Quality assurance standards for Tier 2
Document for clarification

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The note below expands on the key elements of Quality Assurance of the UN-REDD Programme associated with Tier 2 as requested by the ninth Policy Board meeting (PB9) in Brazzaville.

Background

During the sixth Policy Board meeting (PB6), the Policy Board (PB) identified the need for supplemental funds to the National Programmes. The Secretariat was subsequently requested to develop options for the utilization of the Tier 2 mechanism. Following a process of review of Tier 2 Terms of Reference (TOR) at PB9, the PB approved the establishment of the Tier 2 mechanism, its associated TORs (attached for reference) and endorsed the association of the first two Tier 2 Programmes, namely Vietnam and DRC. Furthermore, PB9 requested the Secretariat to "provide clarification on principles, criteria, guidelines and quality assurance procedures referred to in Tier 2 TOR as well as on level of compliance requirements".

Recognizing the need to continue to extend support to forest countries subsequent to the completion of their UN-REDD National Programmes, or independently of the specific scope of the UN-REDD Programme, the Tier 2 mechanism was put in place. Tier 2 programmes are programmes associated with the UN-REDD Programme but subject to their own *Memoranda of Understanding*. This dictates that they have specific agreements, project documents and funding modalities negotiated bilaterally and independently of the UN-REDD Programme Fund which is managed by the MPTF-O. Tier 2 Programmes have their own governance structure and can be supported by one or more of the UN-REDD agencies. As indicated in the TORs for Tier 2, the UN-REDD Policy Board approves the association of such programmes with the broader UN-REDD Programme, primarily for purposes of knowledge management and in view of enhancing the technical platform for UN-REDD Programme.

This document was prepared by the Secretariat in response to the PB's request, and builds on the experience gained so far through support provided to the existing Tier 2 Programmes.

Expected Outcome
For information only

Background Documents and Links for more information
TORs Tier 2

Definition of Quality Assurance
For the purpose of the UN-REDD Programme, 'quality assurance' is defined as "the systematic process ensuring that progammes, products and services delivered in association with the programme, meet the specific standards set by the Programme". The elements provided below build on the accumulated acquis over the past 5 years of operations of the programme.

It is important to note that the primary quality assurance responsibility lies within the Agencies as the implementers of the UN-REDD Programme and associated Tier 2 Programmes. This document recognizes that (i) the agencies have their own established policies, procedures and agreements with countries (both donors and forest countries) and that (ii) different Tier 2 type programmes will entail different agreements with donors, with the country and with the specific agencies involved. The information expanded upon below represents the common elements across the agencies and the principles, guidance and processes agreed upon across the programme.

1 – Standards
- National ownership:
  The UN-REDD Programme upholds national ownership as its primary driving principle. Tier 2 Programmes are to be identified developed and implemented driven by this key principle. National ownership implies strong levels of commitment and involvement by the national counterparts, and alignment of the programme with the capacities, circumstances and priorities of the country and donor.

- Stakeholder engagement:
  One of the flagship principles of the UN-REDD Programme relates to its broad-based stakeholder participation, recognition of the role and contribution of Indigenous Peoples, Forest Dependent Peoples, Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders contributing to and potentially impacted by REDD+. The UN-REDD Programme has expanded upon these principles of participation, validation, and contribution in its 'Operational Guidance: Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest Dependent Communities'.

- Transparency and access to information:
  The UN-REDD Programme is committed to transparent use of resources, to providing access to information in compliance and alignment with the agency rules and procedures and with national circumstances.

- Environmental and social principles:
  The UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria act as a guiding framework to address social and environmental issues in the context of UN-REDD National Programmes and other UN-REDD Programme funded activitiess as well as to support countries in developing their national approaches to REDD+ safeguards in line with the UNFCCC[1].

2 – Processes

- Governance and decision-making:
  Tier 2 Programmes are subject to their own governance and decision making bodies and procedures. However, by association with the UN-REDD Programme, such structures are to follow the UN-REDD Programme's rules of procedure by providing space for participation of civil society and indigenous peoples, by enabling access to information under consideration by the policy board, and by adopting transparent decision-making and fund allocation procedures.

- Reporting:
  Tier 2 Programmes reporting requirements are subject to the individual agreements and in compliance with the Tier 2 Programme documents. The UN-REDD Programme reporting template and cycle can be used by Tier 2 Programmes, and while Tier 2 countries have no reporting requirement to the UN-REDD Policy Board, their reports can be shared for information purposes.

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[1] http://www.un-redd.org/multiple_benefits_sepc/tabid/54130/default.aspx

- Monitoring and evaluation:
  As for the UN-REDD PRogramme, Tier 2 Programmes are to follow latest agreed international practice on results based and adaptive management. Monitoring and evaluation for Tier 2 Programmes is to be embedded in their own documentation, however following the key principles of focus on results, accountability, and independent evaluations as embedded in the UN Evaluation Group guidance. National ownership and involvement in these processes is a key element of learning.

3 – Roles and functions during implementation

- Tier 2 countries:
  These constitute both the forest recipient country and the donor countries. They are the primary stakeholders in the context of Tier2 Programmes, and their relationship is defined based on the negotiated agreements and scope. Vis a vis the UN-REDD Programme, the relationship is one of knowledge exchange and sharing of results, lessons and experiences.

- UN-REDD Programme Policy Board:
  The UN-REDD Policy Board approves association of Tier 2 Programmes with the UN-REDD Programme and is the recipient of updates on progress. As Tier 2 Programmes have a governance and decision-making structure of their own, the linkages are primarily of a knowledge sharing nature and given for information of the Policy Board.

- UN-REDD Programme Secretariat:
  All Tier 2 Programme countries, as UN-REDD partner countries, continue to benefit from the regular support and services of the UN-REDD secretariat. If and when requested by the specific agreement of the Tier 2 Programme, the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat could provide secretariat support similar to the services provided to all the UN-REDD Programme counties. The UN-REDD Secretariat will support the identification and channeling of reports, information and updates to the UN-REDD Policy Board.

- MPTF-Office:
  If and when requested, the MPTF-Office can act as the administrative agent of the Tier 2 Programme funds and provide its support.

- UN-REDD Programme Agencies:

4 – Knowledge management

Once the Policy Board approves association with the UN-REDD Programme, such Tier 2 programmes can benefit from the full suite of knowledge sharing and management support provided by the Programme. In line with the Programme's increasing emphasis on South-South cooperation and exchange, specific efforts will be made to enhance such approaches to learning in particular as Tier 2 programmes are anticipated to have unique and specific experiences to share.

By association with the UN-REDD Programme, Tier 2 programmes would have access to and be included in all the online media, social networks, technical assistance and communications material produced, provided and generated by the Programme.