



REDD+ Country Participant Completion Report Template for the Readiness Fund of the FCPF

About this template

The Grant Agreements for the Readiness Fund of the FCPF with the World Bank require the grant recipients to prepare and furnish to the World Bank a Completion Report in accordance with the provision of Section 2.06(b) (ii) of the Standard Conditions not later than six (6) months after the Closing Date of the grant. The REDD+ Country Participants who entered into a Grant Agreement with the World Bank should prepare the Completion Report using this template and submit it to the World Bank Task Teams not later than six (6) months after the Closing Date of the grant.

Submission Date:

Project Name	REDD+ Readiness Project
Country	Belize
Implementing Agency	Belize National Climate Change Office
Grant Objectives	The objective of the REDD+ project is to carry out Readiness Preparation through a participatory and inclusive process in order to strengthen Belize's capacity to participate in future REDD+ carbon payment transactions.
Original Amount (US\$)	USD 3,800,000.00
Revised Amount (US\$)	USD 3,800,000.00
Actual Disbursed (US\$)	USD 3,791,007.06
Effectiveness Date	March 14, 2017
Original Closing Date	December 31, 2020
Actual Closing Date	March 31, 2022

1. Overall Outcome and its Sustainability

This section provides overall accomplishment of the objectives of the Grant and a plan designed to ensure the sustainability of the Project's achievements.

The objective of the REDD+ project was to carry out Readiness Preparation through a participatory and inclusive process in order to strengthen Belize's capacity to participate in future REDD+ carbon payment transactions.

Key achievements made by the project over its four-year life span by the respective components include:

Component 1: REDD+ Organization Framework, Consultations, and Grievance Redress

- Establishment of REDD+ Coordination Unit (R+CU) and Project Steering Committee (PSC) established as part of the stakeholder platform.
- Establishment and operationalization of Technical Expert Group (TEG).
- Conclusion of REDD+ Coordination Unit staffing process – Project Coordinator, 5 REDD+ Technicians, Procurement Officer, Communications Officer with the addition of a Project Officer, Indigenous People Coordinator and an Environmental and Social Expert.
- Carrying out of a Stakeholder Mapping Exercise, Stakeholder Mapping Protocol completed and utilized to guide stakeholder engagements.
- Development of Communications Strategy
- Delivery of awareness and Communication with Protected Areas and Co-Managers on REDD+ to enhance capacity of integrating into planning and development of management plans for Protected Areas which are Forest Reserves.

Component 2: Prepare the REDD+ Strategy

- Completion of the REDD+ Strategy
- Identification of Deforestation/Degradation (D&D) factors for Belize
- Completion of the Social Environmental Strategic Assessment (SESA) (inclusive of the Safeguard Information System (SIS), SIS website, Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)
- Completion of Draft Benefit Sharing Mechanism (BSM)
- Completion of Ethno-mapping of 4 villages in southern Belize
- Completion of Land Tenure Assessment/ Report for Southern Belize
- Establishment of Feedback Grievance and Redress Protocol established as well as the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) website launched in January 2020
- Launch of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Protocol by the Government of Belize (GOB).

Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) and/or Forest Reference Level (FRL)

- Completion of National Land Use Land Use Change Report 2018.
- Completion of Sentinel 2 imagery maps of Belize
- Submission of Belize's FREL (2020) to UNFCCC.

Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards Systems

- Establishment of National Forest Inventory (NFI) for Belize based on Permanent Sample Plots (PSP)
- Establishment of Destructive Sample Plots (DSP) including Mangroves
- Development of a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) using tier 1, 2 and 3 data for Belize.

As it relates to the sustainability of the project's achievements, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (MSSDCCDRM), the National Climate

Change Office (NCCO), and the Belize Forest Department (FD) have been able to integrate the key components brought on by the REDD+ Readiness Phase into their programmes. Persons trained under the REDD+ Preparation Phase have also transitioned over to the FD to ensure continuity. The FD and NCCO have taken what was introduced and continue to build on them to grow Belize's data base and position as a REDD+ nation. In addition to this, the MSDCCDRM and the Government of Belize (GOB) have made commitments to continue the process as well as build other sectors of Belize as it strives to benefit from its work in conservation. Through the work of the REDD+ Readiness Phase, the GOB has started discussions and work across ministries and departments to revise laws and policies as well as to secure funding and other resources needed to carry out the necessary groundwork to secure comprehensive strategies and mechanisms that will ensure both the government and citizens' benefit.

