

TAP Independent Review of the R-Package Submitted by DRC

Independent TAP-Expert Review on the Self-Assessment Process of the R-Package for of the Democratic Republic of Congo – April 2015¹

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Core Task of the TAP Expert Review

(1) The present document contains the independent TAP-review for the Self-Assessment Process of the R-Package² undertaken by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation process. The purpose of the review is to assess both progress and achievements of REDD+ Readiness in the country, as well as potential remaining gaps moving forward and transitioning from Readiness to implementation of performance-based REDD+ activities.

(2) The TAP-review is a background document for the PC in its decision-making process to endorse the R-Package. The endorsement of the R-Package is a prerequisite for the submission of the DRC ER-PD to the PC. The DRC ER-PD, to be implemented at a jurisdictional level (Mai-Ndombe) aims at establishing a model for a green development program that provides alternatives to deforestation and rewards the efforts that address the challenges of climate change, poverty reduction, protection of natural resources, and biodiversity.

¹ This TAP Expert Review consisted of a desk study and stakeholder discussion with those involved in the DRC readiness for REDD+ process. The Review was done by Jürgen Blaser, Independent TAP Expert; it was undertaken between March 25 and April 6, 2015.

² The purposes of the R-Package are to: (i) Provide an opportunity to REDD Country Participants to self-assess the progress on REDD+ implementation; (ii) Demonstrate a REDD Country Participant's commitment to REDD+ Readiness; and (iii) Generate feedback and guidance to REDD Country Participants through a national multi-stakeholder self-assessment and PC assessment processes.

Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review

(3) This is the first TAP Expert Review of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process of REDD+ in a country using the R-Package. No model exists for such independent review. The TORs prepared for the TAP expert review specify the following:

- Perform an independent review of DRC's progress in Readiness for REDD+; the review is guided by the FCPF Assessment Framework for consistency;
- Review DRC's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process that was used for the self-assessment and the reported outcome;
- Review key outputs and documents that underpin and are referenced in; the R-Package, including documents pertaining to the national REDD strategy and ESMF, reference levels and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures;
- Provide constructive and targeted feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in subcomponents, and propose actions going forward.

(4) To perform this task, a simple methodology has been applied which consists of the following steps:

- Step A: Review (and discussions via telephone) of the self-assessment process of REDD+ Readiness based on the report of the DRC³ and the minutes of consultation meetings in preparation of the R-Package. Box 1 gives an overview of the self-assessment process that has been reviewed by the TAP expert.
- Step B: Review of the results from the multi-stakeholder R-Package self-assessment process. This is based on the report that has been endorsed by a final multi-stakeholder consultation workshop held in Kinshasa on March 12, 2015.
- Step C: Assess what still needs to be done to further develop the Readiness Process.

Box 1: Report Outline of the DRC R-Package Self-Assessment

- 1 Strategic vision of implementing REDD+ in DRC
- 2 Summary of the REDD+ Readiness Process by Component
- 3 Self-Assessment Report of REDD+ Readiness
- 4 Summary of the process of assessing the R-Package
- 5 Workplan on open issues still to be conducted
(Key aspects what DRC needs to address to complete the REDD+ Readiness Process)
- 6 Annexes, including the minutes of the meetings of the various consultation meetings

The TAP expert's role is to assess completeness of the R-Package, including:

- the summary of the readiness preparation process;
- the report of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process;
- the results of the national multi-stakeholder assessment;
- the references provided to documentation pertinent to R-Package.

³ *Auto-Evaluation Participative du Dossier Préparatoire à la REDD+ - République Démocratique du Congo. Rapport final, Coordination Nationale REDD, Mars 2015.*

(5) The purpose of the TAP's expert review is not to second-guess the country's self-assessment (as it is based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process that was guided by the FCPF's readiness assessment framework). The review should rather focus on determining whether a due process and approach was followed while performing the self-assessment, and provide constructive feedback to the FCPF Participants Committee.

