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Title: Regional Technical Advisor
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1. Practice area : UN-REDD	
2. Mission period (incl. of travel days) From 31/08/2015 to 04/09/2015	
3. Type of mission : Inception, technical backstopping	4. Clients Ministry of Environment and Forests; Benishangul Gumuz Region, UNDP Country Office
5. Purpose of mission Inception workshop for the support to readiness in Benishangul Gumuz, technical backstopping to national consultants in place	6. Documents, materials, resources ToR workshop, Presentation from UN-REDD to the workshop, detailed work plan of consultants for 3 months
7. Mission members M. Fabien Monteils, UN-REDD RTA Africa (with Marius Walter on ICA)	8. Costs UNDP/REDD+ Global Budget

9. Brief summary of the mission

The RTA traveled between Nairobi and Addis Ababa on August the 31th, and back on the 5th of September (flight delay of 7 hours with original plan). The mission consisted in (i) a stop over in Addis Ababa allowing the RTA to participate in a meeting on GCF with GEF RTA; (ii) an inception workshop to kick-off the readiness support to the region of Benishangul Gumuz; (iii) technical backstopping to the national consultants (project manager and technical assistant) to implement the support to the region. The mission was officially endorsed by the UNDP team leader for environment, Ms. Sinkinesh Beyene, and facilitated by the national climate change advisor, M. Ababu Anage.

Context : Ethiopia is moving ahead with its REDD+ readiness process. It has been mainly supported by the FCPF, with the perspective of implementing REDD+ in the pilot region of Oromia with FCPF CF and Norwegian support. Norway follows the process closely and provides substantive support, including \$18M to invest in the Oromia region, and \$10M as direct support to the readiness process on top of the \$14M provided by the WB (FCPF and Bio CF). Ethiopia's approach to REDD+ has been dominated by FCPF advises and prescriptions related to FCPF CF. The country expects to finalize its REDD+ National Strategy and FRL by the end of the year 2015, and intends to prepare SIS and BUR for 2016, but the process of finalization and harmonization of methodologies and approach with the UNFCCC doesn't seem clearly understood and under control. Serious risks of delay can be anticipated.

In the meantime, Ethiopia is pushing hard to transition to investment on the ground, with interest from Norway and UK in particular. Norway has committed \$60M per year to the Climate Resilient Green Growth strategy until 2020 (channelled through a national fund managed by the Government and an international fund managed by UNDP MPTF). They are keen on seeing transformative programmes emerging, notably in the field of forest and REDD+ (they indicated the share could be about \$20M per year for forests out of \$60M).

UN-REDD is now well established and recognized in Ethiopia REDD+ landscape. Through targeted support, the Programme provides discreet technical support at the national level (economic valuation of forest and integration in the national system of accounting, ICA, technical review of documents like draft national strategy...). But its more visible support consists in supporting the pilot region of Benishangul Gumuz towards REDD+ implementation. The Programme promotes readiness in a way that is fully embedded into the national REDD+ architecture and UNFCCC compliant. It focuses support on capacity building and the design of regional strategy for REDD+ including respect for safeguards, participation, gender etc. and promotes the coordination with national level in terms of SNSF, SIS, FRL and overall interface with UNFCCC to access RBP. This is also a way to advocate for robust national approach and serious compliance with UNFCCC.

In April 2015, a first mission to Benishangul Gumuz allowed to take direct contact with the President of the region and his team, and confirm the region as UN-REDD supported pilot. In August, two national consultants were recruited as project manager and technical advisor. In the meantime, the ICA work was launched and progressed at the national level, and the ICA consultant is now ready to carry out in situ analysis at the Benishangul Gumuz level.

Mission objectives :

- Attend the REDD+ inception workshop in the region of Benishangul Gumuz
- Strengthen capacity and support the team in Benishangul Gumuz for effective implementation of the work plan

Activities :

- Monday the 31st:
 - o Flight to Addis Ababa
 - o Desk work
- Tuesday 1st:
 - o Meeting with the GEF RTAs at UNDP Regional Service Center
 - o Flight to Assosa
 - o Coordination and follow up discussion with national and regional authorities
- Wednesday 2nd:
 - o BG REDD+ inception workshop. Presentation of REDD+, UN-REDD and the specific approach to readiness support to BG
- Thursday 3rd:
 - o Technical training/support to the regional team of consultants recruited by UN-REDD; presentation and sharing of methodological tools; detailing and upgrading the work plan and coordination for the next 3 months
- Friday 4th:
 - o Desk work
 - o Flight to Addis Ababa and to Nairobi

Information and Analysis :

- GCF:
 - o A full and detailed report was shared by email.
 - o GCF guidelines on mitigation still unclear. UNDP seems more advanced on adaptation.
 - o UNDP will focus on one proposal per country.
 - o UN-REDD RTA have been positioned as “leaders” on the following countries:
 - Côte d’Ivoire (Fabien)
 - DRC (Berta? To be discussed...)
 - Zambia (To be confirmed? Elsie)
 - o RTA should coordinate strongly around the “one proposal per country” approach, and around the “lead” advisor per country.
- Benishangul Gumuz:
 - o Readiness is now on good tracks. The team is in place. The national and regional authorities strongly support the process and acknowledge the fast progress from UN-REDD support. Norway participated in the inception workshop. There is high potential and credible pathway for fast transition towards implementation in the region:
 - Draft strategy with robust drivers review and set of REDD+ PAMs is expected by January 2016
 - The February-August 2016 period could allow:
 - Formulation of investment plan
 - Policy dialogue and finance mobilization from donors
 - Setting implementation arrangements
 - o The CRGE facility is already operational and works for Norway, UK and other donors
 - o Norway and other donors are already committed to support Ethiopia, and channelling finance to support REDD+ investments in BG seems reasonable
 - o Support to the region is a trump card to advise Ethiopia to move its REDD+ process towards UNFCCC. FCPF supported region of Oromia held its inception workshop in 2013 and is still confronted with some issues (benefit sharing in particular) that delay the transition towards implementation. If BG demonstrates that there are faster and more efficient ways to invest in REDD+, this might support a redirection of REDD+ national architecture and process towards UNFCCC spirit and compliance.
 - o The RTA suggested to redirect the support to learning visit to another country (Targeted Support, \$20K) to strengthen the process in the BG region, and anticipate solutions in case of delay with delivering the expected output. National officials decided to maintain the learning visit (to South Korea), to be carried out before the end of the year.
 - o However, despite serious reasons for being enthusiastic, UN-REDD Programme needs to remain realistic and prevent raising too many expectations, and keep vigilant:
 - There are various risks that could delay or derail the process in BG

