Finalising the design of key elements of readiness structures (such as the REDD+ Registry, NFMS and safeguard information system)
- Implementing (at least piloting and testing) key readiness structures
- Developing and Implementing costed and detailed workplans for REDD+ measures to clarify legal aspects relating to rights, tenure and benefit sharing.

7.2. SUMMARY OF SCORES

A summary score is presented below (Table 16) at sub component level based on the responses and scores for questions for each of the sub-components that were received from different stakeholder groups. Overall, the assessment identifies 6 green, 2 yellow and one orange score.

Table 16: Summary of scores by sub-component

Component	Sub Component	Summary of scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	
	2c. Implementation Framework	
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	

This represents a solid improvement since the MTR undertaken in 2014 as shown below (Table 17) which identified only one green 7 yellow and one red score.

Table 17: Summary of scores generated during 2014 MTR process

Component	Sub Component	Summary of scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	
	2c. Implementation Framework	

	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	

8. NEXT STEPS

The assessment clearly points to a number of areas that require action if Ghana is to be fully REDD+ ready, as presented below:

8.1. NATIONAL REDD+ STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The REDD+ Strategy has identified measures to address the policy and legal gaps or barriers to reducing deforestation and forest degradation or enhancing carbon stocks. What is still outstanding is the need to develop a clear, realistic and costed action plan that defines roles and responsibilities for implementation.

An implementation plan is being developed for the ERPD, which provides detailed steps for achieving emission reductions in the cocoa landscape. When developing the Action Plan for the National REDD+ strategy, it will be important to reflect those interventions being taken at sub-national level, within the context of the ERP.

8.2. FOREST REFERENCE LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVEL

Finalise the development of the national and sub-national (ERP) level FRL/RL in line with UNFCCC requirements and as a key milestone in the delivery of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

8.3. NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING SYSTEM

Once the FRL/RL has been finalized (and as necessary, submitted) there is a need to develop the NFMS, including targeting specific capacity development at institutions responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing information.

8.4. SAFEGUARD INFORMATION SYSTEM

To comply with UNFCCC requirements, it will be necessary to establish a national safeguard information system that will report on how safeguards are being "respected and addressed". In line with the UN-REDD model for country-led safeguard development, it will be important to anchor this in existing legal and regulatory mechanisms and provisions for mitigating social and environmental impacts.

8.5. FGRM

The FGRM needs to be operationalized starting from the sub-national level. Linkages to the FLEGT/VPA FGRM may reduce costs and increase linkages between these two important but inter-linked approaches to improving forest governance. Furthermore, given that REDD+ activities will be implemented initially within the cocoa / HFZ landscape, it would make sense to operationalize the FGRM initially within this area.

8.6. REDD+ REGISTRY

The REDD+ registry needs to be designed and operationalized as an essential component of the full set of arrangements for private sector participation in a performance-based REDD+ scheme.

8.7. FUNDS MANAGEMENT OF REDD+ FINANCING

Ghana expects to be the recipient of up to USD 50 million in performance-based payments from the Carbon Fund once the ERPD gets approval and an ER Purchase Agreement is signed subsequently. Other potential sources of REDD+ financing such as the Green Climate Fund will

be pursued in the near future. Robust systems will have to be put in place for ensuring that these funds are properly managed to fully benefit the intended beneficiaries including community groups (such as CREMAs) and farmers etc. whose actions contribute significantly to generating the emission reductions. Currently, no design exists for this structure, however a consultancy for the design for such a structure has recently been commissioned.

8.8. DESIGN OF GHANA'S SECOND ERP

The National REDD+ Strategy outlines plans for a second ERP in the northern Savannah zone that will address the needs of dryland woodlands and forests and the people who live there. Integration of wildlife, collection of non-timber forest products (such as Shea butter) will both be important features of this programme. The design has yet to progress beyond the concept stage and additional thinking will be required to develop a coherent plan that could be submitted for further development to funding channels such as GCF.

8.9. DEEPENING THE ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY MINISTRIES

The assessment has highlighted the need to deepen engagement with non-forestry ministries whose actions have implications for land use and land-use change. This includes the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government and the mining sector (both within and outside government)

8.10. FINALISE AN IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

Four key activities are proposed towards finalizing an implementation framework for REDD+ in Ghana, they include:

a. Undertake legislative reforms on tenure;
b. Develop new legislation on carbon rights, benefit sharing and national REDD+ funding modalities;
c. Operationalisation of institutional arrangements for benefit sharing; and
d. Input of data/ information from the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ programme in the REDD+ information database.

