TAP Review of the R-Package submitted by Mexico

Independent TAP-Expert Review on the Self-Assessment Process of Mexico's R-Package – April 2016

Table of Contents

1. Objectives

This document has the following objectives:

- To present the TAP Review for the Self Assessment Process of Mexico´s R-Package, undertaken through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation. The review assesses REDD+ readiness progress and remaining challenges to be addressed when transitioning from Readiness to implementation of performance based REDD+ activities.

- To assist PC on its decision to endorse the R-Package, which is a prerequisite for accepting the submission of Mexico´s Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD).

2. Methodological Approach

This section presents the scope of the work performed for the TAP review, as per the following Terms of Reference required activities:

- To perform a desk-review of Mexico´s R-Package.
- To perform and independent review of Mexico´s progress in REDD+ readiness, using FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines.
- To review review Mexico´s documentation of stakeholders´ self-assessment, including the process and outcome.
- To review key outputs referred in the R-Package, including the national REDD+ strategy, the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the Reference Emissions Level and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures.
- To provide constructive and targeted feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the subcomponents.

As a main deliverable, this Report, according to the TOR, must address:

- Self-assessment process and documentation submitted by Mexico, and
- Progress on REDD+ readiness with emphasis on strengths and weaknesses of each subcomponent as per the TAP perception (without judging the content of the self assessment report).

To carry out the required tasks, the following methodological approach will be followed:

- Task 1: Review self assessment process and documentation, based on Mexico´s R-Readiness package produced by CONAFOR
- Task 2: Review progress on REDD+ readiness based on the submitted reports and background documents and information

The TAP review does not have the intention of second-guessing the country´s self assessment, which is based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process guided by FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The review rather focus on the due process and approach while performing the self assessment, and provides feedback to the FCPF Participants Committee (PC).

Mexico has prepared a R-Package Report, where the last sections (Sections III and 4) corresponds to the Stakeholders Self-Assessment Report. The Report presents the information gathered for the Self-Assessment Process (Section II), which integrates Mexico´s progress with relation to each of the R-Readiness Components and Sub-Components. The following box presents Mexico´s R-Package Report´s outline

Box 1 - Outline of Mexico´s R-Package Report

Acronyms
I.   Introduction
II.   Progress in the REDD+ readiness progress
    1. Organization and consultation
       1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements
       1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach
    2. Development of REDD+ Strategy
       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
    3. Reference Emissions Level
    4. Forest and safeguards monitoring system
       4a. National Forest Monitoring System
       4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards
III.   Methodology for the participatory self assessment on the progress of REDD+ readiness
IV.   Results from the participatory self assessment
    1. Process description
    2. Results
V.   Conclusions and recommendations
VI.   Annexes

3. TAP Task 1: Review of Self-Assessment Process and Documentation

This section presents the process followed by Mexico to conduct its self-assessment, and the documentation to support it. It presents the TAP Review of institutional arrangements for preparing and carrying out the assessment; the documentation prepared and used for the assessment; the process for selecting and conveying stakeholders, and the process for capturing the participants' points of view and how these will be considered in future REDD+ decisions making in Mexico.

Before engaging in the specific Readiness self-assessment process review, it is worth acknowledging the already comprehensive multi-stakeholder consultation process that has characterized Mexico´s REDD+ process. Since 2010, the participation of local communities, farmers, indigenous peoples, women groups, young groups, NGOs, academia, research centers, government officers from federal, state and local representation, plus civil society has allowed the National Strategy on REDD+ to be built, and to keep it continuously shaped and modeled according to the new information obtained and discussed. The Self Assessment comes as a new consultation process about the whole set of REDD+ activities, which have already been incorporated during consultations for developing each of the key R-package pieces (ie, ENAREDD+, SESA, Consultation Plan, Reference Level and Monitoring).

Consultations for the self assessment process took place through 4 different workshops:

- Indigenous and Farmers Working Group (national representation)
- National CTC-REDD+ (national representation)
- Yucatan Peninsula (regional representation of 3 states: Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo)
- Chiapas State (state representation)

Besides the Indigenous and Farmers Working Group, all other workshops involved the participation of different stakeholders, organized in working groups. In Yucatan, most of the participants represented government (36%); NGOs (20%); and Civil Society (20%). In Chiapas, most participants came from government (38%) and NGOs (31%). The CTC workshop had a larger participation from the civil society (47%), followed by government (35%). The indigenous and farmer working group was evenly representing each group, however there were only 9 participants. Total participants in the 4 groups totaled 77, with a majority from government (32%), followed by NGOs (20%), and civil society (19%).