- There is some uncertainty on the capacity of the country to really engage in effective nation-wide emission reductions, which should inform the decision of UN-REDD Programme to support Ethiopia further in the investment phase

- Risks/challenges

- Weak tradition of participation, transparency and civil society involvement in policy-related processes. Critical point of attention as underscored by the RTA
- Weak understanding of the specificity of UN-REDD approach to regional level readiness. Despite formal commitment, it's unclear how the authorities would react in front of a "carbon-driven" opportunity of investment. The RTA suggests to progress quickly to build capacity, understanding and frame to prevent derailing the spirit of the support
- Despite strong request by the RTA to position UN-REDD as part of a single national REDD+ process and coordination (under the REDD+ national coordinator), so far the UN-REDD focal point was the advisor to the State Minister, creating de facto a parallel process with the REDD+ national coordination under the (political but non operational) leadership of the State Minister. There's been regular "soft" complains by the REDD+ national coordinator. Now that the advisor to the State Minister has been recruited by UNDP to lead the institutional capacity building programme, there is an opportunity to clarify and harmonize the positioning of the UN-REDD support as part of the national REDD+ process, but signals from the authorities are unclear. The RTA reaffirmed the importance of having UN-REDD placed under the leadership of the REDD+ national coordinator.
- Complex governance system, with apparent contradiction between strong decentralised power (by Constitution) and de facto supremacy of the ruling political party (in Addis and at all levels) which controls subnational administration in a very top-down manner. The RTA suggests to invest in securing national level network, relationship, awareness and support beyond the sole regional authorities.
- The perspective of 2020 actual emissions reduction is unclear. The country is ideally positioned to invest substantively in REDD+ between now and 2020, and the policy framework is said to be conducive as part of the CRGE strategy (the reason that attracted Norway and UK among others) but the "consolidation of subnational approaches" as the national REDD+ approach, the de facto power of the central government, and the reluctance of the authorities to explore thoroughly potential policy reforms make it unclear whether the enabling conditions will allow actual emissions reduction by 2020 at national scale. The RTA suggests to keep assessing the potential and risk of national scale emissions reduction. That could determine whether UNDP/UN-REDD should get fully involved in the implementation of REDD+ in Benishangul Gumuz

9.b Results achieved (key outputs)

- The inception workshop was carried out. The presentation from UN-REDD was appreciated. The targeted support implementation is on good track. The readiness process in BG pilot region offers influencing positioning for UN-REDD and enthusiastic perspectives.
- The project manager and technical assistant in BG have strengthened capacities to carry out their assignment and deliver. A detailed work plan was agreed, with rules for coordination and supervision.

9.c Expected outcomes and impacts

The UNDP and overall UN-REDD programme efficiently fits into the REDD+ national process in Ethiopia, and is implemented in a coherent and synergetic way to support national ambitions. It delivers quickly and allows to experiment policy approach to REDD+ at the regional level in a way that is consistent with and support national REDD+ architecture and UNFCCC Warsaw framework.

10. Key counterparts
MEF, UNDP CO

11. Follow up action matrix

Action to be taken	By whom	Expected completion date
Share background methodologies and documents with consultants	Fabien	September 7th
Provide an updated financial statement and budget for the TS	Ababu	September 11th
Support consultants with accessing relevant information from national and Oromia levels, including FAO data	Fabien, Ababu, Tefera, Yitebitu	September 11 th and continuous
Clarify perspectives at the national level to submit REDD+ pillars to UNFCCC	Fabien, Yitebitu	September 18 th

Supervise REDD+ options design process and formulate a concept note to fully inform and engage UNDP CD and MEF Minister on BG perspectives	Fabien, Ababu	November 13 th
Prepare, finalize and deploy international visit to South Korea	Tefera, Yitebitu and Ababu, with review and finalization with Fabien	November 27 th
Formulate a concept note for the readiness and transition of the 3 Bio-CF-funded pilot regions, check the degree of freedom with carbon accounting prescriptions, and check interest with WB and Norway to have UN-REDD providing technical assistance to the deployment of these regional support	Yitebitu	(passed over from former mission)
Carry out a “mid-term review” mission and draft a request for an additional targeted support	Fabien, with Tefera, Yitebitu, Ababu, UNEP and FAO	November/December
12. Distribution list Tim Clairs, Elsie Attafuah, Anne Martinussen, Ela Ionescu, Elspeth Alverson, Sinkinesh Beyene, Ababu Anage, Marius Walter, Ivo Mulder, Daniel Pouakouyou, Philippe Crete, Remi d’Annunzio, Andrew Bovarnick, Alice Ruhweza, Robert Kelly		