Although Belize has made significant progress with its REDD+ Readiness Activities, further work is needed to fulfil the requirements of the phase one of the project. These recommendations include further development of the BSM in phase 2 of REDD+ which includes more extensive communication and consultations with the key stakeholders of the project and those not intensively engaged in phase 1. While a BSM is not a mandate under the FCPF, it is encouraged and is viewed as an essential deliverable to ensure fair and equitable distributions of carbon credit. The project unfortunately was not able to produce a final BSM document due to several factors; these included the setbacks on consultations due to COVID 19 along with the request from the GOB for time to develop a Carbon Rights Framework which would feed into the BSM. This Carbon Rights Framework goes beyond the scope of the REDD+ initiative.

In addition, the REDD+ Strategy indicates the need for the GOB to finalize the REDD+ implementation framework for phase 2 as it will be essential if phase 2 is to function smoothly without delays as what occurred in phase 1. A third recommendation is that there needs to be continued growth in regard to the data sharing and collaborative efforts across ministries and departments. In order for REDD+ to function successfully, all relevant agencies must be united and supportive as information housed within their units is essential to the REDD+ assessments. Fourthly, there is a need to continue building Belize's data base with Tier 3 data. Securing funding for this is essential along with the relevant training of personnel within the Forest Department and other key ministries. Lastly, the readiness process in Belize and related work also indicated that the country needs to continue to update its legislations as well and implement new legislations that will allow for Belize to be fully engaged in the REDD+ implementation.

2. Outcome of each Readiness Grant Activity

This section outlines assessment of achievement of each Activity indicated in the Grant Agreement.

In preparation of the R-Package, the 34 progress indicators detailed in the Guide to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Assessment Framework were assessed. 94.1% of the indicators assessed were found to have achieved significant progress or to have progressed well but require further development.

Below is a table outlining the assessment.

Colour Coding for Indicators during Mid-Term Review in 2019					
Completed	Significant progress	Progressing well, further development required	Further development required	Not yet demonstrating progress	Not Applicable
Colour Coding for Indicators during REDD+ Project Self-Assessment 2022.					
Significant Progress	Progressing well, further development required	Further development required	Not yet demonstrating Progress		

R-PP Progress Indicators	Mid-Term Report Assessment 2017 - 2019	R-Package Self-Assessment 2017 to 2022
Component 1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements		
1. Accountability and transparency		
2. Operating mandate and budget		
3. Multi-sector coordinating mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration		
4. Technical supervision capacity		
5. Funds management capacity		
6. Feedback and grievance mechanism		
Component 1b. Consultations, Participation and Outreach		
7. Participation and engagement of key stakeholders		
8. Consultation processes		
9. Information sharing and accessibility of information		
10. Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes		
Component 2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land Use Change Drivers, Forest Law and Governance		
11. Assessment and analysis		

12. <i>Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement</i>		Green
13. <i>Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities</i>		Green
14. <i>Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance</i>		Yellow
15. <i>. Implications for forest law and policy</i>		Green
Component 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	Red	
16. <i>Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options</i>		Green
17. <i>Feasibility assessment</i>		Green
18. <i>Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies</i>		Yellow
Component 2c. REDD+ Implementation Framework	Yellow	
19. <i>Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations</i>		Yellow
20. <i>Guidelines for implementation</i>		Yellow
21. <i>Benefit sharing mechanism</i>		Orange
22. <i>National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities</i>		Orange
Component 2d. Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) in the Formulation of the REDD+ Strategy	Red	
23. <i>Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues</i>		Green
24. <i>REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts</i>		Green
25. <i>Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)</i>		Green
Component 3. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Level	Yellow	
26. <i>Demonstration of methodology</i>		Green
27. <i>Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances</i>		Green
28. <i>Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines</i>		Green
Component 4a. National Forest Monitoring System	Yellow	
29. <i>Documentation of monitoring approach</i>		Green
30. <i>Demonstration of early system implementation</i>		Green
31. <i>Institutional arrangements and capacities</i>		Green
Component 4b: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	Red	
32. <i>Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues</i>		Green

<i>33. Monitoring, reporting and information sharing</i>		
<i>34. Institutional arrangements and capacities</i>		

As noted above, Belize has made significant progress in all four (4) major Components of REDD+ namely, Component 1: Organization Framework, Consultations, and Grievance Redress, Component 2: Prepare the REDD+ Strategy, Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level, Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards Systems. During the mid-term evaluation, the progress was not measured per indicator but rather by component. The table above reflects the component evaluation made. The final evaluation at the end of the project was carried out in detail per individual indicator.