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

This part of the TAP report provides feedback on the multistakeholder self-assessment report, including the summary of the multi-stakeholder process and discussions (Chapter 4.1 and 4.2 of the Self-Assessment Report March 2015).

(6) ***Self-Assessment process according to the R-Package guidelines.*** DRC respected the R-Package guideline to a high degree, all necessary elements have been captured and well described in a document that is easily readable and that contains a multitude of hyperlinks informing the reader of all necessary background documents and processes. Thus, the Self-Assessment includes relevant background materials, documents summarizing the Readiness preparation process, the assessment criteria and methodology, and relevant documents of the Readiness preparation process such as the national REDD+ strategy, information on the REL/RL, MRV system, safeguards (including the ESMF and FGRM), and information on all relevant meetings (minutes provided in the annex of the Self-Assessment document). From the documentation reviewed it appears that the important inputs have been made publically available in advance of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment validation process. The process included 10 preparatory meetings (including a final national validation workshop) with the different stakeholders, which were held between February 5 and March 12, 2015 (Table 5 in the Self-Assessment Report). 283 people attended the workshops out of the 391 invited 237 men and 46 women.

→ *Well elaborated and complete Self-Assessment Report of the REDD+ Readiness Process*

(7) ***Facilitated Self-Assessment Process.*** As indicated in the background material and cross-checked through social media, all relevant stakeholders in the DRC have been, early in the process, informed of the assessment methodology, and provided with relevant background material. From the view of the TAP expert, the multi-stakeholder assessment process reached its goals; to agree upon progress indicators (color scores) for all of the subcomponents, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the country's progress related to the 34 assessment criteria, and establish actions (and priorities) for further improvements. This was described in the multi-stakeholder self-assessment report and also discussed in the validation meeting of March 12, 2015 (see minutes in the Annex of the Self-Assessment Report).

→ *Well facilitated self-assessment process on REDD+ Readiness conducted. A sign of a seriously conducted self-assessment process is the fact that in the separate meetings of the various stakeholder groups only minor differences between the groups have been observed (e.g. on scoring the achievements). Also, it needs to be noted that the R-Package is based on consensus reached at the validation workshop including on the scoring of achievements.*

(8) ***Time frame and development of the Readiness Process in DRC.*** REDD+ Readiness started in DRC in January 2009 through a kick-off mission led by the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT), FCPF, UN-REDD and national partners from civil society. An initial

commitment to REDD+ Readiness was made by the multilateral partners (\$0.2M from the FCPF and \$1.8M from the UN-REDD). In March 2010, the UN-REDD Steering Committee and the FCPF Participants Committee approved additional funding for the implementation of the R-PP in the DRC (\$3.4M from the FCPF and \$5.5M from the UN-REDD). Based on a mid-term report and review of progress towards Readiness, additional funding of \$5.2M from FCPF was allocated to the Readiness Process in December 2013. Additional resources that have supported the REDD+ Readiness process have been provided by the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) through program activities supported by the World Bank, the AfDB, and the government of Norway.

→ *The self-assessment process has well described the R-PP Readiness development since 2009. The documentation is complete, transparent and easily accessible.*

(9) **Readiness objective and results to be achieved through the Readiness process.** Preparing DRC for REDD+ is a joint effort of various initiatives and projects. The Readiness Preparation Proposal (RPP) defined the framework of all these initiatives and constitutes the building block for REDD+ Readiness in the country. The objective of the Readiness Process as defined in the WB Grant Agreement for the RPP (FCPF) is to *reinforce DRC's capacities to design a socially and environmentally sound national strategy to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), while developing a national reference scenario of emissions from deforestation and degradation that takes into account national circumstances.* Three results have been formulated to achieve the objective:

- a. A National REDD+ Strategy (including the legal framework) is prepared and validated by national stakeholders;
- b. National circumstances affecting the reference scenario are identified and quantified; and
- c. A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) is prepared and validated by national stakeholders.

