

Independent Technical Review: [Uganda] R-PP document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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General comments to R-PP Document of Uganda

The document is in conformity with the UN-REDD Programme rules of procedure and operational guidelines. It is also evident that the document is in line with the UN-REDD Programme strategy 2011-2015.

The document indicates the level of ownership by stakeholders in Uganda. The Government of Uganda has not only committed USD 472,000 but also mobilised funds from Austrian Government and a grant from FCPF. The proposed stakeholder analysis is noble to ensure that stakeholders at subnational and local levels are made aware and involved in all the National Programme activities.

While implementation capacity was found out to be a problem by a review mission in June 2014, the document has proposed a number of measures to mitigate the problem by suggesting a number of capacity building activities

An institutional arrangement has been proposed to facilitate the realisation of the National Programme. There is however need to indicate the interface at the subnational and local level, where the implementation of REDD+ will occur.

Local communities always assume that REDD+ programmes are similar to regular community based forestry management programme where dividends are shared immediately. We know that REDD+ is a performance based payment system, which starts much later. An investment in a community awareness programme is prudent to arrest these expectations from the communities.

Assessing the draft R-PP against review criteria

1. Ownership of the Programme

The National programme is designed to contribute towards the national priorities and in line with international commitments. The programme will contribute towards the realization of the 2002 National Forestry Policy and is part of the 2011 National Forest plan. The programme will also inform the National Climate Change policy.

The existence of a Policy Committee on Environment chaired by the Prime Minister, the Climate Change Policy Committee composed of the Government Institutions, local communities, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions, research institutions the media and the development partners and various National Technical Committees is a commitment towards ownership of the programme. The multi-sectorial nature of the Technical committees is also a positive step towards ownership.

The commitment of the government to contribute USD472,000 in kind and mobilization of other funds from Austrian Government and FCPF is a strong indication of ownership of the programme.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement

During the R-PP preparation process the document indicates a high level of consultation supported by a participation plan developed with assistance from IUCN. There was a country-wide consultation process. In addition two main meetings were held to engage main stakeholders. The first engagement targeted civil society organizations (CSO), followed by a consultation meeting for REDD Working group who are also the National Technical Committee (NTC). The expanded Climate Change Policy Committee (CCPC) was also engaged and participated in the finalization of the National Programme document through a validation process.

The document is not clear on the tools used in consultation at the community level. Noting that the CSO were consulted, there is need for awareness and consultations at the community levels, especially those utilizing the forests as their main source of livelihoods.

The document indicates that 64% of the forests in Uganda are on private land. This calls for a more engagement with the private sector.

3. Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency

The R-PP has presented a budget based on a detailed results framework with indicative activities for each component in line with the expected outcome. The resources allocations per output make it vivid in gauging the programme effectiveness. The cost optimality is indicative and could be based on similar activities carried out in previous projects. Consequently, the allocation of analyzing community-based approaches to REDD+ implementation is rather modest. There is also need to include resources for a baseline study. The baseline will ensure that mid-term and final evaluations are measured against a benchmark

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success

The document has documented two main risk management strategies. The first is on clarity of outcomes and indicative activities. Monitoring the results framework is one of the tools of managing risks and ensuring the success of the programme

The second strategy is the suggested as institutional arrangement. This allows checks and balances and monitors implementation of the programme. Hiring of Technical Advisors and the establishment of the Project Management Unit gives the programme some autonomy and provide room for efficient implementation. It is advisable to expand the institutional arrangement framework to include sub-national if possible up to community level.

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy

The National Programme for Uganda is consistent with the UN-REDD Strategy. The programmes proposed components are within the six work areas within the UN-REDD programme strategy. The implementing structure of the proposed programme is also in-line with the strategy. The proposed outcomes are also aligned to the relevant UN lead agencies as required by the UN-REDD programme strategy. Other compliance with the strategy include; an elaborate M&E system; programme management and a knowledge management system.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance

The development of the national programme followed the rules and procedures in accordance with the UN-REDD programme rules. The formulation of the R-PP was country led and developed in close coordination with the technical support of UN Agencies. This R-PP has incorporated the main findings of a mission in June 2014 to review the REDD+ progress and scope the potential domains of UN-REDD support.

The expanded Climate Change Policy Committee also validated the National programme during a two-day workshop. Thirty-five people validated the R-PP as presented in the minutes.

The Government of Uganda submitted the R-PP using the right channel and the names of all the national counterparts and participating UN agencies responsible for the realization of the National Programme are well presented in the document

Assessing the draft R-PP by component

1. Component 1: Organize and consult

The Uganda R-PP considers component one as a cross cutting issue and is imbedded across the whole National Programme outcomes. The document has managed to highlight and provide appropriate resources within the other components.

