

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Mechanism Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) External Review Template

(interim, December 13, 2012, from Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 6)

Guidelines for Reviewers:

- 1) *FCPF REDD Country Participant R-PPs will be reviewed and assessed by the FCPF Participants Committee, the FCPF's governing body, taking TAP comments into account. External (Technical Advisory Panel or other) and Bank reviewers may provide recommendations on how a draft R-PP could be enhanced, using this template on a pilot basis until a process is approved by the PC.*
- 2) *One set of criteria should be used for review: specific standards each of the current 6 components of an R-PP should be met.*
- 3) *Your comments will be merged with other reviewer comments (without individual attribution) into a synthesis document that will be made public, in general, so bear this in mind when commenting.*
- 4) *Please provide thoughtful, fair assessment of the draft R-PP, in the form of actionable recommendations for the potential enhancement of the R-PP by the submitting country. A REDD Country Participant would be allowed three submissions of an R-PP to the PC for consideration.*

Objectives of a Readiness Preparation Proposal (condensed directly from Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 3)

The purpose of the R-PP is to build and elaborate on the previous Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) or a country's relevant comparable work, to assist a country in laying out and organizing the steps needed to achieve 'Readiness' to undertake activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), in the specific country context. The R-PP provides a framework for a country to set a clear roadmap, budget, and schedule to achieve REDD Readiness. The FCPF does not expect that the activities identified in the R-PP and its Terms of Reference (ToR) would actually occur at the R-PP stage, although countries may decide to begin pilot activities for which they have capacity and stakeholder support. Instead, the R-PP consists of a summary of the current policy and governance context, what study and other preparatory activities would occur under each major R-PP component, how they would be undertaken in the R-PP execution phase, and then a ToR or work plan for each component. The activities would generally be performed in the next, R-PP execution phase, not as part of the R-PP formulation process.

Review of R-PP of Belize

Reviewer: Tomas Schlichter and seven anonymous reviewers

Date of review : June 9, 2014

Standards to be Met by R-PP Components

(From Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 6:)

Overview and TAP general comments:

Belize submitted a new version of its R-PP on June 2014. Most of the recommendations made by the TAP on May 2014 were considered and it is evident the great effort invested in improving the previous version of the document which resulted in improvements in many of the components.

As a result, 7 components (1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 4b, 5 and 6) met the standards while 3 and 4a largely met them.

Strengths:

- The R-PP presents in a fully transparent way the need to improve forest governance.
- The proposal mentions the establishment of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), the creation of the R+CU (REDD-Plus Coordination Unit), and the formation of the Technical Expert Group.
- The description of the consultation framework for engagement with the Indigenous People is well articulated and if executed in this way, it may facilitate paving the road for a REDD-Plus process.
- The proposal provides key information on trends in forest cover and land use change, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and laws and policies.
- The information system of multiple benefits, other impacts, governance and safeguards is well presented.

Key issues:

- The document incorporated only partially plans to improve law enforcement related to illegal logging and uncontrolled land clearing.

Key Recommendations :

- It is essential that steps forward are described of how to improve forestry law enforcement in the country.

The table below shows whether each component meets the R-PP standards

Components	TAP PC 16 Formal R-PP Assessment December 2013	TAP PC 17 R-PP Assessment July 2014
1a. National Readiness Management Arrangements	Largely Met	Met
1b. Information Sharing and Stakeholder Dialogue	Largely Met	Met
1c. Consultation and Participation Process	Largely Met	Met
2a. Land Use, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	Met	Met
2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	Met	Met
2c. Implementation Framework	Largely Met	Met
2d. Social & Environmental Impacts during Preparation and Implementation	Met	Met
3. Reference Level	Largely Met	Largely Met
4a. Monitoring – Emissions and Removals	Largely Met	Largely Met
4b. Other Multiple Benefits, Impacts and Governance	Partially Met	Met
5. Schedule and Budget	Met	Met
6. Program Monitoring & Evaluation Framework	Met	Met

Component 1. Organize and Consult

Standard 1a: National Readiness Management Arrangements:

The cross-cutting nature of the design and workings of the national readiness management arrangements on REDD, in terms of including relevant stakeholders and key government agencies beyond the forestry department, commitment of other sectors in planning and implementation of REDD readiness. Capacity building activities are included in the work plan for each component where significant external technical

expertise has been used in the R-PP development process, and mechanisms for addressing grievances regarding consultation and participation in the REDD-plus process, and for conflict resolution and redress of grievances.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

Following the March 2012 General Elections, changes to Ministerial portfolios created a realignment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture (MNRA) and the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD) was created. With these changes, the departments of Agriculture and Lands and Surveys were placed under the MNRA; and the Forest Department, the Environment Department, and the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) were placed under the MFFSD. Previously, with the exception of the Department of Agriculture, all these departments and the NCCO had been under one Ministry.