→ *The self-assessment process using the R-Package has been conducted to comprehensively assess the degree to which DRC has reached both its objectives as well as the three main results formulated to achieve REDD+ Readiness preparation.*

(10) **National ownership for REDD+ Readiness process.** After reviewing documents and minutes from consultation meetings with the multiple actors, which were reviewed for meetings dating back to the beginning of the Readiness process in 2009, it can be concluded that there is generally a good understanding of the REDD+ development at a national level. The REDD+ Readiness process in DRC places a strong emphasis on consultations (several dozens meetings, workshops, seminars, and exchanges have taken place) for the creation of participatory mechanisms in order to ensure multi-stakeholder engagement. To ensure full participation in the Readiness process, national NGOs created the *Groupe de Travail Climat REDD (GTCR)*, a network which includes nearly all NGOs whose work is in the subject area of environment, forests and rural development; both in the capital and in the provinces. The private sector has also been involved in the process, however, they are involved at present to a lesser degree. The CN-REDD maintains continuous contact with private entities interested in developing carbon transactions in the country, with the goal of ensuring that these transactions follow in accord with the rules established via the Readiness process.

→ *The self-assessment process has shown that the development of the REDD+ process is well understood by diverse stakeholder groups at national level. NGOs, through GTCR and other communication tools, are well embedded in the process, though there remains some critical*

voices on the viability of the REDD+ process for DRC overall. Difficulties exist to recruit the private sector for Readiness and investments.

(11) ***Sub-national implementation of REDD+ readiness in a limited geographical scale.*** Due to the size of the country, there is only limited impact of the Readiness processes at the regional level in many parts of the country. The Readiness work is conducted primarily in 5 provinces (Bandundu, Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental, Equateur and Province Orientale). While in accordance with the recommendations from the independent mid-term review, the CN-REDD established eleven "Provincial REDD+ Focal Points" in 2012. As assessed by the World Bank (2013), operating costs have been very high in such a vast country and the Provincial REDD+ Focal Points have not sufficiently benefited from the necessary financial and technical means to achieve results. In some remote provinces where the likelihood of REDD+ activities being successfully implemented is questionable, the risk of generating frustration among rural communities stemming from the lack of expected benefits (including carbon revenues) was obviously observed. Thus, a decision was taken to target only five provinces; "REDD+ Pilot Provinces", which benefited from additional support by the Investment Program supported by Norway, UN-REDD Programme (UNDP), and FIP (both World Bank and AfDB). Information sharing and capacity building will be required in order to reach all relevant provinces in the further process of implementing REDD+ in DRC.

→ *The Self-Assessment process highlights the achievements of the consultation process in important regions of the country, but due to country size and limited resources, the process could only be established on a subnational geographical scale thus far.*

(12) The key elements that still need to be addressed to consolidate the REDD+ Readiness process have been comprehensively summarized in a concise table in the Self-Assessment Report (Chapter 4.2). The table contains the summary of the stakeholder discussions and summarizes, based on the 34 assessment criteria; the strengths and weaknesses of each component and also lists the actions that still need to be undertaken to consolidate the REDD+ readiness process.

→ *The Self-Assessment Report is well prepared, not only listing achievements, but also clearly states the critical issues that have yet not been fully concluded.*

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

This part of the TAP review focuses on the self-assessment results; progress indicators (color scores) for the nine subcomponents, significant achievements and areas requiring further development related to the corresponding 34 assessment criteria, and activities that address identified areas which require further work.

(13) A wide array of documents was made available to assess progress in REDD+ Readiness. Besides the Self-Assessment report that determined the progress for the 34 assessment criteria under the nine subcomponents (including an impressive list of reference hyperlinks), the TAP Expert particularly consulted the mid-term progress report prepared by the DRC in 2012 and the independent evaluation of the R-PP implementation, also conducted in 2012. The purpose of the R-PP implementation evaluation was to determine what had been accomplished prior to 2012, as well as what was still needed to be achieved for the year 2013 and beyond. The Self-Assessment Report of March 2015 gives a concise description where the Readiness process currently resides. Below, comments are offered regarding the Self-Assessment according to R-Package components, and sub-components and criteria.

