

External Evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (the UN-REDD Programme)

Volume I – Final Report

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Executive Summary

- i. The external evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) was requested at the 9th UN-REDD Policy Board meeting in 2012. It was conducted by an independent team of consultants (Alain Frechette, Minoli de Bresser, and Robert Hofstede) and managed by a joint Evaluation Management Group (EMG), consisting of the Evaluation Offices of the three participating UN agencies.
- ii. The purpose of the evaluation was to:
 - (i) Provide evidence of results achieved to meet accountability requirements;
 - (ii) Promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the Policy Board, participating UN organisations, member countries, and other partners; and
 - (iii) Inform the revision of the UN-REDD Programme Strategy beyond 2015.
- iii. To this end, the evaluation assessed programme performance, including the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability of results and the likelihood of impact. It covered the Programme’s entire range of activities and geographic scope, from June 2008 to the end of 2013.

Overview of the UN-REDD Programme

- iv. The concept of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (or REDD) to help stabilise atmospheric CO₂ concentrations was formally endorsed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bali, in 2007. Several months later, the UN-REDD Programme was launched as a joint effort of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to reduce forest-related emissions and eventually participate in a performance-based payment mechanism in order to achieve so-called “REDD+ readiness.”
- v. Drawing on lessons learned from early experimentation in nine country pilots during a quick start phase, the Programme formalised its approach with a five-year strategy (2011-2015), designed to “promote the elaboration and implementation of National REDD+ Strategies to achieve REDD+ readiness, including the transformation of land use and sustainable forest management and performance-based payments.”¹ To this end, two complementary sets of interventions are used:
 - National Programmes (NP), which provide comprehensive technical assistance to countries with the aim of preparing and implementing national REDD+ strategies or action plans; and
 - Support to National Action – Global Programme (SNA-GP), which provides on-demand targeted technical assistance, including normative and standardised approaches to REDD+.
- vi. As of April 2014, the Programme includes 51 registered partner countries of which 18 receive National Programme support and 29 have accessed SNA-GP support. In 2013, the Programme also

¹ The UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015, p. 6

began coordinating Tier II investments (direct bilateral REDD+ investments) on behalf of the Norwegian government with Vietnam and DRC.

- vii. The Programme is structured around the core competencies of the three UN partner agencies that aim to “Deliver as One.” It is governed by a Policy Board, consisting of representatives from nine NP countries, donors, civil society (CS) and Indigenous Peoples’ (IPs) organisations, and the three UN partner agencies. Representatives from related initiatives, such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and collaborating agencies, are invited to participate as observers. Programme management is assured by: (i) the Strategic Group (SG), which oversees inter-agency coordination; (ii) the Management Group (MG), which is primarily responsible for the delivery and management of the overall Programme; (iii) the Secretariat, which oversees coordination, communications, knowledge management functions, the delivery of SNA-GP, and the preparation/delivery of PB sessions; and (iv) the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office, which acts as the administrative agent of the UN-REDD Programme fund. As of December 2013, slightly more than USD 215 million had been received from Norway (the founding and largest REDD+ donor to date), the European Union, Denmark, Spain, Japan, and Luxemburg (by order of contribution).

Methodology

- viii. The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) were drafted by the UN-REDD Secretariat with guidance from the Evaluation Offices of the three participating UN agencies. They were discussed at the 10th PB meeting in Lombok, Indonesia. The Evaluation Team was selected by the EMG following an independent, open process and contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office.
- ix. Though independent, the evaluation was conducted as a highly consultative and transparent process with several opportunities for evaluation stakeholders to discuss the evaluation questions, approach, findings, and recommendations. The evaluation relied on mixed methods of data collection and analysis, including an in-depth desk review, key informant interviews, an on-line survey, and country visits. Likelihood of sustainability and impact were assessed using a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) of the Programme, with particular attention paid to the rapidly evolving context. The ToC was developed by the Evaluation Team and discussed with Programme proponents during the inception phase.
- x. The evaluation involved three phases. The **inception phase** was initiated with a Team mission to UN-REDD Secretariat headquarters in Geneva, in October 2013, to validate the issues and concerns to be addressed, develop a draft ToC, delineate the boundaries of the assignment, and obtain relevant documents, including a detailed list of all key stakeholders to be interviewed. The draft Inception Report was made available for comments prior to finalisation.
- xi. **Data collection** involved: (i) an in-depth desk studies of Programme documents, including recently evaluated NPs (Indonesia, Panama, Tanzania, and Vietnam); (ii) a comprehensive review of the available literature on REDD+; (iii) key stakeholder interviews with country, CSO and IPO representatives, Programme staff, and associated donors and partners; (iv) a web-based survey; and (v) field visits to a sample of NP countries (Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Kenya, Paraguay, and Zambia) and UN-REDD offices in Bangkok, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Panama, and Rome.
- xii. **Data analysis and reporting** followed an iterative process. Preliminary evaluation findings were shared with all Policy Board members and a short list of 10 external reviewers for feedback. The

Evaluation Team then produced a full draft report that was again shared with key audiences (Programme staff and PB members) for comments. The EMG provided guidance and quality assurance on the evaluation approach and key outputs.

- xiii. The UN-REDD Programme is a complex endeavour, composed of two inter-linked sets of interventions, acting at multiple levels and involving a broad range of stakeholders. In carrying out this evaluation, the Team met with a number of limitations related to data collection, data analysis, and logistics. In all cases, efforts were made to ensure reliability and broad validity of data collected – either through complementary literature review or interviews.

Key Findings

Strategic Relevance

- xiv. The UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to UNFCCC negotiations and the emerging REDD+ agenda, but uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing and slower-than-expected progress on most aspects of the proposed mechanism are creating new challenges. While UN-REDD appears to be adapting to these, there is as yet no emerging consensus on what an alternative scenario for REDD+ might entail.
- xv. Valued for its integrated approach to sustainable resource use, the UN-REDD Programme is largely consistent with country needs and priorities, as expressed in relevant forestry, environment, and climate adaptation and mitigation policies, plans, and sector frameworks. However, the Programme is primarily driven by the UN agencies and the requirements of the mechanism (in alignment with the phased approach to REDD+), as opposed to the challenges that country partners are facing.
- xvi. UN-REDD enjoys strong buy-in from host ministries downward (environment or forestry departments), but country ownership remains weak overall, with limited involvement from policy-makers, non-forest-related ministries, and the private sector. The Programme's emphasis on safeguards and the need for the free, prior and informed consent of forest-dependent populations has created more sustained support amongst civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organisations, though effective participation in local decision-making fora and contentious issues such as tenure and benefit distribution remain unresolved challenges.
- xvii. Thanks to its normative and technical contributions and responsiveness to country demands, the Programme's comparative advantage is becoming progressively clearer in the global REDD+ arena. While coordination with other initiatives is steadily increasing at the national level, the co-occurrence of two multilateral readiness programmes (FCPF and UN-REDD) with limited joint programming and implementation efforts points to a strong potential for further efficiency gains. The adoption of a common definition for REDD+ readiness and its implications would be a step in the right direction.
- xviii. While UN-REDD has the potential to become a fundamental game changer, there appears to be a growing disconnect between the evolution of the Programme and the way resources are allocated on the one hand, and the evolving context on the other. Compounded by the absence of a clear theory of change (ToC) that weakens the Programme's ability to ensure that it is doing the right things to achieve its intended results, UN-REDD's focus on a post-2012 scenario is no longer aligned with ongoing UNFCCC negotiations, the evolving nature of REDD+, and the needs of country partners in particular.