To make comprehension of the whole set of documents and underpinning information easier, CONAFOR prepared a report on the REDD+ readiness process in Mexico, which was distributed to all self-assessment participants. Also, before the actual self assessment consultations took place, a pilot workshop was undertaken, to adjust the methodology, and to test the FCPF Assessment Framework. The test was important to adjust some of the pre-set evaluation process to make it easier to understand within the Mexican context.

The methodology at the actual workshops consisted on a presentation on the achieved progress regarding each of the sub-components. The sessions included a section of questions and answers to ensure an adequate understanding about REDD+ readiness in Mexico.

Next, each group would work on the progress rating, following a color code, further aided by corresponding numbers, as per the figure below. Also, participants were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, and challenges and pending development, related to each of the 34 assessment criteria.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not showing progress		Lacks progress			Acknowledges progress but needs further development			Good Progress	

TAP Assessment. The participative Self Assessment Process in Mexico followed the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines, adapting some of the wording behind the criteria used to assess progress (in particular those related to the Implementation Framework) to the Mexican realities. The R-Package Report, which includes sections on the Self Assessment Process, includes all required elements, and links and references to the necessary complementary information and background documents. However, the TAP Review would have been easier, had the ratings on the 34 assessment criteria been supported with specific feedback from the consulted working groups; rather it had a compiled report summarizing all comments received per criteria.

Following the Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines, Mexico has chose to present the results and comments on the 34 criteria, blending the responses from all groups of stakeholders. This is, the results from the 4 different consultation processes summarize the views of different stakeholder (grouped as per the location or consultation type). For future consultations, it would be interesting to find out the ratings from the different interest groups (ie, NGOs, private sector, farmers, indigenous, government, academia, consultants). It is worth noting the discrepancy from the Chiapas group to the other consulted groups, which shows not only the transparency of the process, but also the need for further outreach at that particular State.

Other element to address in the future is the relatively weak participation from the private sector. The larger representation resulted from government and NGOs (52%). This organizational setting could be assessed as a weakness of the process. So, for the next ER phase, one of the TAP recommendations is to incorporate the participation of private sector in a much stronger way. This is particularly important for next phase, as it will help leverage private capital to the REDD+ implementation objectives.

4. TAP Task 2: Review of Progress on REDD+ Readiness

This section evaluates the progress on REDD+ readiness, as per the four Readiness Components (ie, (i) Readiness Arrangements and Organization; (ii) National REDD+ Strategy Preparation; (iii) Reference Emissions Level; and (iv) Monitoring System and Safeguards). The evaluation is based on the 34 criteria used by Mexico in its self-assessment, following the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. In this section the TAP evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of each subcomponent.

The review was based on the REDD+ R-Package Document prepared by CONAFOR for FCPF. Also, the National REDD+ Strategy, the Reference Emissions Level, and the National REDD+ Strategy Consultation Plan. In addition, further documents were consulted, regarding each of the readiness components (see section 7 below).

Different to other Self Assessment Process Reports, as indicated in the previous section of this report, the Self Assessment Process in Mexico presents the results according to the place of consultation, and to the Indigenous and Farmers Working Group. Therefore, it does not allow to track different perceptions from different type of stakeholders, as it combines all stakeholder types under a regional category. Thus, all stakeholders participating in the Self Assessment in the Yucatan Peninsula (3 states), are grouped in one column. The same applies for the Chiapas State, and for the National CTC. The last column presents the results from the indigenous and farmer working group.

Table 1 – Average ratings from the Self Assessment process

Component	Sub-Component	Average Rating (Color Coded)
Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation	Subcomponent 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements	🟧
	Subcomponent 1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach	🟨
Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation	Subcomponent: 2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	🟨
	Subcomponent: 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	🟧
	Subcomponent: 2c. Implementation Framework	🟧
	Subcomponent: 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	🟨
Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Levels		🟨
Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards	Subcomponent: 4a. National Forest Monitoring System	🟨
	Subcomponent: 4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	🟨

The table 2 below presents the Self Assessment ratings as per the type of consultation grouping used by CONAFOR.

Table 2 – Self Assessment ratings for the nine sub-components according to consultation type

Component	Sub-Component	Yucatan Peninsula	Chiapas State	National CTC	Indigenous and Farmers
Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation	Subcomponent 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements	5	4	5	5
	Subcomponent 1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach	7	4	4	6
Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation	Subcomponent: 2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	7	5	5	5
	Subcomponent: 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	6	4	5	6
	Subcomponent: 2c. Implementation Framework	6	4	4	5
	Subcomponent: 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	5	4	6	6
Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Levels		8	8	5	6
Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards	Subcomponent: 4a. National Forest Monitoring System	7	7	6	7
	Subcomponent: 4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	7	4	6	6

The table 3 below presents the ratings for the 34 criteria, grouped by color code. The results show that most ratings are yellow, followed by orange, and then by green. There are only 4 red scores, all of them marked at the Chiapas consultation, which is the place where lower scores were obtained in general. Most ratings are yellow, which indicates a recognition of progress although in need of further development. Indigenous peoples and farmers, and the participants from the Yucatan Peninsula seem to be more satisfied with ENAREDD+ progress.