A National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), chaired by the MFFSD, is now established with a cross-section of members from all related government ministries and agencies, private sector, civil society and academia. The NCCC also benefits from direct participation of the Office of the Prime Minister and is able to advise the government through the Cabinet.

Figure 1 presents the institutional arrangement for REDD-plus in Belize. The structure of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) is very well presented in Table 1, and its functions are described along the text. Also functions of the two sub- committees dealing with Mitigation and Vulnerability are well described.

It would be also very important to include in the NCCC representatives of the Indigenous Peoples (not only the Toledo Alcaldes Association, but also representatives of the Yucatec and Garifunas), and rural communities. In the last version of the document, presented on June 9, 2014, the government addresses this issue, proposing support for Indigenous Peoples to help them to select their representation in the NCCC. Despite this intention, the document states that the cabinet is the only one that can decide about the membership of the NCCC.

A REDD+ Coordination Unit (R+CU) has been created within the Forest Department.

A Readiness Activities Steering Committee (RASC) is proposed in order to provide direct oversight and support to the R+CU and engage cross sectorial stakeholders in the project. The RASC will include senior personnel from the relevant ministries, private sector, civil society, local communities and indigenous peoples. There will also be representation of women's organization on the RASC.

The seat in the RASC has been made available to the Toledo Alcaldes Association, representing IPs, and given their current land rights claim, until a functioning representative body can be established. Support will be provided to the indigenous peoples organizations as part of the readiness activities so they are able to establish a collective entity that represents them.

A Technical Expert Group (TEG) will also be created under the Mitigation Sub-committee of the NCCC with official membership appointments formalized by the MFFSD. The TEG will provide technical advice to the Forest Department.

The proposed structure includes the Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and all relevant Ministries, and includes links to the national development strategy discussion, and suggests a way to integrate REDD-plus into this discussion.

A description of a feedback and grievance mechanism is presented with the details to be discussed and agreed during the preparation process.

Capacity building workshops are budgeted for the NCCC.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Standard 1b: Information Sharing and Early Dialogue with Key Stakeholder Groups:

The R-PP presents evidence of the government having undertaken an exercise to identify key stakeholders for REDD-plus, and commenced a credible national-scale information sharing and awareness raising campaign for key relevant stakeholders. The campaign's major objective is to establish an early dialogue on the REDD-plus concept and R-PP development process that sets the stage for the later consultation process during the implementation of the R-PP work plan. This effort needs to reach out, to the extent feasible at this stage, to networks and representatives of forest-dependent indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers and forest dependent communities, both at national and local level. The R-PP contains evidence that a reasonably broad range of key stakeholders has been identified, voices of vulnerable groups are beginning to be heard, and that a reasonable amount of time and effort has been invested to raise general awareness of the basic concepts and process of REDD-plus including the SESA.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The R-PP indicates that the design and implementation of REDD-plus will take advantage of the experiences of Belize in terms of community involvement in relation to protected areas management and forest management.

An initial map of actors was developed that considers the socio-economic functionality of forests. The key stakeholders for the REDD-plus are identified according to six categories and a brief description of each is presented.

The initial consultation led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) occurred from August to September 2013 and as a result, a total of 239 individuals were invited, representing 71 organizations/GOB departments. Also 91 villages were involved in consultation activities, and a total of 6 workshops were held to disseminate the RPP and to allow stakeholders to provide inputs.

The preliminary consultations included a set of workshops for indigenous community leaders (Toledo Alcaldes Association) in the Toledo District, and one focus group session with indigenous women and youth mainly from the Toledo Maya Women's Council and the Maya Youth Coalition. The first Technical Consultation involved 31 organizations with 44 participants including government agencies, protected areas co-managers and NGO's and various representatives from the private sector. Key issues and concerns were raised from the consultation and additional recommendations to strengthen future consultations are presented.

The initial consultation that took place fulfilled the requirements at this stage. Among the elements that will require more discussion is the issue of land tenure and land rights for IP which represent the main concern of IP in Belize. This issue needs to be fully addressed by allowing the participation of Maya Communities in the southern part of Belize so the REDD-plus process can be implemented successfully in the country.