3. Lessons Learned

This section briefly presents the most significant positive and negative lessons learned from the operation’s experience.

Some lessons learnt during phase 1 of this project are as follows:

1. It is essential to build the communication and collaboration network of the GOB department and ministries. Consistent communication is essential as well as follow up to ensure actions are taken for successful execution of project activities.
2. Not all ministries and departments are properly trained and equipped to bring their data collection and data bases to the level needed for the generation of REDD+ required data. Funding and continuous training is essential allow for Belize to continue in the generation of quality reports.
3. Due to the dynamic ethnic background of Belize, stakeholder engagement was essential as well as the realization for the importance of the establishing of an Indigenous People’s Desk for effective engagement if the four indigenous constituencies in Belize that make up a large population of Belize.
4. Another is that there is a need for an established strong REDD+ Unit to guide the continuation of works across phases. This is key in order to eliminate replication of activities and trainings and orientation time that would be necessary with the hiring of new staff due to loses of human resource due to gaps in between phases.
5. Belize is in possession of great talent as it relates to technical personnel, and which allows for the building of the technical capabilities of its departments. This most be recognised by the relevant leaders and funding must be required to build these capabilities in order to eliminate outsourcing of consultancies that can be carried out locally and within the departments. The establishment of the Belize Forest Department Gio-Spatial Monitoring Unit that was possible through trainings by the REDD+ and partners is evidence of that.
6. While the MSDCCDRM was a driving force to ensure a successful REDD+ project implementation and ensured timely dissemination and engaging of other ministries and departments; not all ministries and departments fully understood the magnitude of what the REDD+ Readiness Phase was about, what it meant for the country of Belize and what was required to ensure a successful phase 1 completion to move Belize into phase 2. This underestimation created a rush to catch up at the end of the project cycle that led to delays in the completion of certain deliverables such as the BSM and the finalization of the REDD+ Implementation structure.

The following key recommendations represent the response to the project and component, level analysis and related findings presented.

A combination of planning, management, monitoring and evaluation, communication, stakeholder engagement, partnership development and coordination and long-term visioning is essential for a successful phase 2. These include:

1. Improve internal programme and activity level planning and communication
2. Improve Stakeholder Engagement Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
3. Address gaps in REDD+ implementation mechanism, Management, Administrative and Operation System
4. Strengthen Procurement and Financial Planning and Management
5. Establish mechanisms for long-term REDD+ programming, Expand Awareness Building, Branding and Visibility

The below recommendations are the result of the REDD+ readiness process:

Recommendation 1: Belize as a country needs to continue the building of its capacities both human and institutional in order for it to continue to build on the advances made during this first phase of the REDD+ initiative. As it relates to human resources, continued capacity building is needed for the FD, NCCO, LD and other relevant departments in order for Belize to lead its region in sustainable forest management; this also includes the addition of human resource to build the departments to ensure data collection, monitoring and evaluations can continue. On the other side of this is the institutional capacities; the GOB especially over the last few years has struggled to regain its footing as it relates to financial stability, this means that in order for organizations/departments to continue to do the work needed under REDD+, financing support is essential.

Recommendation 2: With the COVID pandemic affecting half of the project, specifically the last 2 years, there is more needed as it relates to awareness and consultations with the larger Belizean demography. The COVID pandemic restricted the interactions with only key stakeholders of the REDD+ initiative, but even further to that, small core groups were formed within these key stakeholder communities with the projects relying heavily on these groups to be the disseminators within the communities. This approach lends itself to errors in communication and segregation. While there was significant progress made in the first year of the project as it related to communication and visibility to the Belizean population nationally, the late start fueled the public's interest and requests for more information. This should that there were significant gaps in communication over the previous years and more work is needed as the work continues. Addition to this, capacities is needed within the REDD+ CU as well as relevant departments and committees to ensure proper monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This includes inclusive meetings across sectors to ensure all respective departments and ministries are operating in harmony to ensure success.