- xix. Based on these considerations, the evaluation rated the **strategic relevance** of the Programme as **Satisfactory**.

Effectiveness

- xx. Overall, the UN-REDD Programme is effective in terms of producing key outputs, and progress towards outcomes is improving. Specifically, notable achievements are being made in terms of forest monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), stakeholder engagement, and the development of national REDD+ governance systems. With regards to outcomes, the Programme is credited with raising awareness on the critical importance of forests and the need for stakeholder engagement, as well as providing forest-dependent communities with a unique platform to voice their rights, needs, and concerns.
- xxi. While contributing to the expansion of the sustainable development paradigm and the development of country capacities in a number of areas (most notably in MRV), achieving and sustaining outcome-level results is an ongoing challenge. Countries participating in National Programmes are not progressing as planned. The time, effort, and resources needed to achieve REDD+ readiness were greatly under-estimated. Though countries differ considerably in terms of their initial capacity and ability to achieve stated objectives, all face considerable challenges, and none of the reviewed countries have so far achieved satisfactory ratings in all outcome areas.
- xxii. Key to understanding the challenges that participating countries face are the inherently complex nature of the REDD+ agenda and the unrealised expectation that financial incentives would help drive change. In essence, instead of building on the capacities and motivation of in-country stakeholders to ensure the maintenance of forest resource systems, the performance-based architecture of REDD+ has made progress dependent on the continuation of technical and financial support coming from abroad.
- xxiii. Hence, the evaluation rated the **delivery of outputs** as **Moderately Satisfactory** and Programme **effectiveness** as **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

Efficiency

- xxiv. At the global level, the Programme relies on a transparent open-access framework – the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – to report on the use and distribution of funds across the three UN partner agencies. While the Fund is managed in accordance with applicable Policy Board decisions on joint annual work plans and budgets for SNA-GP and NP activities, how resources are then allocated and used by each UN agency partner is less clear. Individual agency work plans and budgetary allocations are not shared, and though strict guidelines are used to ensure accountable and transparent use of funds, each agency uses distinct accounting and contracting rules that inevitably lead to increased inefficiencies.
- xxv. The distribution of resources across the Programme is not linked to a clearly articulated strategy. While NP budgets are developed by countries with the support of Programme staff, there are no clear strategic guidelines for the development of these budgets, and the rationale for investing the bulk of available resources in SNA-GP is likewise unspecified. Available evidence suggests that UN agency partners face strong incentives to promote activities that favour their interests, as well as in-house capacities in lieu of local solutions.

- xxvi. UN-REDD does not rely on an integrated management system to track and monitor the use of available resources and quality of Programme results, making it difficult to undertake more complex analyses and decide how best to allocate available resources to achieve objectives.
- xxvii. Though inter-agency coordination is perceived to be improving, with increasing evidence of joint planning efforts in the regions, the challenges to joint programming and implementation remain considerable, especially at the country level. Despite clear intentions to deliver as one, the three UN partners continue to rely on distinct planning, implementation, and accounting requirements that tend to increase transaction costs and reduce delivery effectiveness.
- xxviii. The complexity of the UN-REDD governance structure is generally considered essential for maintaining trust amongst UN partner agencies and across the Programme's diverse range of constituencies, but it also creates high transaction costs, delays in implementation, and administrative redundancies. The Programme's overlapping structures make it difficult to track the rationale for decisions and establish linkages between proposed interventions and programmatic objectives.
- xxix. Based on this, the evaluation rated Programme **efficiency** as **Unsatisfactory**.

Impact

- xxx. As currently designed, the likelihood of broader development impact (i.e., emission reductions) largely lies beyond the Programme's reach. To achieve emission reductions and implement solutions that will address the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the Programme posits that partner countries that graduate from the readiness phase will be able to secure long-term financial support from either market or non-market sources. The future of such financing is unclear, and the road to REDD+ readiness and implementation faces important challenges.
- xxxi. The UN-REDD Programme is helping to create enabling conditions for collective action at the country level. It remains too early to tell what effects the Programme will have in terms of reduced deforestation, sustainable forest resource use, and improved socio-economic conditions. While it is assumed that the key drivers of deforestation will be more effectively addressed during the implementation phase, evidence drawn from both past and present efforts to achieve sustainable outcomes suggests that this may not be the best approach.
- xxxii. The UN-REDD Programme has contributed to the development of more inclusive and transparent forms of stakeholder engagement, as well as some policy and regulatory reforms. Changes in the rules that condition the use, management, and governance of forests at national and sub-national levels will take longer to achieve and require higher levels of commitment.
- xxxiii. The evaluation therefore rated the **likelihood of impact** as **Moderately Unlikely**.

Sustainability

- xxxiv. In a context of growing uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing, the extent to which partner countries will be able to sustain activities once Programme interventions end is unclear. This places the sustainability of Programme results at risk.
- xxxv. The Programme is helping countries to develop comprehensive REDD+ strategies. The capacities needed to support and sustain such efforts are proving more difficult to develop. Among other things, staff turnover, the leakage of trained resources, and incidences of capacity substitution by

international consultants have been observed to affect the ability of participating countries to manage their own affairs.

- xxxvi. The lack of inter-sectoral buy-in and country ownership also places limitations on the sustainability of Programme results at the national level.
- xxxvii. Overall, the evaluation rated **sustainability** as **Unlikely**.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- xxxviii. The importance of, and need for, gender mainstreaming in UN-REDD is reflected in most policy and programmatic documents and guidelines, but the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities at the country level is not taking place in a cohesive and systematic way throughout the Programme. Attention to integrating gender concerns, especially at the local level, will be important if the Programme is to better address all the drivers of deforestation.
- xxxix. The Programme provides an enabling platform for Indigenous Peoples' and civil society organisations to influence global discussions on REDD+. The ability of forest-dependent populations to influence REDD+ processes has so far proven to be more limited at the country level, and non-indigenous communities are not well represented in the Programme, overall. The recognition of land and resource rights, clear benefit distribution mechanisms, and the monitoring and enforcement of safeguards remain contentious issues.
- xl. Institutional uptake and mainstreaming of newly acquired capacities constitute important challenges for most countries, with noted difficulties in terms of mainstreaming knowledge and tools into existing national institutions.
- xli. The UN-REDD Programme has been a strong voice in the prioritisation of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) principles and the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights in the implementation of UNFCCC safeguards, especially in decision-making fora. Programme contributions to social and environmental safeguards are helping to raise awareness at national and global levels, but it remains a challenge to put such principles into practice, notably due to the high number of safeguards and the lack of clear guidance on how to implement, monitor, and enforce these.
- xlii. Through its work on anti-corruption and participatory governance assessment, the UN-REDD Programme is helping to establish more robust standards for REDD+ governance.

