

Independent Technical Review: [Uganda] R-PP document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Reviewer: [Moses Masiga]

Date: [19th October 2014]



General comments to R-PP Document of [Uganda] (maximum 200 words):

(i) The UN-REDD National Programme Document for Uganda accurately describes the national ownership for the REDD+ Programme in the country. The National Development Plan and the country's long-term strategic plan (Vision 2040) both consider forestry to be a primary growth sector. Therefore, forest management activities that will be prescribed under the Programme like agriculture, manufacturing and tourism are strongly linked to national development, livelihoods and poverty reduction efforts.

(ii) The level of consultation undertaken for Uganda's Programme are consistent with the UN-REDD Programme and the key categories of civil society, government system, local governments and the UN-system were included. The private sector does not seem to have been as adequately considered.

(iii) The risks to National UN-REDD Programme represent genuine hurdles to overcome particularly the political support, technical expertise, mobilising interest and support of key stakeholders and managing timelines and procedures. However, this reviewer feels that a strong leadership at the National UN-REDD Secretariat and Focal Point can help overcome the hurdles. Learning lessons from previous programmes can also help to overcome shortcomings. The expanded Climate Change Policy Committee represents a means of adapting to available institutional arrangements.

(iv) The Programme design is generally consistent with UN-REDD Strategy and Programme Procedures and Operational Guidance.

Assessing the draft R-PP against review criteria

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

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

Ownership was reviewed based on three criteria: coherence with national strategies; coherence with UN Country Programme; and Government co-financing:

- (i) Coherence with national strategies is noted in the focus on increasing forest cover from the current 15% to 24%, thereby reversing the deforestation that occurred between 1990 and 2005.
- (ii) The country's Long-Term Development strategy (the Vision 2040), and the National Development Plan (NDP) set as a key strategies re-forestation and afforestation of forest reserves and national parks and wildlife reserves, as well as increasing forest cover on private land.
- (iii) Coherence with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is noted focus on strengthening capacity building to implement policies and laws, support to research and development and appropriate technology.
- (iv) The contribution of Government through in kind co-financing is indicated to a tune of \$472,000.

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

- (i) Minutes attached to the Uganda UN-REDD National Programme suggest that a strong participation of civil society organisations (National NGO Forum, Uganda Land Alliance) and some indigenous organisations (United Organisation of Batwa Development in Uganda – OBDU), international non-government organisations (IUCN), Climate Action Network and the UN-system comprising UNDP, UNEP and FAO.
- (ii) Whereas sub-national implementation of the REDD+ national strategy through an integrated landscape management approach, the description of consultations with landscape sub-national local government administration does not seem to filter through the document. Indeed, the administrative and structural arrangements currently do not seem to cater for this component. Even though it is highlighted in the National Forest Plan (2011/12-2021/22) that low participation and funding for District Forest Departments is a critical contributor to the high rate of deforestation in the country. The presence of a Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD), alone, may not be adequate.

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

- (i) The current Programme seems to be cost-efficient. Under Outcome 1, the invitation of international partners might have to be reflected as at partners' own cost. Alternatively the cost may be subsumed under existing activities. In the spirit of cost-efficiency the Programme may seek to co-opt a technical assistant from current partner institutions to support mediation processes, if a cost-effective alternative is not available.

(ii) Under Outcome 2, (item 2.4-4.2) the standout issue is the development of an AFOLU/LULUCF sector GHG inventory at \$25,000, this might be a low estimate. The experience of GHG inventorying under the UN Low Emissions Capacity Building (LECB) Project in Uganda show that the quality, size and organization of the team has to be strong enough to delivery timely product. This review proposes a 50-75% upward adjustment in the proposed budget. This can be deducted from the budget for international MRV expert item (2.2-2.3).

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

(i) This management risks have been reflected in the monitoring and evaluation framework. The risks point to a loss of time in government approval and verification processes, the ability to establish a strong leadership for the Programme, recruit high quality diligent human resource, mobilise the interest of key Programme contributors, among others.

(ii) A strong commitment from potential funders and developing a strong relationship of REDD+ partners will be critical to the success of the Programme. Nonetheless, the inherent strength of the leadership and international procedures should be the immediate concerns since they represent factors that can be mitigated from the outset.

(iii) Therefore the likelihood of success will be high if the inherent and internal leadership and procedural arrangements are timely and adequate governance is set up. The strength of the leadership ought to help mobilise political support and also mobilise the required human resource.

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

Generally, the Programme document is consistent with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy. A few noteworthy issues can be added:

(i) The Programme needs to consistently mention the source documents supporting alignment with national priorities the National Development Plan, the Vision 2040, UNDAF may support buy in at a national level.