Table 3 – Ratings grouped by color code and consultation type

CONSULTATION TYPE	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
YUCATAN PENINSULA	3	23	8	0
CHIAPAS STATE	2	11	17	4
NATIONAL CTC	0	17	17	0
INDIGENOUS AND FARMERS	0	27	7	0
TOTAL	5	78	49	4

Following is a presentation of each of the sub-components progress as per the TAP reviewer, and the related Self-Assessment perception. For each of the Sub-components, a brief summary of R-readiness progress in Mexico, is presented; then followed by the reported responses from the Self Assessment participants. Note that reported information summarizes the general point of view of all working groups regarding each of the 34 criteria. This information is crossed with

the actual ratings, and with the progress actually presented in the underpinning documents and relevant websites. Next, a brief note on the process and progress -as assessed by TAP- is presented.

Component 1: Readiness, Organization and Consultation

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

Institutional Arrangements (criteria 1-5). The process for developing a REDD+ National Strategy in Mexico started in 2010, with the preparation of the policy document "Mexican Vision on REDD", presented during the XVI Conference of the Parties held in Cancun. The Mexican vision on REDD+, built with the participation of wide array of stakeholders, aimed at becoming carbon neutral in AFOLU, and increase the country´s carbon reservoirs by 2020. The REDD+ process in Mexico is led by the National Commission on Forests (CONAFOR[1]). Complementary instruments also contributing to reduce deforestation and degradation of ecosystems are led by other environmental institutions such as the National Commission on Protected Areas (CONANP); the National Commission on the Use and Knowledge of Biodiversity (CONABIO); the National Ecology and Climate Change Institute (INECC); the Federal Water Protection Agency (PROFEPA); the National Commission on Water (CONAGUA); and other management areas at the National Secretariat on Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). The National Secretariat on Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development (SAGARPA) is also working towards soil restoration and conservation, and on reforestation and forest plantations.

To coordinate work of the different public entities, the Government of Mexico established the Inter Secretariat Commission on Climate Change (CICC), and the Inter Secretariat Commission on Sustainable Rural Development (CIDRS). A REDD+ Working Group (GT-REDD+) was created under CICC with the mandate of promoting REDD+ in Mexico, and developing the National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+). GT-REDD+ has progressed with a draft ENAREDD+, a consultation plan, and ENAREDD+´s communication strategy. The ENAREDD+ has been built with support of the Consultative Technical Committee on REDD+ (CTC-REDD+), formed in 2010 by representatives from different stakeholder groups (ie, NGO, government, communities, indigenous peoples, producers, academic, and private sector); and since 2013 with additional support from the National Council on Forests (CONAF), At the State level, CTCs have also been formed for the State of Chiapas; for the Yucatán Peninsula (Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan), and for each of its three States. Also, for Oaxaca, and Chihuahua.

In 2011 a collaboration agreement was signed between CONAFOR and SAGARPA to establish coordination mechanisms for the development of forest related development policies and

---

[1] As per its Spanish acronym. CONAFOR was incorporated by Presidential Decree on April 2001, as a Descentralized Public Entity adscribed to SEMARNAT, to develop and promote forest conservation and restoration, and forest related productive activities. Also to formulate and implement policies, plans and programs on sustainable forestry development. Its functions are regulated by the General Law on Sustainable Forest Development of 2003.

activities, including the National Strategy on REDD+ (ENAREDD+). In 2013 CONAFOR signed additional inter institutional agreements with the National Women Institute (INMUJERES) to incorporate a gender perspective to the forest and climate change projects. Also with the National Commission on the Indigenous Peoples Development (CDI) to foster better quality of life of indigenous peoples and promote forest conservation and restoration; and with the National Institute on Statistics and Geography (INEGI) for measuring and monitoring carbon. To provide feedback on ENAREDD+, the National Council on Forests (CONAF), created a Working Table for Indigenous Peoples and Farmers (this group includes the State Forestry Union (UESCO), the National Union of Forestry Organizations (UNOFOC), the Directive Council for the Forest Farmer Organizations (RED MOCAF), the indigenous tourism network for Mexico (RITA).

Self Assessment. The self assessment concluded that with relation to the Institutional Arrangement and Coordination there is progress but still there is need for improvement. Particularly perceived as weak is the inter institutional coordination, where the presence of multiple institutions and programs, and the lack of continuity of inter institutional agreements, and the frequent changes of key personnel at the various agencies and programs, makes it complex and difficult to understand. Also, there is a perceived lack of capacity to communicate results and information resulting from the recognized efforts of CONAFOR for coordinating with the different agencies and programs. Stakeholders perceive a lack of transparency with regards to funds availability, mandate and management. Local coordination at the State level is well perceived, but only applies to a few states.