(14) Out of the 34 assessment criteria, the Self-Assessment process of the REDD+ Readiness indicates that 26 criteria have been fully met (green color score) and eight (8) criteria still need further work (yellow). None of the criteria require essential improvement (orange color scheme), or have not been met (red). The scoring of the various stakeholder groups that consulted amongst themselves is presented in the following table:

Group	Consultation	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE/RED
Civil Society (Société civile)	Feb 5, 2015	28	6	0
REDD+ Implementers (porteurs des projets REDD+)	Feb 6, 2015	30	4	0
Stakeholders Bandundu Province (parties prenantes)	Feb 13, 2015	29	5	0
Technical and financial partners	Feb 16, 2015	24	10	0
MEDD and Sectorial Ministries	Feb 19, 2015	26	8	0
Technical Committee (Suivi et Réforme, CTR)	Feb 20, 2015	27	7	0
CN-REDD	March 10, 2015	25	9	0
National Validation Workshop (all together)	March 12, 2015	26	8	0

The summary results for the Self-Assessment process presented in the table in chapter 4.2 (pages 34-43 of the French version of the Self-Assessment) make an honest account of the strengths and weakness for each assessment criteria element, and proposes a synopsis of what still needs to be done to fully accomplish the REDD+ Readiness process.

The following comments regarding the Self-Assessment for each main component of the R-Package are focused in particular on the elements that have been ranked in the yellow color scheme (need for some additional work for consolidation of REDD+ Readiness).

Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

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

(15) **Institutional arrangements for REDD+ (criteria 1-5, green).** A decree by the Prime Minister (N°09/41) was signed in November 2009 to establish the National REDD+ Institutions in the DRC, comprising of: (i) A national REDD committee, in charge of decisions and orientations, involving all stakeholders, particularly civil society, and representatives from indigenous and local communities; (ii) An inter-ministerial committee, in charge of overall REDD+ planning; and (iii) A national REDD coordination unit (CN-REDD) in charge of coordinating day-to-day activities, and in particular responsible for the implementation of the UN-REDD programme and FCPF activities. In addition, national NGOs have created the *Groupe de Travail Climat REDD (GTCR)*, a network including most NGOs who work in the subject matter regarding environment, forest, and rural development; both in the capital and in the provinces. Based on the documents consulted, the GTCR has played a very active role throughout the process of Readiness, closely interacting with the CN-REDD. The GTCR positioned itself to better voice its views in the course of the REDD+ implementation in DRC. The CN-REDD itself is the engine of the REDD+ process in DRC. Initially staffed with (4) international advisors it has evolved into an office that is largely lead by national technicians. Overall, the group's dynamics have evolved technically and institutionally. This is an important asset to continue the REDD+ development process in DRC. Nonetheless, the high-level National REDD+ Institutions in the country created by the Prime Minister Degree (N°09/41) have not been functional throughout the Readiness process. Thus, a revision process of this degree is still under way (expected to conclude in June 2015), creating a REDD+ committee (*comité de pilotage du processus REDD+* under the Ministry of Environment) and defining the modalities between the committee and the National REDD+ Fund supervised by the Ministry of Finance.

Based on the experience made in the Readiness phase, DRC has finally opted to work through a sub-national approach and to primarily focus on five provinces to promote REDD+ in an initial stage (see §11). The complexe socio-economic and political structure, the diverse ecosystems and the difficult governance situation in the different regions of the country justify such a stepwise approach.

(16) **Feedback and grievance redress mechanism (criteria 6, yellow).** The Self-Assessment process recognizes that up to today, adequate feedback and grievance redress mechanisms at the national, subnational and local levels for REDD+ that operates in a transparent and impartial manner have not been put in place. Additional work also needs to be done on how potentially impacted communities by REDD+ will become aware of and have access to such mechanisms. A study has been commissioned to tackle the issue at national level and an in-depth process has been started for the pilot region of Mai-Ndombe. As indicated in the Self-Assessment report, the process should be resumed in early 2016.