The steps to be undertaken to conclude these proposed activities are outlined below:

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES	ACTION STEPS	REMARKS (including availability of funding)
Legislative Reforms on Tree Tenure	1. Development of a position paper through a multi-stakeholder process; 2. Briefing of key sector ministers/ministries and Parliamentary Sub-working group on Forestry on rationale for legislative reforms; 3. Receipt of policy approval from Cabinet on the Bill; 4. Introduction of Bill to Parliament/ passage as an Act of Parliament and assent by President	Funding largely unavailable. Process could take 1 – 5 years for completion.
New Legislation on benefit sharing, carbon rights and REDD+ funding modalities	Same as above	Funding largely unavailable Could take 1 -5 years for completion.
Operationalisation of institutional arrangements for benefit Sharing	1. Development and validation of REDD+ benefit sharing options; 2. Design of benefit sharing institutional framework based on the options validated; 3. Formalisation of institutional framework for benefit sharing	Funding available for (1) and (2) under the FCPF readiness programme. No funding available for (3). Process likely to take up to 2 years for completion
Input of programme level information/ data into Ghana's REDD+ Information Database	Data collection	Funding unavailable Initial data collection will be completed in a year/ afterwards data will be collected annually

8.11. FINALISATION OF INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR MULTIPLE IMPACTS/ OTHER IMPACTS/ GOVERNANCE/ SAFEGUARDS

Three key activities will be undertaken towards finalizing an information system for non-carbon/ safeguards information:

a. Operationalisation of a Safeguards Information System to serve as a respository for non-carbon/ safeguards information;
b. Data collection for input into SIS;
c. Operationalisation of a monitoring system for the SIS;

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES	ACTION STEPS	REMARKS (including availability of funding)
Operationalisation of SIS	Develop/ Testing of SIS	To be funded with FCPF readiness funds and collaboration with SNV
Data collection for input into SIS	Initial data collection for input into SIS.	Funding largely unavailable Should be completed in a year
Operationalisation of monitoring system for SIS	1. Set up/ Formalise an institutional arrangement for monitoring system; 2. Capacity enhancement including making available requisite hardware/ software to identified institutions; 3. Capacity building of local level stakeholders 4. Annual monitoring	Funding unavailable Activity will be done annually

Annex I: Persons Consulted

National REDD+ Secretariat / Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission

Name	Position	Institution
Yaw Kwakye	Head	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Kwame Agyei	Assistant Manager, MRV Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Charles SarpongDuah	Assistant Manager, M&E and Budgeting Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
HilmaManan	Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Raymond Kofi Sakyi	Knowledge Management Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Jacob Amoako	GIS Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Helen Wiafe	Administrative Officer	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Charlotte Asare	Administrative Officer	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Patrick Kwakye	Management Trainee	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission

National REDD+ Working Group

Name	Position	Institution
Hon. Barbara SerwaaAsamoah	Deputy Minister (Chairperson)	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Naa Robert Loggah	Traditional Authority	Forest Forum/ Upper West Regional House of Chiefs
J.G.K. Owusu	Co-Chair/ Forestry Consultant	NRWG
Nora Pappoe	Asst. Development Planning Officer	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Alex Dadzie	National Vice President	Ghana Timber Association
KwadwoKissieduKwapong	Deputy Director	Cocoa Board of Ghana
Kwame Mensah	Network Co-ordinator	KASA Ghana
Musah Abu-Juam	Technical Director	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Joseph Osiakwan	Principal Planning Officer	Ministry of Lands and Natural

		Resources
TabiAgyarko	Principal Planning Officer	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Eric Ofori Nyarko	Deputy Director for Environment	Energy Commission
Nana FrimpongAnokye II	Traditional Authority	National House of Chiefs
Robert Bamfo	REDD+ Consultant	Forestry Commission
Eric Amengor	Deputy Manager	Cocoa Board of Ghana
Franklin Ashiadey	Senior Economics Officer	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

