

# Independent Technical Review: Argentina R- PP document

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Reviewer: Hernán Carlino

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## **General comments to R-PP Document of Argentina (maximum 200 words):**

Argentina has prepared a Programme that adroitly combines existing frameworks and institutional settings while addressing relevant needs under the overall national policy architecture and goals. It demonstrates thorough consideration of how REDD could be implemented in such a diverse set of social, environmental and economic circumstances found in the country.

The extended period of preparation has allowed for a Programme that has gradually been elaborated in order to comply with the standards and requirement and to align with national policies and governance structures.

While for each component there is a detailed presentation of resource allocation for each planned activity and need, the rationale for resource allocation is not made entirely evident and it is not always clear how criticality of key tasks or needs is considered and then correlated with resource allocation made.

A robust risk mitigation strategy should be integrated into the preparation process in order to avoid mitigation gaps or protracted implementation.

The consultation and participation process as included in the R-PP should ensure that all relevant perspectives are taken into account and the dynamic tensions created by transformational momentum do not deter the direction of changes.

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## Assessing the draft R-PP against review criteria

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Ownership of the Programme (maximum 150 words):

The Programme is embedded in the existing national legal framework related to forests, forest management and conservation and is conceptually consistent with national efforts to address secular deforestation and forest degradation in Argentina. Further, the Programme contributes to expand significantly the existing policy instruments to effectively address drivers of deforestation if under an appropriate implementation process.

In addition, the Programme is formally compatible with the principles, priorities and objectives already established in the National Strategy on Climate Change as well as the Action Plan for the short, medium and long term, both under an advanced but still unfinished elaboration process. In addition, careful consideration in the preparation has been given to the adequate articulation of the Programme with an array of ongoing initiatives and institutional arrangements to drive forth climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts as well as enhancing environmental sustainability in Argentina.

The Programme multiple objectives, as defined in the R-PP, are also compatible with national sustainable development priorities and the principles that inform the overall national policies, including poverty alleviation, social inclusion, environmental integrity and equity. However, sectoral policies, in particular agricultural policy, may diverge from those sustainable development goals creating a potential for conflicting objectives in terms of land use, land use change and forestry that needs to be addressed during implementation.

The Government of Argentina has allocated resources to the development of this Programme and to strengthening the information base and technical capacities that will allow for its more effective implementation. The Government is also committing additional resources for Programme implementation.

As Argentina's institutional framework to address climate change issues has improved and strengthened in the last decade and addressing deforestation has been given a relevant place in the national policy agenda, the existing institutional arrangements will facilitate policy coordination and provide an enabling environment for the establishment of the proposed REDD governance structure.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement (maximum 150 words):

Argentina has engaged an extensive range of institutions and relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the R-PP, through various stages and at the different levels of government, including the Plan de Socialización y Participación in place to support the preparation of the last draft of the R-PP. Constructive feedback and inputs were provided in the different phases of the consultation process during Programme preparation gradually improving participation, both in regional and institutional scope, and effective reach. That feedback was taken into account to further the elaboration of the R-PP.

Detailed evidence of the extensive work on information dissemination and consultations undertaken is provided in Annex 1.b and referenced throughout the R-PP. The extremely detailed reporting of the efforts made in the direction of putting in place a robust participatory process, in particular of civil society organizations renders evidence of the importance given to this process.

Further consultations are planned, under the Plan de Consultas y Participación (PCP), that defines the focal points in that participatory process, and includes a step-wise approach to consultations and outreach as well as the convening of national and sub-national, eco-system based, consultations processes and the definition of a consultation and participation protocol. The ecosystem based approach that informs the proposal should allow for the consideration of eco-regional diversity and proposes to engage relevant stakeholders at each of the multiple jurisdictional levels by different means, trying to acknowledge and integrate existing related participatory processes.

In addition, it is proposed that monitoring activities will be supported by local communities to ensure both enhanced participation, an expansion of the monitoring base, and increased awareness on the complexities as well as on the usefulness of monitoring processes.

Notwithstanding the effort to engage relevant stakeholders, the rather limited space for the participation of private sector actors from the agriculture sector reveals the underlying tensions between agriculture as a driving force of deforestation and its key role in contributing to sustaining macroeconomic stability in Argentina. A more comprehensive engagement of the entire agricultural value chain would allow for a more systemic consideration of the means and instruments to mitigate deforestation while diminishing impacts on macroeconomic variables and trends.

As a more extended and comprehensive consultation and participation process, that will be executed when resources are available, is planned, therefore is important that this process is monitored by UN-REDD in the implementation phase

The R-PP is in compliance with the UN-REDD Operational Guidance related to engagement of indigenous people and other forest dependent communities.

3. Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency (maximum 100 words):

Taking into account national circumstances and the specific policy decision making context in Argentina, the R-PP is structured following a step wise approach to programme development, the programme is comprehensive and adequately addresses areas in which strengthening existing capacities, providing to information needs and reinforcing information based decision making processes are needed. Planned activities under each component are in line with component outputs.

R-PP emphasizes its commitment to engaging all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of specific activities, which further ensures the programme effectiveness, even if a broader range of stakeholders should be considered.

The R-PP describes in detail to carry on all planned activities. To that extent, the R-PP places emphasis in using existing institutional structures and capacities as well as integrating this process with other related ones, mainstreaming and avoiding cost duplication. Notwithstanding that some of the elements to appraise the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the Programme are not made clear. While for each component there is a detailed presentation of resource allocation for each planned activity and need, the rationale for resource allocation is not made entirely evident and it is not always clear how criticality of key tasks or needs is considered and then correlated with resource allocation plans.

Current and expected budgetary strictures should be taken into account when allocating resources and national contributions.

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The Programme may be effective under realistic planning, flexible operational arrangements and strong participation that would allow to keep momentum. Cost-effectiveness is likely to be ensured through robust monitoring and a set of performance indicators.

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 150 words):

While there is a comprehensive description of options to mitigate risks that might be conducive to implementation gaps, an accurate description of those risks and the elements to assess the range of risks are not provided in full.

In spite of that, given national circumstances, there are a number of risks that may be associated with the programme, including inter alia:

- a. Insufficient or ephemeral political will thus leaving the programme without the decisive support and momentum to be effectively implemented.
- b. Dynamic tensions and conflicts due to increasingly divergent national policy objectives leading to the programme being challenged or to a diminishing support by key stakeholders.
- c. Protracted implementation leading to incremental costs and declining interest by stakeholders.
- d. Inadequate coordination in practice despite having sensible institutional arrangements.

Given the broad range of risk management options indicated in the R-PP -from the institutional to the organizational, from the technical to the economic-, it is deemed necessary to further elaborate on a robust strategy for the management of risks and ensuring that such a robust strategy, including awareness, participation, and consistency in the structure of incentives and policy instruments, is in place in order to minimize implementation gaps.

The overall risk is assessed as manageable through enhanced programme design and risk management planning.

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy (maximum 150 words):

The R-PP has been prepared following a process oriented approach, considering meaningful stakeholder participation and FPIC and dispute resolution schemes. The R-PP has also sought to internalize in the programme attributes related to national ownership, alignment with national policies, strong participatory mechanisms, stakeholder driven processes and equity considerations in line with the principles that are thought to inform national goals.

The Programme is deemed consistent with the UN-REDD Programme strategy.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance (maximum 150 words):

The Argentinean government has followed the rules and procedures for presentation of the R-PP in coordination with the UNREDD Secretariat, and the technical support of the UN Agencies.

The Programme is deemed in compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance.

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## Assessing the draft R-PP by component

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Component 1: Organize and consult (maximum 300 words):

Component 1 in its entirety provides enough information to comply with the criteria.

The phased consultation process exhaustively described in the R-PP has been quite extended. However, in each of its stages participants in the consultation process may have slightly varied, having thus iterations with different stakeholders; this approach while improving and extending the scope of consultations may have limited the potential for systematically increasing awareness converging into shared views on critical issues.

The institutional structure, integrating both existing and new participation mechanisms under a common framework, seems well developed providing enough means for participation for stakeholders at different jurisdictional levels and allowing for the presence of heterogeneous and frequently contrasting groups of the polity at large. Notwithstanding that, the scope for participation should be extended in order to include economic actors whose actions are influential in terms of driving forth deforestation and forest degradation.

The ambitious consultation and participation process is demanding in terms of coordination, conflict and expectations management and given that there was already an extended period undertaken with preparation, careful consideration of the planned goals and awareness of the limitations of these processes should be factored into the planned PCP, including adequate budgetary provisions.

Further, the proposed capacity building scheme should be steady enough in order to address the continuous needs of the diverse stakeholders, including non government and government representatives, an essential requirement for a useful and effective participatory process, including on how to meet the needs related to informed and meaningful engagement.

This standard is appraised as met.

2. Component 2: Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy (maximum 300 words):

Component 2 as a whole provides enough information to comply with the criteria.

This component includes a historical analysis of deforestation with a particular focus on the last decades, describes the direct and underlying drivers of deforestation, provides quantitative indicators, describes the legal and institutional framework, progress made in addressing deforestation, examines specific conditions and factors in the major forest ecosystems in Argentina, and describes the framework for assessing forest management in line with existing approaches and initiatives under way. The main activities to be carried out are identified, including further analysis of causes of deforestation by ecological region, opportunity cost analysis, also at the regional level, modeling land use changes, capacity building activities, and development of a REDD specific forest evaluation framework. The analysis undertaken on drivers of deforestation broadly sheds light on the major conditions and interaction with relevant policies and measures.