Factors Affecting Performance

- xliii. **Programme Design and Structure.** The performance of the UN-REDD Programme is affected by its ambitious nature and corresponding absence of a clear and explicit theory of change. This places limitations on the ability of the Programme to develop a coherent strategy for achieving results, set priorities, efficiently allocate resources, adaptively manage implementation, and develop sufficiently robust design principles for achieving sustainable outcomes in different social-ecological environments.
- xliv. Though countries are successfully engaging in REDD-related processes, the sustainability of Programme results and their appropriation by the partner countries crucially depend upon the maintenance of dedicated international structures (i.e., financial and technical assistance). Overreliance on the promise of REDD+ financing exposes UN-REDD to potential risks and hinders the resilience of Programme results.

- xliv. The drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are being identified in the readiness phase, but the Programme has so far paid inadequate attention to these concerns, and viable strategies to overcome such challenges are not forthcoming. Though theoretical contributions are being produced, progress in terms of actionable solutions is slow, and few countries have drawn a clear path for tackling the drivers of deforestation once concrete REDD+ support becomes available.
- xlvi. **Cooperation and Partnerships.** The convening authority, legitimacy, and credibility of the three UN agencies are seen as key Programme strengths. By successfully forging partnerships and mutually beneficial cooperation with key development partners (e.g., FCPF) and REDD+ initiatives or implementing bodies more broadly, the Programme’s efforts are helping to strengthen its comparative advantage and value-added at all levels of interaction. Many of these relationships are being initiated through informal channels, especially at the country level. Formal collaboration is strongest at the global and regional levels.
- xlvii. **Programme Organisation and Management.** Management and coordination functions have improved over time, but the ability of the different administrative bodies to meaningfully contribute to the objectives of the Programme is affected by overlapping roles and responsibilities between the Management Group, Strategy Group, and Secretariat; insufficient decision-making autonomy; and close attention to inter-agency equity, as opposed to strategy. This leads to a duplication of efforts, slows down decision-making processes, and raises transaction costs.
- xlviii. **Human and Financial Resource Administration.** Resource allocations are broadly consistent with programmatic objectives and priorities, and they are rigorously managed and monitored by the three partner agencies. However, the process used is neither openly accessible nor clear from a strategic point of view. The absence of a joint accountability and reporting mechanism by the three partner agencies and general oversight capacity by the Policy Board make it difficult to track the relative efficiency, effectiveness, and soundness of Programme investments.
- xlix. **Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation.** The Programme monitors progress and reports on the achievement of outputs, and a results-based framework, linked to the Programme’s management cycle, is currently being developed. Linkages between outputs and the achievement of expected outcomes are not always clear. The purpose and intended results of the Programme will need to be clarified before the benefits of a results-based approach are realised, including the relationship between NP and SNA-GP components.

Conclusions

- i. The global urgency to reduce emissions from deforestation is undisputed, and the UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to the requirements of the REDD+ mechanism, in alignment with UNFCCC requirements. However, contrary to initial assumptions, REDD+ has so far proven to be more complex and far more difficult to implement than what early proponents had envisioned.
- ii. While the Programme is a relevant response to the requirements of the REDD+ agenda and what participating countries need in order to be compliant with the proposed mechanism, it only partially addresses the challenges that countries face in order to reduce emissions from deforestation. For the most part, the focus is on the technical requirements of the phased approach to REDD+, not on developing tangible solutions to address the resource dilemmas country partners face.
- iii. The global context has changed considerably since REDD+ was first introduced. The implicit theory and assumptions that guided the creation and development of the UN-REDD Programme no longer

appear to hold. While the Programme generates a wide range of residual benefits, the achievement of emission reductions remains heavily tied to the outcome of future UNFCCC discussions and the continued availability of REDD+ financing. In a dynamic and unpredictable world, this places limitations on the Programme's resilience vis-à-vis unforeseen developments.

- liii. The Programme is effective in achieving output-level results in most, if not all, of the areas wherein it operates. However, achieving system-wide change is a long-term process. Though some work areas are more developed than others, the changes that the Programme aims to initiate are substantial. Given the incremental nature of policy and institutional change in sovereign political-economic systems, the expectation that countries would be able to comply with the exacting requirements of the Programme within a three- to five-year cycle was overambitious.
- liv. Pursuit of the REDD+ agenda and UN involvement in the delivery of such a mechanism have helped to bring global attention to the fundamental importance of forests for the achievement of a sustainable future. UN partner agencies send a powerful signal that forests are critical for the future. While success is harder to achieve than expected, the absence of UN involvement in the delivery of such an ideal would likely have limited the political appeal and legitimacy of the REDD+ framework.
- lv. In the current context of economic austerity and subdued interest in supporting global public goods, efforts to increase (let alone sustain) results will remain a challenge. Unless UN-REDD works to include key players and develop alternative pathways that limit country dependency on continuous REDD+ financing and external technical assistance, the ability of any country to sustain results will be limited.
- lvi. Despite the myriad challenges that UN-REDD is facing – which are the same across all REDD+ processes – it has nevertheless managed to establish important precedents that are worth acknowledging. The litmus test will come when the Programme either succeeds or fails to heed the warnings contained in this evaluation and adopts a more resilient framework for achieving emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation.
- lvii. The rating for overall Programme performance is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Recommendations

- lviii. Recommendation 1: The Policy Board should re-examine the overall purpose and strategic objectives of UN-REDD, to address both the significant challenges that REDD+ faces and the dynamic context within which it operates. This should include a focus on more flexible and country-driven solutions to achieving emission reductions; the need to address the underlying factors that condition land use and land cover change; and the development of a more resilient and therefore less resource-dependent Programme.
- lix. Recommendation 2: In consultation with country partners and other stakeholders, the UN-REDD Management Group should develop a robust Theory of Change that explains what the Programme aims to accomplish and how it will achieve such ends (i.e., link theory to action).
- lx. Recommendation 3: UN partner agencies should further their collaboration with the WB's FCPF with a view to fully harmonise standards and approaches, eliminate the duplication of effort, and strengthen joint delivery on the basis of core agency competencies.