REDD+ Sub Working Group Members

Name	**Position**	**Institution**
Kennedy Ntoso	Cocoa Sustainability Head	OLAM Ghana Ltd.
Augustine Arthur	Database Manager, ICT Dept.	Forestry Commission
Joyce OforiKwafo	Corporate Affairs and Media Relations Manager	Forestry Commission
Joseph Adu-Mintah	Head, ICT Dept.	Forestry Commission
Wale Adeleke	Consultant	IUCN
Mark Dadebo	Corporate M&E/Budgeting Manager	Forestry Commission
Eric. K. Bonney	Manager, Timber Industry Devt. Division (TIDD)	Forestry Commission
Edith Abruquah	Operations Manager, Forest Services Division	Forestry Commission
OpponSasu	Director, Corporate Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (CPME)	Forestry Commission
Rebecca Ashley Asare	Head of Research	Nature Conservation Research Centre
Benjamin Torgbor	District Manager, Plantations Dept.	Forestry Commission

CSO, NGO and Private Sector stakeholders

Name	**Position**	**Institution**
Kwame Mensah	Network Coordinator	KASA Ghana
Bernard Eshun	Programme Coordinator	ACTWAR
Wellington Baiden	CEO	Portal Forest Estates
Daryl Bosu	Deputy Director	A Rocha Ghana
Doreen A. Yeboah	National Coordinator	National Forest Forum (NFF)
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Kwame Mensah	Network Coordinator	KASA Ghana

World Bank

Name	Position	Institution
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Neeta Hooda	Senior Carbon Finance Specialist	FCPF Facility Management Team, World Bank, USA

Validation Workshop

Name	Position	Institution
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Nora Pappoe	Asst. Development Planning Officer	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
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Raymond Sakyi	Knowledge Management Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
HilmaManan	Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Daniel Nsowah	Senior Planning Officer	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Sylvia Opatu	Planning Officer	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Patrick Kwakye	Management Trainee	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Maclean AsamaniOyeh	Consultant	World Bank/Nature Conservation Research Centre
Nana FrimpongAnokye II	Traditional Authority	National House of Chiefs
Eric Amengor	Deputy Manager	Cocoa Board of Ghana
Benjamin Torgbor	District Manager, Plantations Dept.	Forestry Commission
SenaTabbicca	Deputy Manager	Cocoa Board of Ghana
TabiAgyarko	Principal Planning Officer	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Daryl Bosu	Deputy Director	A Rocha Ghana
DorcasGyimah-Owusu	Project Assistant	IUCN

Musah Abu-Juam	Technical Director	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
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Eric OforiNyarko	Deputy Director for Environment	Energy Commission
Yaw Kwakye	Head	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission
Kwame Agyei	Assistant Manager, MRV Specialist	Climate Change Unit, Forestry Commission

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Annex III: Questions Used in the Self-Assessment Exercise

Subcomponent 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements

1. Accountability and transparency

- How are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements demonstrating they are operating in an open, accountable and transparent manner?

2. *Operating mandate and budget*

- How is it shown that national REDD+ institutions operate under clear mutually supportive mandates with adequate, predictable and sustainable budgets?

3. *Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration*

- How are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements ensuring REDD+ activities are coordinated, integrated into and influencing the broader national or sector policy frameworks (e.g., agriculture, environment, natural resources management, infrastructure development and land-use planning)?

4. *Technical supervision capacity*

- How effectively and efficiently are national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements leading and supervising multi-sector readiness activities, including the regular supervision of technical preparations?

5. *Funds management capacity*

- How are institutions and arrangements demonstrating effective, efficient and transparent fiscal management, including coordination with other development partner-funded activities?

6. *Feedback and grievance redress mechanism*

- What evidence is there to demonstrate the mechanism is operating at the national, subnational and local levels, is transparent, impartial, has a clearly defined mandate, and adequate expertise and resources?
- What evidence is there that potentially impacted communities are aware of, have access to, and the mechanism is responsive to feedback and grievances?

Subcomponent 1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach

7. Participation and engagement of key stakeholders

- How is the full, effective and on-going participation of key stakeholders demonstrated through institutional mechanisms (including extra efforts to engage marginalized groups such as forest-dependent women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities)?
- What are the participatory mechanisms being used to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities have the capacity to effectively participate in REDD+readiness and implementation?
- What measures have been taken to mainstream gender considerations across REDD+ readiness activities?

8. *Consultation processes*

- What evidence demonstrates that consultation processes at the national and local levels are clear, inclusive, transparent, and facilitate timely access to information in a culturally appropriate form?
- What evidence is there that the country has used a self-selection process to identify rights holders and stakeholders during consultations?
- What evidence is there that Indigenous Peoples institutions and decision-making processes are utilized to enhance consultations and engagement?