TAP Review. Information on Institutional and organizational setup for REDD+ was clearly presented, and it is easily accessible. However, given the natural complexity of the existing institutional and consultation arrangements, it seems stakeholders prefer to have a closer localized coordination. State run consultations have shown better acceptance, as they facilitate interactions with the actual landowners and stakeholders. CONAFOR efforts to promote a stronger coordination at the local level seems to be an appropriate strategy for further strengthening.

Feedback and grievance redress mechanism (criterion 6). Mexican public institutions have the legal obligation of addressing complaints, information requests and providing feedback to the people. Since 2012, CONAFOR has established a Citizen Attention System (Mecanismo de Atención Ciudadana -MAC), which addresses all forest management matters, including those related to REDD+ in three main areas: (i) requests related to the information management and transparency; (ii) information requests and suggestions related to the CONAFOR programs; and (iii) claims and complaints regarding public servants. Each area has a specific office in charge for receiving and redressing requests and complaints[2]. MAC principles for redressing grievances and complaints are accessibility, cultural appropriateness, efficacy and effectiveness, equity, transparency, and a feedback oriented approach. The mechanism operates through a

---

[2] The Internal Control Office to address faults from public servants; the Liason Unit to the National Institute on Information Access and Protection, for information and transparency requests; and the Citizen Attention Follow-Up Office, to address any requests or solicitations related to CONAFOR´s activities and programs.

telephone hotline, CONAFOR´s website and CONAFOR state offices. In addition to CONAFOR´s mechanism, other governmental entities such as SAGARPA have their own public participation mechanisms. Moreover, consultative mechanisms such as CTC-REDD+, or CONAF can also help convey the views, and suggestions from REDD+ stakeholders.

Self Assessment. In general, the rating given to the Complaints and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (CGRM) is relatively low (orange color), requiring further development. Although the mechanisms exist, they are not known or accessible at the local level; in particular, there is the need to have a specific CGRM for REDD+, locally oriented and managed.

TAP Review. CGRM exists and it is taken very seriously at CONAFOR. It seems that the general claim is to have the REDD+ coordination and related CGRM closer to the local communities and stakeholders. This is being tested in Yucatan, as part of Mexico´s R-Readiness effort. This effort could be complemented with having a specific REDD+ or ENAREDD+ CGRM in CONAFOR. Next, it would help setting specific REDD+´s CGRM at SAGARPA, and of course continue the effort at the State level entities (Secretariats representations).

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

Participation of key stakeholders (criterion 7). As presented in the above section on REDD+ institutional coordination, and according to the Constitutional mandate, the REDD+ process in Mexico has been participative and all relevant stakeholders have been involved in the different development stages. CONAF´s working group on REDD+, CTC-REDD+, the State CTCs, and CONAF´s Indigenous and Farmers Working Group, have been the main vehicles for a wide, comprehensive stakeholder participation in the REDD+ process and ENAREDD+ development. At the government level the Inter-Secretariat Climate Change Commission (CICC) has involved 14 secretariats in developing the Mexican Vision on REDD+ and the work after. In 2014, the Yucatan Peninsula established a Safeguards Committee that added a participatory platform to the overall REDD+ process in Mexico. As indicated above, the REDD+ process in Mexico has incorporated the participation of key minority groups such as indigenous peoples, farmers, and women. To build capacity, the MEXICOREDD+ Alliance has been created, coordinated by CONAFOR and SEMARNAT, and the local and state governments, and involving NGOs (TNC, Rainforest Alliance, Espacios Naturales y Desarrollo Sustentable) a research center (Wood Hole Research Center), and USAID. The Alliance is aimed at strengthening local capacities for REDD+ friendly productive measures, and for managing REDD+ knowledge.

Consultation Process (criterion 8). CONAFOR and the other REDD+ related agencies at federal, state, and local level have involved all types of stakeholders, including government, private sector, research and academic institutions, NGOs, indigenous peoples (through CDI), farmers and local producers, and women groups. According to the ENAREDD+´s Consultation Plan (June 2015), the Government of Mexico has identified about 16,000 agrarian areas covering about 63 million ha of forests, which represents near 45% of the country´s total forest area. The consultation process has prioritized the groups and representatives from these communities, involving indigenous communities through their traditional authorities, forest management and

agrarian producer groups, forest land owners or occupants, local communities through their representative entities and organizations, and a third group engaging academia, civil society and any other person interested in REDD+ or ENAREDD+. To identify representatives from land owners and right holders, the Government will rely on the property rights based on culture, tradition and the formal law.