(ii) The progress from support under the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) into the UN-REDD Targeted Support can be more articulated stated.

(iii) The structure of the Programme seems well constructed; this reviewer makes some comments that will be captured in suggestions for improving technical design of R-PP.

(iv) In defining the programme, it is not apparent what the national strategic benefits of the REDD National Programme will be. It may be necessary to describe such benefits as contribution to sustainable wood and non-wood products, as well more tourism, GHG capture and food security, among others.

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

(i) The institutional arrangement for management of the UN-REDD Programme comprises of three centres: an expanded Climate Change Policy Committee (CCPC) that provide governing oversight to support to the Programme; the UN System; and the National REDD Secretariat

and Focal Point. Support for the UN-REDD Policy Board is described in the National Programme structure. The CCPC is headed by the Permanent Secretary and it reports to the Government Cabinet-level policy Committee on Environment.

- (ii) Uganda's REDD National Programme was endorsed by the CCPC with room for revisions and reviews. The REDD reporting process has been phased as one of the capacity building activities within the national programme, under the activities covered by the UN-REDD Targeted Support.
- (iii) There is clarity in the obligations on communication, public disclosure and conflict of interest have been indicated in the TORs for the proposed technical positions at the National REDD Secretariat.

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, organize and consult, is well structured. It describes how the consultation process covered relevant government, non-governmental and international stakeholders, although consultation with private sector seems weak. Importantly, the R-PP shows the consultation with District Local Governments where 64% of the forests are on private land. Even though the specific District Local Governments consulted were clearly highlighted.

The appointment of the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) as the National REDD+ Focal point also always easy interaction with the policy arm of government and clear administration of the REDD+ programmes between government and potential partners.

There are on-going policy and regulatory reviews and new plans that present both an opportunity for integrating REDD+ but also imply revisions in the R-PP. The National Environment Act Cap 153 and the National Environment Policy (1995) are being revised with a good opportunity articulating REDD+ in the new regulatory reforms. Similarly, the National Forest Plan 2011/12-2021/22 made revisions that represent a better understanding of REDD+. These revisions will streamline REDD+ in national planning and strategy implementation processes.

The issue of resource rights is currently only expressed in the National Land Act 1998 as amended in 2004 and 2010 (Cap 227). The Act created four tenure systems; freehold, leasehold, customary and Mailo land. The reforms under the Land Act Cap 227 offer land and resource rights for all land tenure systems, the exceptions guaranteeing highest security of tenure to freehold system. But only 5% of Ugandans have freehold land titles, therefore resource rights needs more consideration .

Whereas consultations are important, it is imperative some early actions for the REDD+ programme are initiated. Early actions will allow for data generation and collection, feedback consultation processes and build momentum where positive feedback from consultations has been realized.

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

The REDD-plus Strategy component covered a lot of ground and information but presents a hard volume of text to condense into a strategy. Whereas the level of literature review undertaken is appreciated, the section does suffer considerable repetitiveness for issues such as the legislative, policy and institutional framework, and forestry governance in the country. Similarly, the drivers for deforestation seem to carry a lot of text and when condensed into Table 25 the flow of the report seems to improve.

Some underlying issues to emerge as implicit drivers are worthy of consideration. For example, the role of woodlands in the REDD+ Programme if they are the most vulnerable forest estate how can that be better addressed. . Even though bush lands and grasslands are not considered forest areas they have a strong buffering role and land use change for grasslands particularly potentially increases pressure towards forest degradation. Therefore the role of other land use/cover systems in the REDD+ programme is significant.

The discussion on forestry resources is a little limited in scope to the standing forest stocks or forested land and leaves out physical, human and other investments that contribute to forest management. In a natural resource accounting system such improvement are often considered.

It does not seem at the end of reading the component that a cohesive/comprehensive strategy has been designed. Although the UN-REDD National Programme makes concrete additions that should be added to the R-PP document for institutional arrangements, policy and legislative arrangements, administrative and financial arrangements and a work plan of actions, capacity building, recruitment of key personnel and governance systems.

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

The R-PP notes that the procedures for developing a National Forest Reference Emission Level are still under development. The R-PP was developed at the time when National Biomass Survey and subsequent estimates of above ground carbon reference for Uganda was still undeveloped. In the intervening period there have been valuable additions under Global Carbon Estimates with the UN FAO, and ongoing activities in the country with UNDP.

Additionally, since the National Forestry Authority is implementing Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and voluntary carbon projects with partners it should have access to baseline information for the National Forest Reference Emission Level. Whereas a high level of accuracy is sought under REDD+ programmes benefiting from current initiatives can support current efforts. Although this reviewer notes that additional capacity and capacity building will be required to achieve a National Reference Emissions level.