- What evidence is there that consultation processes are gender sensitive and inclusive?

9. *Information sharing and accessibility of information*

- How have national REDD+ institutions and management arrangements demonstrated transparent, consistent, comprehensive and timely sharing and disclosure of information (related to all readiness activities, including the development of REDD+ strategy, reference levels, and monitoring systems) in a culturally appropriate form?
- What evidence is there that information is accessible to stakeholders (e.g., in a format and language understandable to them) and is being received?
- What channels of communications are being used to ensure that stakeholders are well informed, especially those that have limited or no access to relevant information?

10. Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes

- How are the outcomes of consultations integrated (fed into, disseminated, publicly disclosed and taken into account) in management arrangements, strategy development and technical activities related to reference level and monitoring and information systems development?

Subcomponent: 2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance

11. Assessment and analysis

- Does the summary of the work conducted during R-PP formulation and preparation present an analysis of recent historical land-use trends (including traditional) and assessment of relevant land tenure and titling, natural resource rights, livelihoods (including traditional/ customary), forest law, policy and governance issues?

12. *Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement*

- How was the analysis used to prioritize key direct and indirect drivers to be addressed by the programs and policies included in the REDD+ strategy?
- Did the analysis consider the major barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement activities (if appropriate) to be addressed by the programs and policies included in the REDD+ strategy?

13. *Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities*

- What evidence demonstrates that systematic links between key drivers, and/or barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement activities (as appropriate), and REDD+ activities were identified?

14. *Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance*

- 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 relatedto specific REDD+ programs, outline further steps and identify required resources?

15. *Implications for forest law and policy*

- Does the assessment identify implications for forest or other relevant law and policy in the long-term?

16. Links between REDD+ and VPA/FLEGT

- How effective are the linkages and learning between national REDD+ readiness activities and those related to FLEGT within the context of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed with the European Union, and what specific measures (if any) have been taken?

Subcomponent: 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options

17. Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options

- Were REDD+ strategy options (prioritized based on comprehensive assessment of direct and indirect drivers of deforestation, barriers to forest enhancement activities and/ or

informed by other factors, as appropriate) selected via a transparent and participatory process?

- Were the expected emissions reduction potentials of interventions estimated, where possible, and how did they inform the design of the REDD+ strategy?

18. *Feasibility assessment*

- Were REDD+ strategy options assessed and prioritized for their social, environmental and political feasibility, risks and opportunities, and analysis of costs and benefits?

19. Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies

- Have major inconsistencies between the priority REDD+ strategy options and policies or programs in other sectors related to the forest sector (e.g., transport, agriculture) been identified?
- Is an agreed timeline and process in place to resolve inconsistencies and integrate REDD+ strategy options with relevant development policies?
- Are they supportive of broader development objectives and have broad community support?

Subcomponent: 2c. Implementation Framework

20. Adoption and implementation of legislation/ regulations

- Have legislation and/or regulations related to REDD+ programs and activities been adopted?
- What evidence is there that these relevant REDD+ laws and policies are being implemented?

21. *Guidelines for implementation*

- What evidence is there that the implementation framework defines carbon rights, benefit sharing mechanisms, REDD+ financing modalities, procedures for official approvals (e.g., for pilots or REDD+ projects), and grievance mechanisms?

22. *Benefit sharing mechanism*

- What evidence is there to demonstrate benefit sharing mechanisms are transparent?

23. *National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities*

- Is a national geo-referenced REDD+ information system or registry operational, comprehensive of all relevant information (e.g., information on the location, ownership, carbon accounting and financial flows for sub-national and national REDD+ programs and projects), and does it ensure public access to REDD+ information?

Subcomponent: 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts

24. Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues

- What evidence is there that applicable social and environmental safeguard issues relevant to the country context have been fully identified/analysed via relevant studies or diagnostics and in consultation processes?

25. *REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts*

- How were SESA results and the identification of social and environmental impacts (both positive and negative) used for prioritizing and designing REDD+ strategy options?

26. *Environmental and Social Management Framework*

- What evidence is there that the ESMF is in place and managing environmental and social risks/potential impacts related to REDD+ activities?

Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels

27. Demonstration of methodology

- Is the preliminary sub-national or national forest REL or RL presented (as part of the R-Package) using a clearly documented methodology, based on a step-wise approach, as appropriate?