It is however important to ensure that the messages on REDD+ are channeled properly to avoid misrepresentation and misunderstanding at the subnational and local level. It is advisable to conduct targeted focus group activities with small audiences as pilot before implementation of a public awareness activities across the country.

2. Component 2: Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy

Development of the REDD+ national strategy is proposed as an outcome in the R-PP. The grants from FCPF and UN-REDD Targeted support are already supporting a number of activities geared towards realization of the national strategy. The National programme will bridge the gaps and complete the national REDD+ strategy formulation through five main outputs; (i) ensuring the strategy development process is timely and within the REDD+ readiness principles (ii) ensuring that the analytical inputs are robust and comprehensive (iii) facilitate policy level and cross sectional dialogues to strengthen the policy dimension (iv) ensuring that the strategy is fully embedded in and directly contributes to the national development planning and budgeting process and (v) that the strategy will have strong international recognition and can mobilize support for the investment phase.

The proposed activities for the National Programme together with the support activities for the FCPF and UN-REDD Targeted support, will lead to the formulation of a good strategy. Including outcome 3 (strategy implementation) as part of the National programme will also enhance the development of the strategy. The realization of the link between the national level reductions in deforestation and forest degradation with the implementation of the REDD+ programmes at subnational and local levels will shape the governance of the strategy.

Development and implementation of an effective strategy must have a high degree of stakeholder involvement. This R-PP has taken note and has proposed a stakeholder analysis.

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

The R-PP has proposed the development of the National Forest Reference Emission Levels (FREL) as part of the National Forest Monitoring systems as outcome 2. FCPF is already providing support for developing FREL in form of historical assessment of land cover, assessment of carbon stocks, data analysis and capacity building.

There are three main approaches in determination of FREL; (i) statistical (use of inventory or remote sensing data); (ii) Geospatial (GIS) land use change patterns and (iii) Economic modeling. Majority of countries use a combination of I and II. The R-PP has elaborated on the use of GIS but silent of the use of inventory data. This aspect needs to be emphasized in the document.

Assessing historical trends and assessment of national circumstances are two of the most complex and difficult activities in a REDD+ programme. There is need to think upfront on the adequate access to relevant, appropriate and current scientific methods to ensure accuracy of data to international standards.

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

Uganda is already receiving support to enhance its NFMS. Austrian Cooperation, the FCPF (readiness grant) and the targeted support from FAO have ensured the existence of an NFMS. For example, data on the national forest reference emission levels (FREL) is being collected. The National programme will fill the gaps to ensure a robust NFMIS. FAO will support in the design and development of the system. The NP will provide support on strengthening key elements of NFMIS; and build capacity of key stakeholders. The NP proposes four main outputs; (i) data collection and analysis (ii) strengthened capacity of NFA to systematically monitor forest cover (iii) strengthen the capacity and provide tools for NFA to update and disseminate REDD+ information (iv) build the capacity to ensure that the Government of Uganda has the capacity to report on its GHG emissions from the forest sector

The proposed system is adequate but there is need to ensure that social and environmental benefits of REDD+ are captured, stored and reported. This system should be able to include biodiversity, forest condition and socio-aspects of forest resources.

The proposed monitoring system is also silent on the roles of other stakeholders especially CSOs, the private sector and the indigenous people in the monitoring process.

5. Component 5: Schedule and Budget

The National Programme proposes a two-year budget of USD 1,798,670 in addition to other mobilized resources to put in place its REDD+ management process, complete its National REDD+ strategy and develop capacities required for implementation. The budget is evenly distributed within each year and evenly spread over the four components, cost making it a well-scheduled budget. The indirect costs are at 6.54%. There is no indication of a funding gap. The Government of Uganda has committed USD 472,000. The other resources have already been mobilized from Austrian cooperation (USD 887,208), FCPF (USD 3,634,000) and UN-REDD backstopping (USD 310,000).

6. Component 6: Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Section 6 of the R-PP is devoted to Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting. A detailed Monitoring Framework is also presented. The framework provides the risks, resources, means of verification, the responsible institution, scheduling and frequency of monitoring, data collection tools, and indicators (baseline and targets). This framework is detailed enough to monitor activity implementation. In order to capture the real impact of the whole Programme, there is need to expand the framework to capture data at the outcome level to answer the *-so what* –question. This also requires a baseline study. There is no allocation of the baseline in the budget.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the R-PP Document of Uganda

The technical design for R-PP document for Uganda is excellent, however;

- It will be useful to indicate how the programme will interface at the subnational and local level. This could be achieved by extending of the proposed institutional arrangement to the community level

-The document has indicated the levels of consultation. It will be more complete if the national consultations were unpacked to see the tools and depth of consultations at the local and subnational levels.

- An awareness programme has been suggested. It is important to ensure that the package is aimed at managing community expectations and geared towards behavioural change.