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

(17) **Inclusion of stakeholders through an extended consultation, information and participation process (criteria 7, 8 and 10, green).** The REDD Climate Working Group (GTCR), composed by a variety of diverse non-governmental organisations, has developed into a dynamic and critical group that worked closely with the CN-REDD in the construction of the national REDD strategy. The functioning of such a dialogue platform is an important asset for further development of REDD+ in

the country. However, discrepancies remain on how commercial enterprises, including forest concessions, should be integrated in the further dialogue. Informed consent and Free Prerequisite (CLIP) has been incorporated in the DRC national framework strategy for the REDD+ to be implemented during the investment phase. However, the strategy framework provides no details yet on the necessary measures and practical arrangements for its implementation.

(18) **Information sharing and accessibility of information (criteria 9, yellow)**. The Self-Assessment process recognizes that a national communication plan (*Plan Intégré de communication pour la promotion de la REDD+ en RDC 2013-2017*) has been developed but is yet not fully implemented. There is still need to work on transparent, consistent and timely shared ways of communication by national REDD+ institutions in an appropriate form. Also adequate channels of communication need to be further enhanced to ensure that stakeholders are well informed, especially those that have limited or no access to relevant information. This is a continuous task that CN-REDD should have in its overall mandate over the longer term.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

Sub-Component 2a: Assessment of land use, land use change drivers, forest law, policy and governance (criteria 11-15, green)

(19) **Analysis of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation**. Several quantitative and qualitative studies⁴ have been conducted to assess land use, land use change drivers and forest degradation in DRC by a large variety of different authors. They have developed research on the causal relationship between the economic, legal, policy setting of DRC and associated patterns of land-use change, deforestation and forest degradation. As highlighted in the Self-Assessment process, that when combined, these studies offer a common understanding of the major issues applicable for developing an effective REDD+ strategy.

(20) **Natural resources rights, land tenure, governance and implications for forest laws and policies**. A major milestone in the Readiness process was the development of a framework for the Improvement of Economic Governance⁵. The overall aim of this framework is to increase transparency and efficiency of business in the natural resources management sector in DRC. REDD+ measures and important REDD related reforms are fully included in this governance matrix. Additionally, close coordination has been initiated between the REDD+ Readiness process and the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) of the EU FLEFG (Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Process of the European Union). However, civil society stakeholders observe weak mobilization of financial resources for land tenure reform and land-use planning (*réforme foncière et l'aménagement du territoire*) in the country. The self-assessment process also notes the inexistence of a national forest policy as a weakness that needs to be urgently addressed.

⁴ Including in particular : (i) *Analyse qualitative des causes de la déforestation et de la dégradation des terres forestières dans une RDC post-conflit (PNUE)*; (ii) *Etude qualitative sur les causes de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts en République Démocratique du Congo (ONU-REDD, GTCR)*; and (iii) *Etude qualitative sur les causes de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts en République Démocratique du Congo (UCL)*.

⁵ *Amélioration de la Gouvernance Economique*, see Annex 5 of the Self-Assessment Report which contains the most recent updating of the matrix in January 2015

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

(21) **The REDD+ strategy of DRC involves various sectors of the economy.** As previously stated the various monitoring reports of R-PP implementation over the past few years, the seven pillars of the national REDD+ strategy (Agriculture, Energy, Forests, Governance, Demography, Country Planning, and Land Tenure) require effective coordination and cooperation between different sectors of development and economy. All the associated challenges which may arise from potential competitions among sectors need to be addressed when implementing the agreed REDD+ Strategy. It is thus critically important to embed the REDD+ agenda, and its goals, at the highest political level for suitable arbitrage among the ministries and sectors when REDD+ is implemented. The institutional question of effective intersectoral and cross-sectoral collaboration thus is of crucial importance to implement the proposed REDD+ strategy for the country.