Information sharing and accessibility of information and implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes (criteria 9-10). Information packages have been produced at all levels (ie, virtual, state level fora, public participation mechanisms), to ensure a good participation of the different groups of stakeholders. Also, thematic fora addressed to women, youngsters, indigenous people, and rural communities were held. At the end of 2015, for that year alone there were 191,000 responded surveys, 10,000 comments, and 3,000 suggestions. In 2015 there were 683 virtual participants, 5,352 participants at the state forums, 337 participants at the thematic forums, and 53 indigenous groups. Information was presented in the form of Guideline on Forest Management and REDD+, at the institutional websites, as flyers, as infographics, as material in Maya, Nahuatl, Mixtecoan, and Tahaumara indigenous languages, as posters in the different languages, as a comic magazine, and as radio infomercials. Capacity building was provided to the different government, local and indigenous groups, and to the general public through internet courses and tutorials, and interactive workshops. Agreements were captured in the consultation processes and incorporated as feedback to ENAREDD+.

Self Assessment. In general, in the self assessment process, the rating for the entire consultation, participation and outreach sub-component was marked as yellow, indicating progress but still needing further improvement. In Chiapas the rating was lower (orange), indicating a much higher need for progress, in particular with relation to dissemination and outreach of information and consultation results. From the information available, there still seems to be a lack of knowledge and awareness about REDD+ at the state level. Also, it has been pointed out that most of the consultation has been reduced to the forestry sector. Participants pointed out that the REDD+ information has stressed the potential benefits, but has left out the associated risks (although the SESA process produced a risk management matrix). Most participants requested better feedback on their participation and on the consultation results.

TAP Review. As indicated in the previous section of the report, public consultation seems to be a strong, if not the strongest, feature of the Mexican REDD+ Readiness process. All interest groups have been involved, and particular emphasis has been placed on those stakeholders representing minorities such as indigenous peoples, farmers, women, and youngsters. The self assessment process has been done in accordance to guidelines. Nonetheless, the TAP recommendation is to further strengthen the feedback part of the consultation process. It will help gain additional support and participation, if the comments and suggestions could be better registered, and if the effects on the specific ENAREDD+ adjustments could be traced back.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

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

Legal Framework and Governance (criteria 11, 14, 15). In Mexico there are many studies related to the relationship between forest use, forest property, and land use change drivers. The most important include an assessment on the legal gaps for implementing REDD+ in Mexico, which indicates the right of the Government to promote the common good, including the environmental services, and the quality of life. Another key document is the Legal Framework for REDD+ and Proposed Reforms, which would ease REDD+ implementation in the country. A key reform would guarantee the legal right for landowners to enjoy the benefits from forest conservation. Benefit distribution was also discussed and a tool for options assessment was developed under cooperation between PROFOR and CONAFOR; and in a dialogue organized by The Forest Dialogue and UICN in Yucatan. Forest governance and cost benefits have been also studied.

Land use change drivers and REDD+ (criteria 12-13). Specific regional studies on land use change drivers and REDD+ were developed for Jalisco, Chihuahua, Chiapas, and Yucatán. Also, there is a comprehensive study on the state of the art in monitoring deforestation and forest degradation in Mexico covering the past 20 years, combining remote sensing (mostly optical satellite imagery) and field verification work. Studies on carbon stocks and on wall-to-wall MRV for Mexico using Landsat are also available.

Self Assessment. The rating from the Self-Assessment process for this sub-component is mostly yellow, acknowledging progress, but stressing the need for further development, in particular with relation to land tenure and land use, and to the analytical process on land use change. The land use and land tenure relationship is perceived as a challenge for the successful implementation of ENAREDD+. Basically, the consulted stakeholders claim that it is not clear how the results from the studies have been taken into account. Also, participants claim that this information should be better socialized. There seems to be a lack of clarity about land use change drivers. Concerns about underlying causes such as unemployment have also been manifested. in addition, there is need for more dissemination on the legal analyses, and on the subsequent required steps to fill gaps.

TAP review. The self assessment process adequately follows the procedures recommended by FCPF. However, the Assessment Guidelines point to the need to have additional, clearer information on land tenure and its effect on ENAREDD+ implementation. The TAP review has found from the Self Assessment results that land tenure and the relationship with land use change drivers need further development. Also, CONAFOR should provide more feedback on the deforestation drivers and land tenure suggestions and concerns, to address the comments reported in the Self Assessment.

Sub-component 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options (criteria 16-18)

As per the 5 optional types of REDD+ strategies, Mexico has expressed interest in promoting the achievement of all main goals: (i) reducing to zero the carbon loss of baseline forests; (ii) significantly decreasing the forest degradation rate; (iii) increasing the forest coverage area, through sustainable management, assisted natural regeneration, and forest conservation; (iv) protecting and conserving biodiversity as a way to enhance environmental services; and (v) enhancing the social capital development (productive capacity and better social dynamics of the communities), and economic growth of rural communities. ENAREDD+ is the vehicle for capturing Mexico´s priorities, with regards to the institutional and legal framework; organizational arrangements; financing policies; levels or reference construction; MRV development and implementation; participation, communication and transparency; and social and environmental safeguard setting and application.