- lxi. Recommendation 4: UN partner agencies should work with partner countries to strengthen country ownership over all aspects of national REDD+ efforts, including the development of a more bottom-up approach.
- lxii. Recommendation 5: As part of the revision to the Programme’s Strategy, UN partner agencies and participating countries should place greater emphasis on integrated cross-sectoral approaches to REDD+ and should advocate for higher-level political support and capacity building across national government entities.
- lxiii. Recommendation 6: UN partner agencies and country partners should initiate joint actions to address the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, by tackling issues and engaging relevant stakeholders (especially the private sector) early in the REDD+ readiness phase.
- lxiv. Recommendation 7: The PB should make resource rights a priority area for Programme interventions, building on existing tenure-related efforts at the national, regional, and global levels. To this end, the Programme should support country efforts to clarify the land and resource rights of forest-dependent populations, including carbon rights and the related distribution of benefits.
- lxv. Recommendation 8: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should continue efforts to streamline social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, especially with regards to benefit sharing mechanisms, and support country efforts to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.
- lxvi. Recommendation 9: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should intensify efforts to mainstream gender equity across the Programme, providing sufficient resources and relevant training to ensure a more comprehensive and systematic approach.
- lxvii. Recommendation 10: Country partners and UN partner agencies should strive to ensure fair and verifiable representation of CSOs, IPs, and other forest-dependent populations in NP decision-making.
- lxviii. Recommendation 11: The Policy Board and UN partner agencies should revise and simplify the UN-REDD governance structure to reduce overlap, strengthen the strategic and substantive functions of the PB, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the MG and Secretariat.
- lxix. Recommendation 12: The UN-REDD Secretariat should continue efforts to develop and implement results-based planning, monitoring, and reporting tools across the breadth of the Programme, to draw lessons from ongoing implementation efforts, support adaptive management needs, and report achievements to both internal and external audience

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Acronyms

AWG-LCA	Ad Hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action
BDS	Benefit Distribution System
CAST	Country Approach to Safeguards Tool
CBFF	Congo Basin Forest Fund
CCBA	Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CN-REDD	Coordination nationale REDD (National REDD Coordination, in DRC)
COP	Conference of the Parties
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EEG	Environment and Energy Group
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Programme
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HQ	Headquarters
IAG	Advisory Group on Forests, Rights and Climate Change (IAG)
ICA	Institutional and Context Analysis
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
IFF	Interim Forest Finance
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPO	Indigenous Peoples' Organisation
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IWG-IFR	Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD+
KfW	German Development Bank (KfW)
LAC	Latin American Countries
LEAF	Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

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MB	Multiple Benefits
MG	Management Group
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICFI	Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative
NRAP	National REDD+ Action Programme
OAI	Office of Audit and Investigations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PB	Policy Board
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PGA	Participatory Governance Assessments
PNG	Papua New Guinea
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries
REM	REDD Early Movers
R-PIN	Readiness Plan Idea Note
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SEPC	Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria
SES	Social and Environmental Safeguards
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SG	Strategy Group
SNA-GP	Support to National REDD+ Actions – Global Programme
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of IPs
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD Programme	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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External Evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (the UN-REDD Programme)

1. Introduction

1. In response to established accountability requirements, the need to capture lessons learned from the first years of implementation, and draw recommendations on the way forward, the external evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (the UN-REDD Programme) was requested at the Ninth UN-REDD Policy Board meeting in 2012, in Brazzaville, Congo.

2. The evaluation was conducted by an independent team of consultants (Alain Frechette, Minoli de Bresser, and Robert Hofstede), with technical and research support provided by Melissa Rodrigue and Laura de Bresser. The evaluation was managed by a joint Evaluation Management Group (EMG) consisting of the Evaluation Offices of the three participating UN agencies.

1.1 Nature and Structure of this Report

3. The Evaluation Team is proud to present this report to the UN-REDD Policy Board and three participating UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, and UNEP), in support of their decision-making needs. It is the Team's hope that relevant institutions in all countries participating in UN-REDD interventions, other REDD+ initiatives, and the broader REDD+ community will also benefit from the analysis and recommendations herein.

4. This report is organised as follows:

- Section 2 covers the purpose, scope, and objectives of the evaluation;
- Section 3 details the reporting process and methodology, including data sources and methods, as well as evaluation limitations;
- Section 4 provides an overview of REDD+ and, as a result, some insight into the external context surrounding the UN-REDD Programme;
- Section 5 explores the UN-REDD Programme structure, scope, and underlying theory of change;
- Section 6 contains the findings, evidence, and associated analysis of the evaluation;
- Section 7 includes the report's conclusions;
- Section 8 presents lessons learned from the experience; and
- Section 9 outlines recommendations for the Programme, moving forward.

5. Appended to this report are: (i) the references cited in the report; (ii) the list of documents consulted; (iii) the names, title, and organisation of interviewed stakeholders; and (iv) the evolution of REDD+, as captured in the UNFCCC processes. Volume II includes: (i) Terms of Reference; (ii) data collection instruments; and (iii) survey results.

2. Purpose

6. As articulated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the evaluation's purpose is to *make a broad and representative assessment of the Programme's performance*, including the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency of related interventions, sustainability of current investments, and likelihood of impact in the near to long-term future.

2.1 Scope and Objectives

7. The evaluation covers the Programme's entire range of activities and geographic reach, from its inception in June 2008 to the end of 2013. More specifically, it seeks to:

- Provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements;
- Promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the Policy Board, participating UN organisations, and other partners; and
- Inform the revision of the UN-REDD Programme Strategy.

8. As per the ToR, the evaluation focused on a core set of OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact, and sustainability), as well as cross-cutting issues and factors affecting performance. These criteria are defined in each sub-section, where the core questions addressed are also provided. In the end, the evaluation sought to articulate lessons learned on the Programme's strategic direction, including operational and technical aspects, to improve future programming activities at the national and global levels.

3. Methodology

9. The overall design of this evaluation is based on the use of the Programme's theory of change (ToC). Following Funnell and Rogers (2011), the evaluation uses the Programme theory to assess how the different contexts wherein UN-REDD operates affect the Programme's performance; whether or not the proposed logic of results hold at the country level; and whether the assumptions made in terms of external factors needed to enable and sustain change are valid, and if not, how such discrepancies affect performance. While firmly grounded in the use of the Programme ToC, the Evaluation Team's approach was also evidence-based, utilisation-focused, and participatory.

10. **Evidence-based:** In addition to data triangulation from evidence collated during this evaluation, the Team cross-referenced its findings and areas of recommendation with relevant scientific literature to search for commonalities as well as areas of convergence and divergence. Though findings integrate the views of key stakeholders, they are likewise fact-based and informed by triangulated sources of evidence.

11. **Utilisation-focused:** The Evaluation Team maintained close communication with the EMG, Secretariat, and Management Group (MG) to ensure that the assessment supported the information needs of UN-REDD management and the Policy Board. These interactions served to ensure the usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, and did not decrease the evaluation's independence, as the Team maintained the final say on the content of the evaluation report.

12. **Consultative and Participatory:** In order to build a positive precedent for the evaluation, create a sense of ownership, and foster shared understanding of the study results, the Evaluation Team maintained strong communication with Programme staff, both at global level and at regional and national levels, throughout the evaluation.

3.1 Evaluation Process, Data Collection, and Reporting

3.1.1 Inception Phase

13. The **inception mission** (Rome and Geneva, October-November 2013) allowed for the development of mutual trust among Evaluation Team members, UN-REDD Secretariat staff and other key stakeholders. It helped ensure that the EMG and consultants had a shared understanding of the UN-REDD evaluation, and was used to validate the issues and concerns to be addressed by the Evaluation Team, through interviews with UN-REDD Programme staff, members of the MG and Strategy Group (SG), and discussions with the EMG. The inception mission was used to develop a draft ToC, delineate the boundaries of the assignment, and obtain relevant documents, including a detailed list of all key stakeholders to be interviewed.