Recommendation 3: The REDD+ Strategy and the proposed institutional structure needs to be finalized. The strategy was shared with the GOB for them to address highlighted areas that required further input. These are key aspects of the strategy that shape how REDD+ will be carried out. The R+CU institutional structure for the REDD+ project in Belize was sound and serves its purpose adequately. For the implementation phase it is of key importance to have an optimal

involvement of the FD in project activities since the Department has a fundamental role as manager of forests.

With the production of the draft BSM, greater work is needed to generate a final BSM. In addition to this, with the passing of the FPIC protocols by the GOB and the concerns raised by IPs; more needs to be done to create a document that is balanced as it relates to the needs of both the government and IPs of Belize. The GOB has been engaged in extensive work on Belize's Carbon Rights legislation which goes beyond the scope of REDD+ initiative. The finalization of this document is needed for the completion of the BSM in addition to the completion of the remaining consultations with the GOB stakeholders, NGOs and Non-IP communities. Without these consultations, the draft mechanism is one-sided; while the REDD+ CU tried to garner some input from these groups via an on-line survey, many recipients communicated that their impression was that a more in-depth consultation would follow which resulted in some recipients not completing the surveys.

Another area that will require further resources and management to ensure success in phase 2 is the equipping of departments to ensure the elimination of the gaps identified during the readiness phase. There is a need for continued management and collaborations to allow Belize to continue in the building of its Tier 3 data collection. To date Belize has secured significant Tier 3 data, however there are still areas where the country continues to rely on Tier 1 and 2 data to complete its estimations. If Belize is to continue building and improving on its NFMS, NFI and MRVS, Tier 3 data collection is essential.

Recommendation 4: Another area that needs strengthening is the area of Procurement and Financial Planning; financial bottle necks need to be ironed out as well as continued trainings with changing of project accounts personnel to ensure smooth transition. And finally, Management, while one of the issues experienced in the first year of phase one was a transition of the project from FD to NCCO which resulted in successful completion of phase one, it is essential that the lessons learned during this period is carried over into phase 2 to ensure this is not repeated in order to maximize the execution period provided for activities.

Recommendation 5: The REDD+ Readiness project had developed a communication plan to bring awareness of REDD+ and its activities in Belize. While there was much done in year 2 and 3 to bring awareness, there were deficiencies which was compounded by the COVID Pandemic. The project CU was able to produce valuable visibility packages in its final year, but it was not able to properly distribute due to the time remaining within the project. It is essential that within phase 2, the project continues to build on its mechanisms for long-term REDD+ programming as well as explanation of awareness, branding and visibility.

Despite the follow-up work that needs to happen as presented throughout; REDD+ has made a significant impact in the country of Belize in terms of assisting in closing technical gaps, increasing capacity, strengthening coordination with the indigenous peoples on the forestry issues, opening to door to carbon credit which has led to not only Green Carbon in the terrestrial environment, but also Blue Carbon Credit within the Marine environment, building of cross-sectorial collaborations and data sharing, as well as the enhancement of Belize's robust conservation activities during this REDD+ Readiness Phase.

With the completion of the readiness phase and preparations to start the implementation phase of REDD+, the expectations are that the follow up work needed will be completed in Phase 2 and

that GOB and its people will continue to work towards a REDD+ structure that will ensure equitable distribution of the REDD+ benefits.

4. Project Cost by Readiness Grant Activity

Activities	Amount at Approval (US\$)	Actual at Project Closing (US\$)	Percentage of Approval
Component 1: REDD+ Organization Framework, Consultations, and Grievance Redress	\$1,597,000.00	\$1,447,107.98	90.61%
Component 2: Prepare the REDD+ Strategy	\$1,165,000.00	\$1,204,181.85	103.36%
Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level	\$420,000.00	\$580,320.12	138.17%
Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards Systems	\$438,000.00	\$446,150.97	101.86%
Component 5: Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation	\$180,000.00	\$113,246.14	62.91%
Total	\$3,800,000.00	\$3,791,007.06	