(22) **CN-REDD coordination role for REDD+ strategy options.** The self-assessment process refers to the important role of CN-REDD to coordinate national REDD+ programmes from various donors and institutions, as well as its effort to develop a monitoring/evaluation framework using strategic indicators. Thus, CN-REDD defined a work programme to ensure that REDD+ actions proposed by the various promoters are beneficial, feasible and cost-effective, and that they fit into the context of the country's national development framework.

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

(23) **Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations (criteria 19 and 20, green).** DRC is in a continuous process to define institutional, economic, legal and governance arrangements necessary to implement the proposed REDD+ strategy options. Through a collaboration with GLOBE law makers are constantly informed about REDD+ and its potential for sustainable development. A legislative working group (*Groupe d'Appui Juridique*) was formed and works intensively on the longer term issues relating to land tenure rights, carbon rights, the integration of REDD+ in the forest law, and land-use planning. The adoption of legislation and or regulations related to REDD+ programs still requires more time and effort, but according to the Self-Assessment is progressing well.

(24) **Benefit sharing mechanism (criteria 21, yellow).** An initial study has been undertaken in 2011 and prepared a pathway for the legal orientation for REDD+ benefit sharing. However, national guidelines on benefit sharing have not yet been developed. In the preparation of the ER Programme for Mai-Ndombe, concrete options for benefit sharing will be developed and should be finalized by June 2015 and open for discussion. This particular study will also develop principles for benefit sharing that can be potentially introduced at the national level.

(25) **National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities (criteria 22, yellow).** The process to develop a national REDD+ information registry is still in progress. A ministerial decision (*Arrêté ministerial 4/12, Février 2012*) defines the procedure for registration of REDD+ projects. However, the platform is not yet operational in spite of the fact that a number of technical issues relating to the registry have been well addressed in the Readiness phase and a manual of procedures has been developed (containing information on the location, ownership, carbon accounting and

financial flows for sub-national and national REDD+ projects, public access to REDD+ information). A consulting firm has been contracted and it is expected that the work will resume before end of 2015.

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

(26) **SESA, ESMF and National Environmental and Social Standards.** The SESA process and ESMF (*Cadre de Gestion Environnementale et Sociale*)⁶ aim at creating a sustainable institutional structure that ensures effective management of social and environmental issues beyond the Readiness phase. The SESA process has been comprehensively implemented since early 2012 with broad participation of stakeholders; all necessary documents and processes related to their work have been produced and conducted. The result is an ESMF report and five related frameworks (Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF); Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF); Process Framework; Cultural Heritage Framework; and Pests and Pesticides Framework). Additionally, through an extended participatory process, the National Social and Environmental Standards were developed and refined. The various reports of stakeholders and web consultations recognize the important multi-stakeholder process that led to a successful outcome. Still needed to be finalized are the operational modalities to operationalize the safeguards and standards (planned for August 2015), as well as the integration of these tools in legal and regulation frameworks (expected for end of 2016).

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

(27) **Methodological basis for the establishment of Reference Level developed (yellow).** DRC pursues reference level development in a stepwise and iterative approach. The country entrusted the design and maintenance of the Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) Platform (TERRA CONGO), as well as the development of the national forest reference emissions level (REL) and forest reference level (RL) to the Department of Forest Inventory and Management Planning (DIAF: Direction des Inventaires et des Aménagements Forestiers). Belonging to the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, and Tourism (MECNT); DIAF is financially and technically supported by the UN-REDD Programme (FAO). A generally applicable forest stratification (see *Guide opérationnel des normes de stratification*) has been developed and endorsed and is being tested in one province (Bandundu). It is expected that based on this protocol experience, the national carbon assessment can be advanced rapidly (proposed for December 2015). A refined reference level will be developed at sub-national level for Mai-Ndombe, and is also expected to be finalized by December 2015.