The TAP review recommended in November 2013 that early dialogue and consultation should include all aspects related to land tenure and IP. This issue was considered in the present version of the R-PP.

Likewise as recommended previously, minutes of meetings are now included in the document.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Standard 1c: Consultation and Participation Process

Ownership, transparency, and dissemination of the R-PP by the government and relevant stakeholders, and inclusiveness of effective and informed consultation and participation by relevant stakeholders, will be assessed by whether proposals and/ or documentation on the following are included in the R-PP (i) the consultation and participation process for R-PP development thus far³ (ii) the extent of ownership within government and national stakeholder community; (iii) the Consultation and Participation Plan for the R-PP implementation phase (iv) concerns expressed and recommendations of relevant stakeholders, and a process for their consideration, and/or expressions of their support for the R-PP.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The RPP presents the objectives, design and main elements of a consultation plan and process. It also includes the consultation for Feedback and Grievance Redressal Mechanism (FGRM). Among the consultation elements is key to include the IP land rights discussion for a REDD-plus mechanism in Belize.

The document should include information clarifying the list of stakeholders that have been contacted up to now, and a plan to initiate contacts with the rest of them.

It's very important to understand that the REDD-plus process may be a very adequate mechanism to continue and intensify the dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, considering the issues related to land tenure and other relevant rights of IP.

Following the last TAP Review, the document presented on June 9, 2014 includes among the elements to be discussed Indigenous Peoples land tenure rights, and other rights. An Indigenous Peoples REDD+ roundtable will be established in order to share information and facilitate the consultation process with special attention to land tenure rights and other important issues.

The budget reflects activities related to the functioning of the Indigenous Peoples REDD+ Roundtable.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Component 2. Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy

Standard 2a: Assessment of Land Use, Land Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy, and

³ Did the R-PP development, in particular the development of the ToR for the strategic environmental and social assessment and the Consultation and Participation Plan, include civil society, including forest dwellers and Indigenous Peoples representation? In this context the representative(s) will be determined in one of the following ways: (i) self-determined representative(s) meeting the following requirements: (a) selected through a participatory, consultative process; (b) having national coverage or networks; (c) previous experience working with the Government and UN system; (d) demonstrated experience serving as a representative, receiving input from, consulting with, and providing feedback to, a wide scope of civil society including Indigenous Peoples organizations; or (ii) Individual(s) recognized as legitimate representative(s) of a national network of civil society and/or Indigenous Peoples organizations (e.g., the GEF Small Grants National Steering Committee or National Forest Program Steering Committee).

Governance:

A completed assessment is presented that: identifies major land use trends; assesses direct and indirect deforestation and degradation drivers in the most relevant sectors in the context of REDD-plus; recognizes major land tenure and natural resource rights and relevant governance issues; documents past successes and failures in implementing policies or measures for addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; identifies significant gaps, challenges, and opportunities to address REDD; and sets the stage for development of the country's REDD strategy to directly address key land use change drivers.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The RPP assesses clearly the major land use trends and the sources of information and presents an interesting overview of the country's situation in relation to the forest sector. It also identifies the main drivers of deforestation of the most relevant sectors, including some current government policies as drivers.

It recognizes the major land tenure and natural resources rights issues and mentions the governance precedents such as the Finance and Audit Act 4, (Petroleum Act 3 and The PACT).

This component provides very useful and detailed information on trends in forest cover and land use change, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and laws and policies. It provides measures for addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

At present there is no legislation that recognizes communal forms of land ownership such as indigenous owned lands. The inclusion of the recent case of Sarstoon-Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIM) v. AG Belize, which affirms the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as a legal requirement prior to any government action affecting Belize's indigenous peoples' rights is welcome and important.