The starting point will be collating available data and information on forest carbon activities and assessing whether or not it can support the REDD+ programmes. Then a decision is made on how to fill the gaps and/or utilize some of the available information. Issues such as benefits sharing and livelihoods and REDD+ programme options can be extrapolated from these initiatives.

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

The Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards is reasonably under developed. An emerging note from the R-PP was the expectation that the clarity of this component would emerge from additional consultation as well as the work done by taskforces and the implementing institutions under the National REDD programme. Even though a lot of capacity building is envisaged the presence of a strong data collection and analysis system for generating land use/land cover data and national biomass surveys presents a strong standing point.

The forest monitoring capacities of the NFA, UWA and NGOs undertaking forest carbon projects have not been fully reflected in the discussions. Even the low level voluntary carbon projects are able to gain access to international markets through partnerships with international agencies that offered a lot of services and build a base that can contribute to the National REDD Programme. For example, NFA is already working with smaller organisations such as ECOTRUST to organize voluntary carbon schemes for communities under collaborative forest management. If the lessons learned, including the experiences of the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the NFA, are collated they offer a starting base for a future National Forest Monitoring and Information Safeguards.

Additionally, the mandate under the National Environment Management Authority to develop regulatory support for Environmental Impacts, Audits, pollution, chemical management, biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing need to be added to the draft R-PP.

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

The budget and schedule in the R-PP are unlikely to reflect a precise element of actions and costs of implementing the R-PP because of the additional refinement requirement for the different actions. In spite of this the descriptions under component 1 (organize and consult) are very well developed and therefore the actions and budget under this component can be fairly assessed.

It is the feeling of this reviewer that the descriptions of the schedule and budget are reliable and help to inform the UN-REDD National programme for Uganda. The resources allocated will have to be revised given changes in institutional arrangements, human resource requirements and the extended time line for undertaking the additional studies proposed.

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

The monitoring and evaluation framework in the R-PP shows the breakdown of components 1-6 of the R-PP, the proposed activities to be undertaken, the outputs, indicators, means of verification and the timeline between 2012 and 2014. The framework does not indicate the responsible organisations, the possible risks and/or assumptions made, and there is no clear delineation between expected outcome and activities. In a regular log frame approach, the goal or expected outcomes determine the activities, outputs, indicators and resource requirements.

There was effort to streamline the monitoring and evaluation framework under the UN-REDD National Programme document. The institutions that provide leadership for different components are stated. The UN-REDD Targeted Support needs to be used to streamline such discrepancies. It should be noted that the difference between the R-PP and the UN-REDD Programme is that in the latter most of the partners and their contributions are already determine. In the R-PP the quality of the R-PP will attract future partners and therefore the authors may not be able to accurately represent the needs of the Partners. But the experience with the UN-REDD Programme should help the country integrate the necessary revisions for the R-PP.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the R-PP Document of [Uganda] (maximum 400 words):

This technical review captures the progress made with the technical design of Uganda's R-PP including those integrated into Uganda's UN-REDD National Programme. Whereas under R-PP document the authors had a strong organisation and description of component one, the consistency seemed to decline for the remaining five components of the document.

For component two where the information seems to involve considerable literature review the authors may choose to reduce the number of sources to a few and therefore have a concise description. The use of tables will help to reduce and edit out additional information that is not required. For example, many of the direct drivers of deforestation are driven by the same indirect drivers; i.e. demographic factors influence expansion of agricultural land, demand for wood products and other similar pressures. Therefore designing a table with direct and indirect drivers may reduce the repetitiveness in the text. The National Programme Results Framework has also been articulated for the R-PP in the UN-REDD National Programme document.

In reviewing both the draft R-PP and the UN-REDD National Programme Document it is clear that the outcomes on designing and setting up National Forestry Monitoring System and Sub-national implementation of REDD+ national strategy will require considerable capacity building. But it also seems that the existing capacities within government and non-governmental organisations undertaking forest carbon activities were not collated. Uganda has six registered forest carbon CDM projects. All these projects have developed reference levels and MRV systems albeit with international support largely from the World Bank. The existence this capacity should be a starting point for how an MRV system for REDD+ can learn from capacity already on ground.

Furthermore, UNEP and FAO have already been working with the NFA, NEMA and other government agencies leading to current capacities in National Biomass Surveys, analysis of sensitivity of ecosystems. Whereas these tools take time to be updates the role of the REDD Programme could focus on improving the regularity of the data collated. Finally, the technical MRV system rely on current proposals for developing baselines, reference levels and monitoring systems proposed under the UNFCCC as well as progress made in other countries. If therefore the specific data and capacity gaps are articulated and the available capacities collated the technical flow of these two sections will improve. In turn, this will make the budgets and work plans developed therein more accurate.