(28) **Use of historical data, adjusted for national circumstances (yellow).** Since 2009, the country has developed its Reference level on a thorough analysis of its forest cover change since 1970 through a variety of approaches. In February 2015 a workshop defined the necessary elements (Feuille de route) needed to present a National Reference Level based on historical data at COP-20 in Paris. In respect to the Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, DRC will follow the UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines as they evolve.

⁶ The ESMF sets out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures to assess potential environmental and social impacts and risks, and contains measures to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset adverse environmental and social impacts and enhance positive impacts and opportunities of said projects, activities, or policies/regulations.

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for forests, and safeguards

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

(29) **Monitoring approach.** The national forest monitoring system (Système national de Surveillance de Forêt, SNSF) is based on the platform INPE (National Institute of Space Research Brazil) and renamed as TerraCongo. It is aimed to generate information that allows comparison of change in forest area and carbon content (and associated greenhouse GHG-emissions) relative to the baseline estimates used for the REL/RL. It is grounded on a (i) satellite surveillance system, (ii) the national forest inventory and (iii) the GHG inventory. An action plan has been developed to operationalize the MRV system over three years (2015-18). Several ways to support such a system in the long run are considered (e.g. collaboration with Brazil and/or collaboration with FAO for a regional approach in the Congo Basin), however, no decision has been taken so far.

In an initial stage, due to capacity constraints at technical and institutional levels, the MRV system will be developed at the level of the ER-Program in Mai-Ndombe. It is expected that at this subnational level, a MRV system will be developed until the end of December 2015.

At the national level, MRV will be developed in a second stage, presumably until December 2016. However, development at this level will require the institutional strengthening of DIAF, the organization responsible for maintaining the national forest inventory and the satellite-based monitoring system. There will be affiliated resource needs to accomplish this, e.g. to create the required capacities, training, hardware/software.

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

(30) **Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues (criteria 32, green).** Non-carbon aspects and, social and environmental safeguard issues of REDD+ preparations have been identified in the SESA process, and while defining national social standards. The preliminary study on benefit sharing focused on non-carbon benefit. The Self-Assessment raised the question of difficulties to collaborate with local communities and farmer associations as REDD+ might not be sufficiently understood at that level. Capacity building and inclusion of women, local communities, and youth is constantly needed.

(31) **Monitoring, reporting and information sharing (criteria 33, yellow).** A transparent system for periodically sharing consistent information on non-carbon aspects and safeguards is completely new in DRC and will need time to be implemented. An early operational stage is functional with the work of the platform MOABI and the National Social and Environmental Standards (Standards nationaux) and the strategic indicators for REDD+ developed during the Readiness phase. There is however still the need to introduce these tools at local level and to develop a simple system to monitor non-carbon benefit through the National REDD+ registry.

(32) **Institutional arrangements and capacities (criteria 34, green).** In the Readiness process a Committee assigned to assess risks and co-benefits was created, however it has not been very successful due to lack of motivation (Self-Assessment report). An attempt to establish a simple institutional arrangement that performs tasks related to non-carbon aspects and safeguards has

been proposed. Also, associated resource requirements need to be identified and estimated (required capacities, training).

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

(33) Based on the documents consulted, as well as web and e-mail consultations, the **TAP reviewer has the opinion that the enumerated accomplishments described in the DRC Self-Assessment report and based on the R-Package have been effectively achieved. Also, the proposed work programme for consolidation of the Readiness phase is well prepared and potentially will lead to full accomplishment of REDD+ Readiness within a reasonable time frame** (December 2015, as proposed in the report for most of the proposed activities). In spite of the complex and difficult enabling conditions in the country, DRC has reached a high level of preparation for REDD+ at this time.