Following suggestions of the last TAP Review, the document submitted on June 9, 2014 presents the different forest types reflecting the heterogeneity of these ecosystems in Belize. Lowland broadleaf moist forests cover more than 33% of the country's surface. These ecosystems as well as the Lowland Broadleaf Wet Forests are undergoing conversion to agriculture. The document recognizes also that different strategies are needed to address deforestation and forest degradation depending on the forest types.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Standard 2.b: REDD-plus strategy Options:

The R-PP should include: an alignment of the proposed REDD-plus strategy with the identified drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and with existing national and sectoral strategies, and a summary of the emerging REDD-plus strategy to the extent known presently, and of proposed analytic work (and, optionally, ToR) for assessment of the various REDD-plus strategy options. This summary should state: how the country proposes to address deforestation and degradation drivers in the design of its REDD-plus strategy; a plan of how to estimate cost and benefits of the emerging REDD-plus strategy, including benefits in terms of rural livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and other developmental aspects; socioeconomic, political and institutional feasibility of the emerging REDD-plus strategy; consideration of environmental and social issues; major potential synergies or inconsistencies of country sector strategies in the forest, agriculture, transport, or other sectors with the envisioned REDD-plus strategy; and a plan of how to assess the risk of domestic leakage of greenhouse benefits. The assessments included in the R-PP eventually should result in an elaboration of a fuller, more complete and adequately vetted REDD-plus strategy over time.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The component describes the background policies that influence land use and resource management in the country and its influence in a future REDD-plus context.

Policy interventions and incentives are presented for the five established deforestation and forest degradation drivers: agriculture, infrastructure expansion, unsustainable and illegal logging, hurricanes, pests and wildfires. In addition strategic intervention, intervention costs, intervention benefits and level of implementation are discussed by driver. A brief description on a plan for assessing the risks of domestic leakage of greenhouse gas emissions is presented. -

The document in its new version of June 9, 2014 reflects the need to implement an effective land use planning system, to allow the coexistence of agricultural production with conservation of natural ecosystems. Also, steps towards a better management of Key Biodiversity Areas, funded by a GEF project are presented with detail. Despite these improvements, additional details on how the government is planning to improve law enforcement in areas such as illegal logging and uncontrolled land clearing and conversion should be included.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Standard 2.c: REDD-plus implementation framework:

Describes activities (and optionally provides ToR in an annex) and a work plan to further elaborate institutional arrangements and issues relevant to REDD-plus in the country setting. Identifies key issues involved in REDD-plus implementation, and explores potential arrangements to address them; offers a work plan that seems likely to allow their full evaluation and adequate incorporation into the eventual Readiness Package. Key issues are likely to include: assessing land ownership and carbon rights for potential REDD-plus strategy activities and lands; addressing key governance concerns related to REDD-plus; and institutional arrangements needed to engage in and track REDD-plus activities and transactions.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The component describes the key institutions and their role in the implementation framework, and identifies and discusses the main issues. Among the elements presented for discussion are the land tenure and carbon rights. In this context the carbon rights undoubtedly tie in closely with current land tenure systems and will inevitably need to take customary and traditional land use and rights issues into consideration. Both the Government of Belize and the Toledo Alcaldes Association have appealed the decision of the Appeals Court to the Caribbean Court of Justice, the last available option. No matter what the outcome of this final appeal process is, strengthening land and resource management, which also involves improving governance systems, will help resolve the customary land rights issue in Toledo. Failure to do so will restrict the level of success in achieving sustainable forest management, REDD-plus objectives and true sustainable development.

Following the suggestions of the last TAP Review, the document presents in Table 14 a work plan including: Critical Issues, Response, Expected Results, Involved partners and a timeframe.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Standard 2.d: Social and Environmental Impacts during Readiness Preparation and REDD-plus Implementation:

The proposal includes a program of work for due diligence in the form of an assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts as part of the SESA process. It also provides a description of safeguard issues that are relevant to the country's readiness preparation efforts. For FCPF countries, a simple work plan is presented for conducting the SESA process, cross referencing other components of the R-PP as appropriate, , and for preparing the ESMF.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The component is very well presented and clearly lays out the steps that will be taken during R-PP implementation to undertake the SESA process and prepare the ESMF, and which body will have the oversight role – in this case the R+CU.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Component 3. Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level**Standard 3: National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level**

Present work plan for how the reference level for deforestation, forest degradation (if desired), conservation, sustainable management of forest, and enhancement of carbon stocks will be developed. Include early ideas on a process for determining which approach and methods to use (e.g., forest cover change and GHG emissions based on historical trends, and/or projections into the future of historical trend data; combination of inventory and/or remote sensing, and/or GIS or modeling), major data requirements, and current capacity and capacity requirements. Assess linkages to components 2a (assessment of deforestation drivers), 2b (REDD-plus strategy activities), and 4 (monitoring system design).

(FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a stepwise approach may be useful. This component states what early activities are proposed.)