14. As part of the **inception phase**, the consultants conducted a preliminary review of available documents, developed an Inception Report and evaluation matrix, which were reviewed by the EMG, Secretariat and MG, and finalised the proposed methodological approach.²

3.1.2 Data Collection Phase

15. **In-Depth Desk Study and Literature Review:** The consultants reviewed key documents identified by the MG, and relevant sources of information were extracted for report writing and as references to validate during key stakeholder interviews. These included general background documentation and websites; strategy documents; relevant reports; Programme management notes; design documents, work plans, and budgets; as well as monitoring and evaluation reports, policy documents, and sector plans. To validate observations, findings, and areas of recommendation, the Team also carried out a detailed review of relevant sources of scholarship and documentation of related initiatives (especially the FCPF programme). A complete list of references is provided in Appendix I.

16. **Semi-Structured Interviews of Key Stakeholders:** The evaluation consultants conducted a series of semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions, for a total of 190 interviewees. The EMG helped set up meetings with key informants identified by the Secretariat, MG and agency teams, and the Secretariat helped to arrange the country and regional visits. Informants included a sample of Policy Board members; government stakeholders; members of civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organisations; current and potential donors; country, regional, and HQ staff members from the three associate UN agencies; UN-REDD Secretariat and Programme management staff; as well as representatives from other bilateral or multilateral initiatives. A complete list of interviewees is included in Appendix III.

17. **E-Survey:** To collect further data on Programme performance, an online survey was conducted among UN-REDD Programme staff and country representatives (focal points, programme directors/coordinators, government representatives, civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organisations, permanent observers and ex officios of the Policy Board [PB], as well as consultants). The instrument was developed in consultation with the EMG and programmed into Fluid Survey, an online software in which data is protected under Canadian privacy laws. The survey was made available in English, French, and Spanish and sent to 398 potential respondents: 32 emails bounced, 94 respondents initiated the survey, 81 completed the survey, and 285 chose to ignore it – yielding a response rate of 20%. The survey was made available for three weeks. In all, three invitations to participate were sent on the Evaluation Team's behalf by the Head of the UN-REDD Secretariat. For a complete view of survey results, please see Volume II.

² The Inception Report is available on Workspace website at:
http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=12048&Itemid=53

18. **Field Missions:** Building on the input of key stakeholders and documented sources of evidence, countries were selected on the basis of previous levels of investments (i.e., technical support), the degree of completion of the National Programme (NP) or targeted support, and the relative involvement of UN agencies in furthering the readiness of participating countries. Missions were conducted in Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Kenya, Paraguay, and Zambia. Each field mission lasted three to five days. Relevant information was also drawn from recently evaluated NPs (i.e., Indonesia, Panama, Tanzania, and Vietnam), complemented by interviews (in person and by phone / Skype) on specific issues (especially in Panama and Bolivia). In addition to country-level information, the Team gathered data at regional and global levels through visits to the UN-REDD offices in Bangkok, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Panama, and Rome.

3.2 Analysis and Reporting

19. Throughout the evaluation – including data collection, analysis, and report writing – the Team adhered to the UNEG Norms and Standards. Depending on the nature of documented sources of evidence and the methods used for collecting data, qualitative and/or quantitative methods of analysis were used. The Team also rated evaluation criteria according to a six-point scale, as outlined in the ToR.

- **Descriptive analysis** served to understand the contexts in which the UN-REDD Programme operates; how the Programme functions and coordinates with country partners, donors and other initiatives; and how it monitors and tracks its progress.
- **Content analysis** was used to collate and analyse documents and interview notes in order to identify emerging trends and patterns, as well as diverging perspectives.
- **Quantitative analysis** was used to interpret survey results and other sources of data as required.

20. **Comparative analysis** was used to triangulate multiple data sources and methods to ensure the validity of findings and minimise the risk of spurious correlations.

21. As a preliminary step to the draft report, the Evaluation Team worked to develop and substantiate the major findings relevant to the report's purpose and objectives. **Preliminary evaluation findings** were shared with the EMG, the Policy Board, the MG, and the SG. The MG provided direct (Skype session) and written (joint) responses. Of the Policy Board, only Norway, the European Commission, the MPTF Office, and Papua New Guinea provided feedback. The preliminary findings were also reviewed by an external group of 10 experts (academics, opinion leaders and representatives from leading economic, conservation and rights-based organisations), yielding valuable comments and constructive criticisms that have been fully incorporated in the report findings and arguments.

22. Following the preliminary review of the draft evaluation statements, a full draft report was developed and submitted to the PB for its review. This **Final Report** takes into consideration all of the feedback received during the final round of review, which included comments and observations from the MG, Norway, Japan, Denmark, and the MPTF Office.

3.3 Limitations

23. The UN-REDD Programme is a complex endeavour, composed of two inter-linked programmes (i.e., the SNA-GP and the National Programmes) and multiple levels of intervention (global, regional, national, local) that require the involvement of a broad range of stakeholder groups. It aims to address numerous complex and sensitive inter-related issues (governance, anti-corruption, forest rights, land tenure rights, IP rights and participation, MRV/REL definitions, equitable benefit sharing, private sector involvement, etc.) through a novel and continuously evolving framework. Differentiating critiques of the REDD+ agenda from the performance of UN-REDD is complicated by the Programme's strong normative role in defining the many facets of REDD+. In

carrying out this evaluation, the Evaluation Team met with a number of challenges and limitations, some of which were raised during the inception phase, but others emerged during implementation of the assignment.

3.3.1 Data Collection Challenges

24. In order to evaluate the performance of such a large and complex programme, one must have a comprehensive amount of quantitative and qualitative data and information, and the Team has faced challenges in this respect. Three main reasons were: (i) of the 50+ partner countries (18 of which are NP countries), available resources allowed the Team to visit only 7 countries, and due to timing conflicts, some visits were very short (i.e., 3 days) and could not include visits to pilot initiatives. Support for scheduling and logistics was inadequate in some instances, leading to a precious loss of time and missed opportunities to meet with key stakeholders, including collaborators; (ii) opportunities to engage with key partners, such as the WB's FCPF and Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative have likewise been limited due to timing constraints and/or unavailability of stakeholders; (iii) the response rate to the online survey was acceptable (20%), but most responses came from the UN agencies (62%), with considerably lower contributions from country partners and civil society/government representatives (18% each); and (iv) annual budgets and work plans for each of the UN partner agencies were never obtained.

25. Even though the Team fully understood that the focus of the evaluation was on the entire Programme and not the performance of specific components, such as the National Programmes, to avoid duplicating existing or planned evaluations. However, the ToR also specifically required the Evaluation Team to assess the current readiness status of supported countries. This made it necessary to dig deeper and make judgements, largely on the basis of documented evidence, since country visits were often too short to draw useful conclusions. Moreover, the Team's questions were necessarily aimed at understanding the overall scope of engagement, not the performance of NPs per se.