Self Assessment. The rating in the self assessment process varies from State to State and to the national process, mostly ranging between yellow and orange, as some progress is acknowledged in particular with reference to the ENAREDD+ development. In Chiapas there is a real concern (red), on the analysis of REDD+ implementation implications. And in general there is concern about the consequences of REDD+ on the on-going sectorial policies (in particular there is a lack of clarity about social, economic, costs and benefits, and environmental feasibility). Also the participants wonder about the role of the different institutions when implementing ENAREDD+.

TAP Review. The Self Assessment process was clear and helped raise a key issue, such as the REDD+ implementation risks for the local communities, even more so when REDD+ activities may be perceived as going against the traditional agriculture and livestock activities. More work on the identification and management of risks is recommended, especially at the State level.

Sub-component 2c: Implementation Framework (criteria 19-22)

Mexico has produced an analysis on the model of intervention for early REDD+ initiatives (in the States of Jalisco, Chiapas, Campeche, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo), in which it relates the discrepancies in the sector approaches (agriculture and cattle ranching, and environment), as one of the main challenges for effective REDD+ implementation. Besides illegal logging the land use change to pastures and agriculture are the main drivers. Only promoting a sustainable agriculture and pasture management, agroforestry, and better productivity of already degraded lands, there can be incentives for deterring deforestation and forest degradation. REDD+ implementation has started as pilot experiences for testing a model of intervention focused to (i) addressing local needs on forests and climate change; (ii) promoting a model of land governance promoting the participation of different stakeholders in land use planning and sustainable development; (iii) strengthening of coordination of sectors to ensure consistency; and (iv) articulating sectorial policies and programs.

Self Assessment. This sub-component is mostly rated Orange (lacks progress), and Chiapas has rated Red (no progress) the distribution of benefits, which the other have rated Orange. Other area of special concern is the intervention of ENAREDD+ with relation to the early REDD+ activities or implementation; the participants, especially the indigenous and farmers, demanded more precise definitions regarding carbon rights, benefit distribution, and claims and grievance redress mechanisms. It is proposed that the model of intervention gets better dissemination, that the benefit sharing mechanism is developed, and that financing mechanisms are promoted to incentivize sustainable development activities. Although there is awareness about a REDD+ national registry in the making, participants demand further dissemination and information about it.

TAP Review. Carbon rights and benefit sharing is perhaps one of the most complex type of issues to be dealt with in any country engaging in developing REDD+ strategies. Land tenure is traditionally accepted under Mexican law with relation to ejidos or community lands, and carbon rights seem to belong to the Government, as they arise from a regulation; nonetheless benefits are to be distributed taking into account the land title holders and the positive actions and efforts on emission reductions. Since these are crucial elements for the ER phase, it seems that further dissemination about the steps followed by the government, and how traditional land ownership relate to the rights and benefits, would help strengthen awareness, and readiness.

Sub-component 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts (criteria 23-25)

The SESA process in Mexico has been used to help shape the development of ENAREDD+. It has involved numerous workshops, meetings, and studies engaging participants from all stakeholder groups. The process started in May 2011 with a national SESA Workshop where the main elements for ensuring benefits and minimizing risks were identified for further discussions and developments. Also SESA Follow-up Group was formed. The main SESA elements are (i) the identification of risks related to REDD+ implementation in Mexico; (ii) the stakeholders mapping update; (iii) the national consultation process on REDD+; (iv) the analysis of risks related to ENAREDD+ implementation. A specific panel on the National Safeguards System, and National Safeguard Information System was conducted as part of SESA. Also, ENAREDD+ includes a plan of action for developing and implementing an Environmental and Social Management Framework.

Self Assessment. This sub-component is rated yellow (progress but needs further development) with regards to the environmental and social safeguards and REDD+ and regarding the social and environmental analysis. However, it turns to yellow and even red (Chiapas), when consulted about the Environmental and Social Management Framework. Participants ask for better dissemination of studies and workshops, and for concluding the ESMF.

TAP Review. In spite of the massive amount of consultation rounds and vehicles deployed by the Mexican government, there is still the perception that further socialization and

dissemination is needed especially at the decentralized state or municipal level. The TAP recommendation here is to further disseminate how stakeholders' comments have been considered. One of the most important guiding principles in the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework is the evidence of completeness about processes. Although the dynamic nature of REDD+ is recognized, it is also important to strike a balance between process and products, in particular regarding elements such as ESMF. The TAP recommendation is to continue developing the Safeguard National System, and to keep reporting back to stakeholders so that progress is better perceived.

Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels (criteria 26-28)

Mexico has developed a publicly available Reference Emissions Level based on deforestation, according to the IPCC and UNFCCC guidelines[3]. The Reference Emissions Level Report was presented to the UNFCCC on December 2014, and technically evaluated in 2015. The Reference Forest Emissions Level was finally approved on November 2015. The sources of information were (i) the maps on land use and vegetation land cover from the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI); (ii) CONAFOR´s national forests and soils inventory and CONAFOR statistics on forest fire events (ha); and (iii) the National Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (INEGEI), as per the Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC.

Self Assessment. When asked, participants on the Self Assessment rated progress from Orange to Green, perceiving better progress on the use of historical data and on the congruence with IPCC and UNFCCC. A main concern was the lack of degradation data in the analysis, process which the Government of Mexico has already started. Also, there is awareness of the MAD-MEX platform for semi-automatic wall-to-wall monitoring of deforestation using Landsat, which is being developed. Participants were insisting on improving the resolution with this new system. Also, participants require better information dissemination.

TAP Review. As with most of the R-Readiness Components and Sub-components, participants seem to recognize and acknowledge progress. However further outreach is in demand, especially when coming to the main source of information, the reference and project emissions levels. More precision, and the incorporation of degradation is being worked, and probably will ever continue to be enhanced. Therefore, easy access from stakeholders to the data, and processed information is key to keep ownership. In many cases, as indicated in the workshops, locals can have an important contribution to the field data calibration.

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards

Sub-component 4a: National Forest Monitoring System (criteria 29-31)

---

[3] Done with financial and technical support from the Government of Norway, from UNDP, and from FAO.

Mexico has built a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), which started operating in July 2015. The system, built with collaboration from CONAFOR, CONABIO, INECC, and INEGI, combines field data from the national forest inventories with remote sensing, and allows the estimation of forest areas, related biomass, land use changes, and related GHG emissions. NFMS provides inputs for the National GHG Inventories and official reports to UNFCCC. The National Forest and Soil Inventories are updated every 5 years since 2004. In 2014, Mexico started the updating of the Emission Factors, taking into account soil samplings to better determine soil carbon, and considering disturbance factors such as forest fires and logging activities. In 2016, it is expected that the MAD-MEX platform is finalized and operational.

Self Assessment. The rating under the Self Assessment is mostly yellow, with some Green ratings from Jalisco and Chiapas regarding the approach for monitoring. The progress regarding the NFMS is well recognized, although participants request better dissemination, and the possibility for feedback from stakeholders. Also, state participants suggest that state level data could help enhance the information quality. There is fear that the system does not last due to costs and lack of local technical capacity.

TAP Review. Similar to the Reference Emissions Level process, monitoring is perceived as a progressing and constantly enhancing capacity; something which can be understood when reviewing the underpinning documents, and the specific stakeholder comments during the Self Assessment. Not only dissemination is needed in this case, but also, a more active participation which could be built when establishing mechanism for capturing local feedback.

Sub-component 4b: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance and Safeguards (criteria 32-34)

Mexico is developing a Safeguard National System (SNS); and a corresponding Safeguard Monitoring System (SIS in Spanish), designed to track 7 REDD+ environmental and social safeguards identified and agreed during COP-16. The safeguard objectives are to minimize risks from REDD+ implementation, promote a better benefit sharing, better participation, and to protect biodiversity. SNS will require legal adjustments and the appointment of relevant institutions to ensure implementation and compliance, including a CGRM. An assessment of the relevant legal framework for the projected SNS was conducted in 2013. UN-REDD is supporting SIS and SNS development through the sponsoring of inter institutional dialogues on REDD+ Safeguards.

Self Assessment. The Self Assessment rating is mostly Yellow (Progress but need of further development), with the exception of Chiapas, which has rated Red the Participation and Transparency, and Orange (Lack of Progress) the identification of REDD+ environmental and social issues and co-benefits. Participants claim that co-benefits have not been identified or quantified, and that their implication in ENAREDD+ implementation is not clear. Progress with respect to the safeguards systems is acknowledged but participants would like to see more dissemination and better participation opportunities for local communities. More capacity building for local communities is claimed.

TAP Review. More socialization with the forestry communities should be sought. Also as pointed out by the participants, more work on co-benefits, including social and environmental, could help gain further support and ownership, and enhance participation. The perception of the TAP reviewer is that this information has been probably shared, and even built with stakeholders, but somehow, in the Self Assessment, it was presented as something to improve. In reading the comments, it seems that the opportunity cost of not changing land use may collide with the legal obligation to protect forests. And the economic and environmental co-benefits could still be better internalized by forest communities to help better align with the REDD+ objectives.