- Are plans for additional steps and data needs provided, and is the relationship between the sub-national and the evolving national reference level demonstrated (as appropriate)?

28. *Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances*

- How does the establishment of the REL/RL take into account historical data, and if adjusted for national circumstance, what is the rationale and supportive data that demonstrate that proposed adjustments are credible and defendable?
- Is sufficient data and documentation provided in a transparent fashion to allow for the reconstruction or independent cross-checking of the REL/RL?

29. *Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines*

- Is the REL/RL (presented as part of the R-Package) based on transparent, complete and accurate information, consistent with UNFCCC guidance and the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, and allowing for technical assessment of the data sets, approaches, methods, models (if applicable) and assumptions used in the construction of the REL/RL?

Subcomponent: 4a. National Forest Monitoring System

30. Documentation of monitoring approach

- Is there clear rationale or analytic evidence supporting the selection of the used or proposed methodology (combination of remote sensing and ground-based forest carbon inventory approaches, systems resolution, coverage, acuracy, inclusions of carbon pools and gases) and improvement over time?
- Has the system been technically reviewed and nationally approved, and is it consistent with national and international existing and emerging guidance?
- Are potential sources of uncertainties identified to the extent possible?

31. *Demonstration of early system implementation*

- What evidence is there that the system has the capacity to monitor the specific REDD+ activities prioritized in the country's REDD+ strategy?
- How does the system identify and assess displacement of emissions (leakage), and what are the early results (if any)?
- How are key stakeholders involved (participating/ consulted) in the development and/or early implementation of the system, including data collection and any potential verification of its results?
- What evidence is there that the system allows for comparison of changes in forest area and carbon content (and associated GHG emissions) relative to the baseline estimates used for the REL/RL?

32. *Institutional arrangements and capacities*

- Are mandates to perform tasks related to forest monitoring clearly defined (e.g., satellite data processing, forest inventory, information sharing)?
- What evidence is there that a transparent means of publicly sharing forest and emissions data are presented and are in at least an early operational stage?
- Have associated resource needs been identified and estimated (e.g., required capacities, training, hardware/software, and budget)?

Subcomponent: 4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards

33. *Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues*

- How have relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental safeguard issues of REDD+ preparations been identified? Are there any capacity building recommendations associated with these?

34. *Monitoring, reporting and information sharing*

- What evidence is there that a transparent system for periodically sharing consistent information on non-carbon aspects and safeguards has been presented and is in at least an early operational stage?
- How is the following information being made available: key quantitative and qualitative variables about impacts on rural livelihoods, conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services provision, key governance factors directly pertinent to REDD+ preparations, and the implementation of safeguards, paying attention to the specific provisions included in the ESMF?

35. *Institutional arrangements and capacities*

- Are mandates to perform tasks related to non-carbon aspects and safeguards clearly defined?
- Have associated resource needs been identified and estimated (e.g., required capacities, training, hardware/software, and budget)?

Annex IV: Catalogue of Documents/Reports Produced Under Readiness Phase (1&2)

Readiness studies/documents	Web links
Independent Evaluation of REDD+ Readiness at Mid-Term	https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/May/Independent_Evaluation_of_REDD_Readiness_Ghana.pdf
Development of REDD+ Communication Strategy	https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/April/REDD%20%20%20Comm%20Strat%20Final%20Doc.pdf
High Level Engagement with Private Sector and State Actors on the Emission Reduction Programme	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/High-Level%20Buy-In%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf
Establishment of Benefit Sharing	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/Final%20Report%20REDD%2B%20Benefit%20Sharing%20Ghana.pdf
Development of Measurement, Reporting and Verification System	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/Ghana%20MRV%20Final%20Report%20(ID%2067024).pdf
Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/final%20%20ESMF%20REDD%2B_oct%202014.pdf
Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/final%20RPF-REDD%2B-oct%202014(1).pdf
Development of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/FINAL%20SESA%20report-18122014.pdf
Development of Dispute Resolution Mechanism (GRM)	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/Final%20final%20DRM%20Report.pdf
Development of REDD+ Strategy	https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/April/Ghana%20National%20REDD%2B%20Strategy%20Final.pdf
Development of an Integrated M&E Framework	https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2015/April/M%26E%20Final%20Draft_March_2014.pdf
Operational Guidance and Standard for Sub-national and National REDD+ Programs	http://fcghana.org/userfiles/files/REDD%2B/final%20Report%5B1%5D-13-2-15.pdf