26. To compensate for the lack of input and the complex nature of the Programme, the Team did a thorough review of Programme documents and relevant sources of scholarship to assert and validate inferences. This information is captured in the footnotes, and complete references are provided in Appendices I and II of this report.

3.3.2 Analytical Challenges

27. The focus of the Evaluation Team has been on outcomes and results, rather than outputs. Although the SNA-GP and the individual NPs have a monitoring results framework, collected information does not readily translate into measurable progress towards stated outcomes. For example, numerous training activities and workshops are held on many topics, but there is limited evidence of how this capacity is incorporated into the work of the trained individuals and into existing national systems.

28. Secondly, there is as yet no clear definition of what REDD+ readiness implies. Though the end goal is to move participating countries towards implementation (i.e., institutional reforms and experimentation with emission reduction efforts), there is no agreed-upon definition of the intended result, nor are there clearly stated performance indicators for measuring such progress. The SNA-GP and NP documents effectively identify performance indicators. Yet, SNA-GP achievements do not readily translate into individual country readiness, and the development of a strategy or roadmap does not signify that a country is necessarily "ready." To its credit, the UN-REDD Programme arguably requires the demonstration of higher levels of achievement than the drafting of a national strategy (e.g., see monitoring framework for SNA-GP), but the Programme does not rely on a single cohesive framework that ties all the different levels of results together. This made it difficult for the Evaluation Team to assess the degree to which progress was being made. To this end, the evaluators based their analysis on stakeholder input, evidence drawn from literature, and their professional experience and expertise.

29. Finally, as noted above, survey results are heavily slanted towards the perspective of Programme staff, which suggests a possible built-in bias. Though survey results are used in the report, the views expressed cannot be regarded as being consistent with the perception of all other stakeholder groups. To this end, survey comments were found to be more insightful of the Programme's strengths and challenges (see Volume II for all comments and results).

3.3.3 Logistical Aspects

30. The coordination of this global evaluation involved the Evaluation Team, the EMG, the MG, and the UN-REDD Secretariat. Decisions on country selection and field visits involved these four groups and required validation by regional and country staff. Therefore, planning of country missions took much longer than anticipated, and missions ran into the end-year period.

4. Context

31. This section presents the concept of REDD+, as well as the Programme’s context and design. For an overview of the evolution of REDD+, see Appendix IV.

4.1 Forest and Climate Change

32. Tropical deforestation and forest degradation, whether from wood harvesting, shifting agriculture or conversion to alternative land uses, represent “the largest and most variable single contributor” to emissions from land use change.³ Collectively, land use change (i.e., agriculture, deforestation, and other land uses) accounts for about a quarter of net anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.⁴

33. According to the latest IPCC data,⁵ net emissions from deforestation and forest degradation have diminished slightly since the 1990s, both in absolute terms (from 1.5 ± 0.8 GtC yr⁻¹ between 1990-1999 to 0.9 ± 0.8 GtC yr⁻¹ between 2002-2011)⁶ and in proportion to fossil fuel combustion and cement production, which have increased from a decadal mean of 6.4 ± 0.5 GtC yr⁻¹ in the 1990s to 8.3 ± 0.7 GtC yr⁻¹ for 2002-2011.⁷ Though net emissions from deforestation currently represent less than 10% of the total annual carbon influx, gross emissions from tropical deforestation and forest degradation remain relatively high (i.e., 3.0 ± 0.5 GtC yr⁻¹ for the 1990s and 2.8 ± 0.5 GtC yr⁻¹ for the 2000s).⁸ Were it not for the terrestrial land sink, which cumulatively captures some 27% of all GHG, net emissions from deforestation would be much greater.⁹ Hence, when the mitigation potential of forests is combined with the near equivalent sequestration capacity of the world’s oceans, it is clear that “any significant change in the function of [these two] carbon sinks” would directly “affect the excess carbon dioxide remaining in the atmosphere,” and the ability of the international community to limit the mean rise in global temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius, as per the second objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).¹⁰

34. By bringing an end to deforestation and forest degradation, protecting forest regrowth, and actively promoting reforestation efforts on unproductive and previously forested lands, CO₂ uptake by the terrestrial land sink could potentially increase by as much as 3 to 5 GtC yr⁻¹.¹¹ To put it more sharply, “no other processes or procedures alone have the potential for stopping and reversing the accumulation of CO₂ in the atmosphere at the speed necessary to stabilize concentrations at 450 ppm or less.”¹² The importance of forests for dealing with climate change, the loss of biological diversity, poverty, and indeed the maintenance of life on Earth as we know it cannot be overstated.¹³ As emphasised in the UNFCCC, all “Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss.”¹⁴

³ Le Quéré et al. (2013, p. 703); IPCC (2013, p. 50)

⁴ IPCC (2014)

⁵ IPCC (2013a, Table 6.1, p. 486)

⁶ 1 GtC = 1 Gigatonne or 1 billion tonnes of carbon = 1 Petagram of carbon (PgC) = 3.664 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

⁷ Net emission reductions in the last decade are attributed to increased afforestation/reforestation (IPCC, 2013, p. 491) and reduced rates of global deforestation (FAO, 2012).

⁸ IPCC (2013, p. 491)

⁹ According to the IPCC (2013, p. 50), forest regrowth absorbs about 2 GtC per year. Gross emissions from deforestation and forest degradation represent roughly 33% of all human-generated GHG (Houghton, 2012, p. 601).

¹⁰ Le Quéré et al. (2013, p. 730)

¹¹ Houghton (2013)

¹² Houghton (2012, p. 601). 450 parts per million (ppm) is the proximate threshold for maintaining global temperature within a 2°C stabilisation target.

¹³ Agrawal et al. (2013, p. 82)

¹⁴ UNFCCC (2010)

4.2 REDD+: Responding to a Global Challenge

35. The idea that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (or REDD) could potentially stabilise atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ below the anticipated threshold of 450 ppm was formally adopted as an agenda item of the UNFCCC at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bali, in December 2007 (see text box). Designed to offer a performance-based mechanism for reducing emissions from forest-related sources, REDD aims to compensate developing countries that successfully limit the loss, conversion or degradation of forests within their jurisdictional boundaries.

By attributing a market value to the carbon captured and stored in forest biomass, REDD seeks to enhance the terrestrial land sink via the use of payments for ecosystem services (PES). Accordingly, countries that take remedial actions to reduce aggregate pressure on forests would be rewarded relative to achieved emission reductions, thus creating a system where the long-term interests of forest conservation would be able to compete with the short-term gains of less sustainable land use alternatives.¹⁷

36. Conditioned by ongoing negotiations and experiences, the basic contours of the REDD-plus (REDD+) agenda were established with the 2010 Cancun Agreements (COP-16).