Secondly the component examines the major options for a REDD strategy, including the a preliminary identification of seven areas of intervention with strategic activities to be carried out, and also including a set of proposals for each of the relevant eco-regions and a set of indicative actions that could be implemented for the short, medium and long term.

Thirdly, the document describes the institutional and regulatory framework under which a REDD strategy is to be implemented, including competencies, resource management, property rightson carbon stocks and the pertinent legal framework.

It is recommended that a comprehensive analysis of the existing structure of incentives, the required changes to that structure and the consideration of policy instruments available, including comparative experience in this area, be carried out during programme implementation to ensure that implementation is undertaken with a broad set of policy instruments.

The component met the standard.

3. Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level (maximum 200 words):

Component 3 as a whole provides enough information to comply with the criteria.

Argentina proposes to implement a step wise approach including the development of reference emission levels for each eco-region, advancing gradually from those regions with better data availability where reference levels would be more detailed and accurate, and in addition, or in those regions that are considered key ones in term of their relevance, allowing for the differentiated development of reference levels in different regions of the country, according to feasibility and relevance. The aim is to have a consistent and integrated system on the basis of national, eco-regional or provincial levels. These are currently being assessed in line with the availability and integrity of the existing information. A work plan is proposed that aims to be consistent with UNFCCC requirements.

This component met the standard.

4. Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards (maximum 300 words):

Component 4 in its entirety provides adequate information to comply with the criteria

The overall monitoring and MRV system for national forest monitoring and information on safeguards proposed envisages two different systems, including one to measure emissions, forest cover and a national forest inventory system enhancing the reliability and accuracy of carbon estimates; and a second one to monitor co-benefits and other multiple benefits resulting from the implementation of the REDD+ strategy. The proposal aims to utilize available information systems, databases, native forest inventories and existing capacities.

The work plan for the development of a MRV system includes among its principles and standards the requirement of enhancing capacities and strengthening efforts for a reliable MRV system that in the long term allows for access to results based finance in line, both as a contribution to climate change cooperative mitigation efforts and to the enforcement of the existing legal framework. The proposed

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work plan thus aligns itself with the Warsaw Framework, in particular with the modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying.

It is proposed that community monitoring approaches will be used in the safeguards and co-benefit information systems as a complement of the national carbon monitoring and MRV system, enhancing the quality of the monitoring process and well as reinforcing ownership and participation.

This standard is met.

5. Component 5: Schedule and Budget (maximum 300 words):

Component 1 as a whole provides enough information to comply with the criteria.

It is recommended that the sources of funding be expanded in order to mitigate the risk associated with the lack of multiannual budgetary approaches.

Further, a more flexible approach to the allocation of funds, under a programmatic scheme, rather than activity oriented, is recommended

The component met the standard.

6. Component 6: Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (maximum 300 words):

Component 6 as a whole provides enough information to comply with the criteria.

Standard is met.



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**Suggestions for improving the technical design of the R-PP Document of [insert country name] (maximum 400 words):**

The R-PP has been prepared based on an extensive review and analysis of the overall policy objectives, legal framework, and strategies, plans and programs in preparation in Argentina, including the consideration of the outstanding socio-economic and environmental issues the Government of Argentina has prioritized as tenets of its long term vision. It is also based on an extended consultation process with a diverse range of stakeholders including experts, the epistemic community, non-state organizations, civil society and indigenous peoples' organizations, vulnerable groups, small subsistence farmers and women in the polity.

The Programme has been enhanced with the inputs from consultations and a thorough internal review process in its substantive elements. Further elaboration should seek more clarity and avoid redundancy. Improvements in form should be undertaken.

While the formal institutional mandate and competencies are clearly expounded in the R-PP and are based on the existing legal and institutional architecture, a high level mandate and the evidence of decisive political will should be sought to avoid implementation gaps and ensure effective and stable implementation towards a sustainable governance regime.

Given the time frame since the inception of an early dialogue pursuant to the consultation process on REDD in 2008 and more recent consultation and outreach in late 2013, this gap predicated on those missing elements in the institutional process that have prevented the full materialization of a climate strategy and might affect the effective implementation of this Programme. Further delays in the effective implementation of the programme should be avoided.

Given the federal structure of government, participation of sub-national and local authorities is key to ensuring effective implementation. Appropriate budgetary allocation towards enhancing capacity building at all levels is recommended.

Similarly securing sufficient resources to undertake the assessment of drivers of deforestation and policy options to address those drivers is key in terms of ensuring successful implementation.