(34) As outlined in Annex 1 of the Self-Assessment report, DRC already started its Readiness program approximately ten years ago with the submission of views of the Congo Basin countries in SBSTA 24 in 2006 and intensified the process since 2009 with the implementation of the R-PP. In the view of the TAP expert, DRC is now ready **pursue the next level of its REDD+ process; to implement an ER-Program at subnational level** (as proposed in the region of Mai-Ndombe). This recommendation is justified on the following grounds:

- a. A solid process has been conducted over the past six years to advance the REDD+ Readiness process in the country as outlined in the comprehensive and complete R-Package and observed using a thorough Self-Assessment review.
- b. A considerable effort has been undertaken in the consultation process, driven by a variety of stakeholders, including in particular those that had been excluded in former development processes. Today there is no need to go beyond what is planned in the work programme for consolidation the Readiness process but to embark on a learning-by-doing process and embark in a emission reduction programme that is based on performance-based payments and the implementation of a real-scale benefit-sharing mechanisms with the direct users of the resources.
- c. In spite of the considerable progress, a number of activities still need to be conducted to consolidate the Readiness phase, which can be implemented in a reasonable time frame in parallel with the preparation of the ER-Program. Table 7 in the Self-Assessment Report gives a synoptic overview of the remaining work to the done in the REDD+ Readiness Phase between March 2015 and Juin 2016⁷. This table should be completed by a more specified work programme with clear budget allocations for the remaining tasks in Readiness that could be conducted in parallel to the ER-PD programme preparation.

(35) There are some major elements that need to be further clarified in the process of preparing the ER-PD. Some of these issues that have arisen in the Readiness phase will continue to be important in the further development of REDD+ as a GHG mitigation scheme, including, *inter alia*:

⁷ Tableau 7 (p 46): Programme de travail pour la consolidation de la phase de préparation à la REDD+ entre mars 2015 et juin 2016.

- a. Further information sharing on the experiences in the ER-Program area and with associated REDD+ projects in other provinces in the country;
- b. Continuous policy dialogue at the level of national government and law makers to consolidate the REDD+ approach and to create the enabling conditions for a national REDD+ Program;
- c. Conclude the national RL and introduce a national MRV system based on the current achievements;
- d. Strengthen a nationally coordinated and financed CN-REDD as clearinghouse for REDD+ projects and investments that operate under the REDD+ strategy of the country

(36) Five Provinces have been the focal areas for REDD+ readiness and initial investment approaches and one region particularly has been chosen for the ER-PD. As REDD+ is a national approach, it is important to synergistically improve the knowledge and information base of REDD+ forest management and land use in all provinces and through a stepwise approach. The overall aim is to develop a shared strategic vision between REDD+ and sustainable forest and land management that take into account the overall framework condition for natural resources management, *inter alia*, institutions and their governance; law enforcement; fight against illegal practices; access rights to land and natural resources; civil society inclusion; constructive dialogue between all stakeholders, etc.

(37) Finally, in the opinion of the TAP expert, it will be important to *continuously strengthen the governance structure of the national REDD+ process*. In the process of the mid-term review of the R-PP in 2013, a strong proposal was made for a revision of the Decree regarding the organization of the REDD+ process in DRC. The ambition was to anchor the REDD+ process at the highest political level possible with a strong role played by the Ministry of Finance, in charge of REDD+ payments. As the self-assessment process has highlighted, neither the national REDD committee (in charge of decisions and orientations) nor the inter-ministerial committee (in charge of overall REDD+ planning) have become active bodies in the Readiness process. Nonetheless, progress has been made e.g. on validation of the national REDD+ Strategy by the *Conseil des Ministres* on thematic consultations in respect to the work on SESA and National Standards, as well as the dialogue with the *Comité Technique de Concertation des Secrétaires Généraux* (CTC/SG). As further stated in the Self-Assessment report, a recent initiative of the MEDD asks for the revision of the institutional arrangements of REDD+, with the idea of creating a single *comité de pilotage* at high level with the concerned ministries, chaired by MEDD. The initiative also includes a reflection on the coordination between such a new committee and the *Fonds National REDD+* which is chaired by the Ministry of Finance. Whatever the final proposal will be, the current institutional situation, after 6 years of Readiness work and 10 years of REDD discussion in the country, is not satisfactory and still need to be further addressed.

Additional Documents consulted

(Others than the documents submitted with R-Package and the hyperlink references provided in the document)

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