Henceforth, the “plus” (+) in REDD+

would refer to: (i) the conservation of forest carbon stocks; (ii) the sustainable management of forests; and (iii) efforts to enhance forest carbon stocks. The Agreements also included the adoption of a broad set of safeguards and guidelines, highlighting the need to implement REDD in the context of a sustainable development agenda focused on poverty reduction, country-driven strategies, and the inclusion of social and environmental considerations, such as participatory processes, the protection of indigenous rights, and the conservation of biological diversity.¹⁸

37. With COP-17 (Durban), guidance on safeguard information systems and modalities for forest reference levels were refined.¹⁹ Finally, the recently adopted Warsaw Framework on REDD+ (COP-19, November 2013) brings together all the final elements needed for REDD+ implementation, including decisions on: (i) a results-based financing work programme for forests; (ii) the coordination of support for implementing activities; (iii) national forest monitoring; (iv) MRV systems; (v) the development of a viable safeguard information system; (vi) guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of reference (emission) levels; and (vii) the need to

REDD within UNFCCC

The concept of a results-based mechanism for protecting forests in developing countries was first introduced at the 11th COP in Montreal, in 2005. Spearheaded by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, on behalf of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, the idea of reducing emissions from deforestation emerged from Costa Rica’s early experiments with PES and the recognition that the exchange value of natural capital, particularly the carbon storage services rendered by forests, was unrecognised as a potential mechanism of the Convention. To this end, a proposal of "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries: Approaches to Stimulate Action" was submitted for the Convention’s consideration.¹⁵

Following a detailed review by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), REDD was adopted at the 13th COP in Bali, Indonesia. With Decision 1/COP 13 – the so-called Bali Action Plan – the need to develop “[p]olicy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” became a permanent agenda item of the Convention. The Bali COP called on all parties to support the technical and institutional capacity-building needs of developing countries.¹⁶

¹⁵ Extract from interviews with Kevin Conrad, Special Envoy and Ambassador for PNG, and Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, former Minister of the Environment for Costa Rica

¹⁶ UNFCCC (2008)

¹⁷ Parker et al. (2009)

¹⁸ UNFCCC (2011, Annex I)

¹⁹ UNFCCC (2012)

proactively address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. By finalising the “rulebook” for REDD+, the Warsaw Framework effectively helped to reinvigorate climate change talks and the hopes of a new climate deal in 2015.²⁰

4.3 REDD+ Support

38. Though the operational meaning and implications of REDD+ continue to evolve,²¹ the inherent challenge of designing and implementing nation-wide PES systems has since led to the widespread acceptance of the need for a phased approach towards REDD+.²² As proposed by the Meridian Institute,²³ and later adopted by the UNFCCC,²⁴ the phased approach consists of a linear and iterative process that aims to: (i) build institutional capacities and support the development of national REDD+ strategies (i.e., Phase 1 or “readiness phase”); (ii) implement national REDD+ strategies, including the enactment and enforcement of required policy reforms and measures (i.e., Phase 2 or “implementation phase”); and (iii) undertake a full-scale implementation of the proposed performance-based payment mechanism on the basis of measurable emission reductions from established reference levels (i.e., Phase 3 or “investment phase”).

39. Support for REDD+ readiness is provided by a number of multilateral, bilateral, and non-governmental organisations, including the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and Forest Investment Programme (FIP), the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI),²⁵ Germany’s REDD Early Movers programme (REM), USAID’s programme for Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forest (LEAF),²⁶ the United Kingdom and Norwegian Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), and a host of other initiatives by such groups as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), to name but a few.²⁷

40. Though the financing needed to operate at scale (via the Green Climate Fund) has yet to materialise, results-based emission reduction schemes are currently being developed outside the auspices of the UNFCCC processes, both independently (e.g., voluntary markets) and in anticipation of a formal REDD+ mechanism (e.g., FCPF Carbon Fund). Examples include significant progress by Costa Rica²⁸ towards a fully operational REDD+ mechanism in September 2013; the creation of the world’s first sub-national carbon registry in the state of Amapá, Brazil in 2011-12; and large-scale FCPF-supported projects such as Mai Ndombe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Similarly, discussions in Warsaw (COP-19) led to further international coordination and coherence around the issue of forest financing (through the Standing Committee on Finance), pledges of USD 280 million by Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States to capitalise the World Bank’s BioCarbon Fund initiative to support forest landscapes, as well as an additional grant of USD 40 million to the UN-REDD Programme by the Norwegian government.

41. After several years of uncertainty, the momentum for a new global climate change agreement in 2015 seems to have picked up. Whether or not such an agreement comes to fruition is hard to say. While COP-19

²⁰ UNFCCC (2014)

²¹ Angelsen and McNeil (2012); Buizer et al. (2014); den Besten et al. (2014); Pistorius (2012)

²² Angelsen (2013, pp. 3-4)

²³ Streck et al. (2009)

²⁴ UNFCCC (2011, art. 73)

²⁵ www.regjeringen.no

²⁶ LEAF supports REDD+ efforts in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

²⁷ For a summary of these various initiatives, please see REDD+ in the International Context in Appendix IV.

²⁸ On September 10, 2013, Costa Rica was the first country in the FCPF to access large-scale performance-based payments for conserving its forests, regenerating degraded lands, and scaling up agro-forestry systems for sustainable landscapes and livelihoods. See: <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/letter-intent-signed-costa-rica>

announcements offer signs of hope, the proposed pledges fall short of the USD 23-38 billion that the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD+ (IWG-IFR) estimated would be required in order to secure a 25% reduction in the global rates of deforestation between 2010 and 2015.²⁹

4.4 Challenges to REDD+

42. When REDD was first introduced in 2005, it attracted a great deal of hope, including early prognostics of a low-cost “win-win” solution for climate change mitigation, tropical forest and biodiversity conservation, and increased resource flows to developing countries, in support of poverty reduction efforts and sustainable development initiatives.³⁰ If fully implemented and respected, the potential for tangible emission reductions and improved human-environment interactions is real and substantial.³¹ However, REDD+ has so far proven more difficult to achieve, slower to materialise, and costlier to implement than what early proponents had envisioned.³² The low-hanging fruit analogy is increasingly challenged by the stark realities of implementation.

43. Though REDD+ is credited with increasing the level of awareness and commitment of government and private sector actors around the importance of forests, it faces many of the same struggles that previous international efforts, such as sustainable forest management (SFM), integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP) or forest certification schemes have faced.³³ To its credit, the ever-expanding agricultural domain is recognised as a fundamental driver of deforestation in most REDD+ countries,³⁴ but gaining a foothold in the political-economic decision-making processes that affect large-scale land use change will require an ongoing expansion of REDD+ target audiences. As recent studies have shown, economic growth does not necessarily lead to better forest conservation and improved land management;³⁵ it merely implies that countries with excess financial capital can outsource the social, economic, and environmental costs of production to territories that have not achieved the same level of development.³⁶ Such observations hold significance in terms of the actions needed to reduce the pace and extent of deforestation and forest degradation.