5. Summary assessment and recommendations

Overall R-Readiness Progress

Based on the documents consulted, and interactions with CONAFOR, the TAP Reviewer considers that the Self-Assessment Report, together with the R-Package information confirms that Mexico´s progress on REDD+ readiness is solid to move to the next ER phase. Mexico started its REDD+ strategy building process in 2009, and has progressively strengthened the participation of different stakeholders at all levels. Progress has also been achieved at the technical level, as better technologies are being adopted for forests and carbon monitoring, and as degradation monitoring is also to be included in the national monitoring system.

Self Assessment Process

As indicated above, the Self Assessment process in Mexico has been done in agreement with FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, it has incorporated the participation of all stakeholders´ representation, and has even made participatory consultations possible at the National, Regional, and State Levels. Further, it has stressed the participation of farmers and indigenous peoples (In addition to the other groups long incorporated in the consultation processes).

Mexico´s vision has been clear from the beginning, and its ENAREDD+ has long been focused to the majority of forest tenants, which are the communities that hold social land rights. The early initiatives have consistently focused on the States in Mexico where ejidos and communities account for most of the forest direct stakeholders. Therefore, the consultation processes including the self-assessment has rightly targeted the most relevant stakeholders.

The information and document preparation for the Self Assessment events were strong, considering the on-going participatory process of REDD+ in Mexico. The documentation for the event integrated all R-Package elements and links to complementary and underpinning information was made available. Moreover, the process itself was aimed at ensuring all participants were on the same page as per the REDD+ progress status. Results were summarized and incorporated into the R-Package document.

Overall Assessment and Recommendations

The self assessment ratings show a good level of acknowledgement of Mexico´s progress in REDD+ readiness, as indicated by the majority of Yellow scores. Mexico has placed important efforts to disseminate at the central and local level the progress on ENAREDD+, and on allowing public participation to take place to ensure ENAREDD+ is a real participatory process. However, in the Self Assessment working groups there was the request for further dissemination and knowledge sharing, and especially for finding out how the different comments and suggestions have been taken into consideration in producing the different R-Package elements.

Local implementation of REDD+ seems to be a commonly accepted goal, which requires further capacity building and dissemination of information. Additional funding under the ER phase should place more emphasis on involving local communities at the State level, especially if in need of promoting sustainable agriculture. Identification of co-benefits, and further work on the risks and economic feasibility of REDD+ activities at the local level will be important to incentivize forest conservation and restoration in certain areas.

Finally, it seems the legal and institutional process still represents a challenge that should be addressed as the first steps of the ER phase, in particular the gaps regarding carbon rights and benefits distribution. Other area to quickly address during the next phase is the creation of the National Safeguard System and associated monitoring, and the dissemination of co-benefits.

6. References

Mexican Vision on REDD+
http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/2521Visi%C3%B3n%20de%20M%C3%A9xico%20para%20REDD_.pdf

Complaints and Grievance Redress Mechanism
http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/5113Mecanismos%20de%20Atenci%C3%B3n%20Ciudadana.pdf

Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment (SESA) Draft Report. CONAFOR

National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+). CONAFOR

Reference Emissions Level. CONAFOR

Legal Gaps
http://www.alianza-mredd.org/uploads/ckfinder_files/files/1_1_2_1%20Diagnostico%20Normativa%20aplicable%20REDD%2B%20(ANEXOS)%20CEJA(4).pdf

REDD+ Legal Framework and Proposed Reforms
http://www.alianza-mredd.org/uploads/ckfinder_files/files/Marco%20Legal%20de%20REDD%2B%20en%20M%C3%A9xico%20y%20Reformas%20Propuestas.pdf

Early REDD+ Initiatives Intervention Model
http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/6258Modelo%20de%20intervenci%C3%B3n%20REDD_.pdf

Report on ESMF panel under SESA
http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/6353Relator%C3%ADa%20del%20Panel%20sobre%20la%20construcci%C3%B3n%20del%20SNS%20y%20SIS%20en%20M%C3%A9xico.pdf

Modified Reference Emissions Level
http://redd.unfccc.int/files/frel_mexico_modified.pdf

National Forest Information System
http://www.cnf.gob.mx:8090/snif/portal/infys/temas/documentos-metodologicos

Assessment of applicable legal framework for safeguards in Mexico

http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/6355An%C3%A1lisis%20del%20Marco%20Legal%20Relevante%20y%20Aplicable%20a%20M%C3%A9xico%20en%20Relaci%C3%B3n%20a%20las%20Salvaguardas.pdf

Sistematización y análisis de trabajos relacionados con el estudio de la deforestación y degradación forestal en México, en los últimos 20 años, a través de métodos y técnicas de percepción remota y verificación en campo. José Manuel Canto Vergara y María Luisa Cuevas Fernández