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

A section on available historical land-use change studies has been added to the document, which indicates that the country has a vast amount of information on land-use change. The proposed methodology for a national reference level will use the projection of the historical trend. The reference period is discussed, but seems too long as no trend has been observed in the period. Furthermore, a chart on steps required to develop a reference level is provided, but the steps are not elaborated in the document.

Overall, it is not entirely clear how the reference level will be calculated. Belize faces a situation where pressure on its forests is increasing and where deforestation may well go up from the current 10,000 hectares per year under a business as usual scenario. If the country will want to adjust its historical deforestation rate, it will have to include a well documented justification for this.

Recommendations:

The same recommendation for the previous version is also valid here:

- Provide a work plan for the reference level for deforestation and forest degradation that include the main driver elements described in component 2a.

Conclusion: Standard Largely Met

Component 4. Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards

Standard 4a: National Forest Monitoring System:

The R-PP provides a proposal and work plan for the initial design, on a stepwise basis, of an integrated monitoring system of measurement, reporting and verification of changes in deforestation and/or forest degradation, and forest enhancement activities. The system design should include early ideas on enhancing country capability (either within an integrated system, or in coordinated activities) to monitor emissions reductions and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, and to assess the impacts of the REDD-plus strategy in the forest sector.

The R-PP should describe major data requirements, capacity requirements, how transparency of the monitoring system and data will be addressed, early ideas on which methods to use, and how the system would engage participatory approaches to monitoring by forest-dependent indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers. It should also address independent monitoring and review, involving civil society and other stakeholders, and how findings would be fed back to improve REDD-plus implementation. The proposal should present early ideas on how the system could evolve into a mature REDD-plus monitoring system with the full set of capabilities.

(FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a staged approach may be useful. The R-PP states what early activities are proposed.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-Plan meets this standard, and recommendations:

This component recommends a three-tiered monitoring program as follows: 1) quantifying forest cover and changes in forest cover, 2) quantifying carbon stocks and emissions, and 3) drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. A work plan for this program, which was developed at a National Validation Workshop for an MRV System in Belize, is outlined in Annex 4 of the R-PP. This is a well-written and well-reasoned analysis.

Most of the recommendations have been adequately addressed. It is suggested to include a section that describes how the impact of the different REDD-plus activities, and its impacts, will be monitored and how this will be used to give feedback to the other components of the REDD-plus strategy, as pointed out in recommendation 1 and 2.

Recommendations:

The same recommendation for the previous version is also valid here:

1. Clarify how the impacts of the REDD-plus strategy will be monitored.
2. Give an outline of how the MRV system will provide feedback to other components during the implementation of the REDD-plus strategy

Conclusion: Standard Largely Met

Standard 4b: Designing an Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards :

The R-PP provides a proposal for the initial design and a workplan, including early ideas on capability (either within an integrated system, or in coordinated activities), for an integrated monitoring system that includes addressing other multiple benefits, impacts, and governance. Such benefits may include, e.g., rural livelihoods, conservation of biodiversity, key governance factors directly pertinent to REDD-plus implementation in the country.

(The FCPF and UN-REDD recognize that key international policy decisions may affect this component, so a staged approach may be useful. The R-PP states what early activities are proposed.)

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-Plan meets this standard, and recommendations:

This section has been substantially improved, attending all recommendations made on the previous version.

It would be appropriate to implement the activities in a sequential way, assigning priorities and thus developing a temporal plan.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Component 5. Schedule and Budget

Standard 5: Completeness of information and resource requirements

The R-PP proposes a full suite of activities to achieve REDD readiness, and identifies capacity building and financial resources needed to accomplish these activities. A budget and schedule for funding and technical support requested from the FCPF and/or UN-REDD, as well as from other international sources (e.g., bilateral assistance), are summarized by year and by potential donor. The information presented reflects the priorities in the R-PP, and is sufficient to meet the costs associated with REDD-plus readiness activities identified in the R-PP. Any gaps in funding, or sources of funding, are clearly noted.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The budget is well presented and includes the Government and other sources of funding in the final summary.

Conclusion: Standard Met

Component 6. Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Standard 6: The R-PP adequately describes the indicators that will be used to monitor program performance of the Readiness process and R-PP activities, and to identify in a timely manner any shortfalls

in performance timing or quality. The R-PP demonstrates that the framework will assist in transparent management of financial and other resources, to meet the activity schedule.

Reviewer's assessment of how well R-PP meets this standard, and recommendations:

The component has incorporated the recommendations provided and now is Met.

Conclusion: Standard Met