44. Apart from the complexities of setting up a performance-based payment mechanism, REDD+ is also challenged by the fact that “[t]he commodity is hard to quantify, the sellers are not well defined, the big buyers do not exist and the rules of the game are not established.”³⁷ From the potential for cross-border leakage to the contentious issues of land tenure and carbon rights,³⁸ benefit sharing, and non-market valuation; the lack of local/national capacities; weak national and international commitments to address the underlying drivers of deforestation (e.g., perverse subsidies and local/international pressure for trade and economic growth); the high costs of REDD+; the inherent difficulty of changing ideas, values, beliefs, and associated behaviours; and the slow pace of climate change negotiations – to name but a few major challenges – the problems identified in the

²⁹ IWG (2009)

³⁰ Eliasch (2008); Stern (2006)

³¹ IPCC (2013b)

³² Brockhaus and Angelsen (2012); Buizer et al. (2014); McDermott (2014); Phelps et al. (2012)

³³ Angelsen (2013); Boyd (2010); Buizer (2014); McDermott (2014)

³⁴ Boucher et al. (2011); DeFries et al. (2010); Geist and Lambin (2002); Houghton (2012); Kissinger et al. (2012); Rademaekers et al. (2010); M. Williams (2003). In the latest Gap Emissions Report by UNEP (2013), agriculture is viewed as the critical point of entry for drastically reducing emissions from land use change, with only passing references to “other” initiatives such as REDD+.

³⁵ FAO (2012, pp. 15-18)

³⁶ Meyfroidt and Lambin (2011); Meyfroidt et al. (2013); M. Williams (2003)

³⁷ Angelsen and McNeil (2012, p. 44, cited in Bray, 2013)

³⁸ Following Peskett and Brodnig (2011), carbon rights refer to “intangible assets created by legislative and contractual arrangements that allow the recognition of separate benefits arising from the sequestration of carbon in the biomass.” In other words, carbon rights refer to a distinct class of assets, which can be purchased and transferred separately from forest rights. Very few countries have legally defined tenure rights to carbon, an issue that stands to affect the right to trade and benefit from forest conservation efforts (see RRI, 2014).

literature are many and varied.³⁹ Ultimately, the future of forests depends on the ability of societies everywhere to understand how these systems contribute to their social, cultural, and economic well-being and their consequent ability to negotiate equitable benefit sharing mechanisms.⁴⁰ Cash alone will not solve these issues.⁴¹ Some of the key challenges for REDD+, identified in relevant sources of scholarship, are presented in Exhibit 4.1 below.

Exhibit 4.1 Key Challenges to REDD+

Key Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear performance indicators or benchmarks for measuring progress towards REDD+ readiness;⁴² • Inadequate key stakeholder participation and political ownership of REDD+ processes at the country level;⁴³ • Entrenched path dependencies and lack of political will to alter existing power structures and distribution of benefits;⁴⁴ • Corruption, weak governance structures, lack of transparency, and complacent monitoring and enforcement;⁴⁵ • Absence of regulatory frameworks to integrate safeguards and benefit sharing into PES schemes;⁴⁶ • Non-permanence and leakage at national, regional, and global scales;⁴⁷ • Absent or weak willingness to engage in tenure reforms, lack of clarity over carbon rights, and the absence of safeguards and regulatory frameworks to protect the rights of indigenous and local communities with respect to tenure and benefit sharing;⁴⁸ • Overly complex configurations of actors, processes, frameworks, guidelines, and tools;⁴⁹ • High opportunity/implementation/transaction costs and the lack of credible models for decision-making purposes;⁵⁰ • Externalisation of the incentives for reform (phase 2) and to achieve measurable results (phase 3), which risks undermining normative arguments for change and opportunities for solutions that do not require long-term financing, while neglecting the failures of past experiments with conditional aid and results-based assistance;⁵¹ • Gaps in data and the technical requirements of REDD+, including uncertainty over historical rates and processes of deforestation and related inability to predict future trends (population, economic demands, climate feedbacks, etc.);⁵² • Uncertainty over the development, regulation, and performance of carbon markets;⁵³ • Increasing population, affluence, trade liberalisation, demand for food, energy and resources, expanding agribusiness (e.g., maize, soybean, oil palm, cocoa, cattle, rubber), and the so-called global land grab.⁵⁴

³⁹ See for example: Angelsen (2013); Boer (2013); Bray (2013); Fosci (2013b); McDermott (2014); W. D. Sunderlin et al. (2014).

⁴⁰ Agrawal et al. (2013)

⁴¹ White (2011)

⁴² Fosci (2013b); Wertz-Kanounnikoff and McNeill (2012)

⁴³ Di Gregorio et al. (2012); Evans et al. (2014); Luttrell et al. (2014)

⁴⁴ Brockhaus et al. (2013)

⁴⁵ Ascher (1999); Humphreys (2006); Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014); Luttrell et al. (2014); Repetto and Gillis (1988)

⁴⁶ Buizer et al. (2014); McDermott (2014); McDermott et al. (2012)

⁴⁷ Karsenty et al. (2014); Lambin and Meyfroidt (2011)

⁴⁸ Evans et al. (2014); Karsenty et al. (2014); Naughton-Treves and Wendland (2014); Phelps et al. (2012); RRI (2013, 2014)

⁴⁹ McDermott (2014); Visseren-Hamakers et al. (2012)

⁵⁰ Fosci (2013a); Gregersen et al. (2010); Lubowski and Rose (2013)

⁵¹ Angelsen (2013); Bray (2013); McAfee (2012); Seymour and Angelsen (2012); Vatn and Vedeld (2013); White (2011)

⁵² Seymour and Angelsen (2012)

⁵³ Angelsen (2013); Seymour and Angelsen (2012)

⁵⁴ Hudson et al. (2013); Meyfroidt et al. (2013); Weinzettel et al. (2013)

5. UN-REDD Programme

45. The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (hereafter “UN-REDD Programme”) is a joint programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Grounded in the assumption that a post-2012 climate regime would be adopted at the Copenhagen COP, the UN-REDD Programme was launched in 2008 “to assess whether carefully structured payment structures and capacity support can create the incentives to ensure *actual, lasting, achievable, reliable* and *measurable* emission reductions while maintaining and improving the other ecosystem services forests provide.”⁵⁵ The scope of the Programme was iteratively refined, and following the adoption of its 2011-2015 Strategy, emphasis was placed on supporting national REDD-readiness efforts,⁵⁶ focusing on phase 1 of the phased approach to REDD+ implementation. To this end, the Programme seeks to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to reduce forest-related emissions and participate in an eventual REDD+ mechanism.

5.1 Structure and Scope

46. The UN-REDD Programme principally operates through two complementary sets of interventions:

- National Programmes (NP), which provide comprehensive technical assistance to countries with the aim of preparing and implementing national REDD+ strategies or action plans and building the necessary capacities; and
- Support to National Action – Global Programme (SNA-GP), which provides on-demand targeted technical assistance, including normative and standardised approaches to REDD+.

47. Programme implementation began in March 2009 with an initial nine-country pilot phase (i.e., *Quick Start Pilot* programmes in Bolivia, DRC, Indonesia, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Zambia) that was designed to experiment with tools and methodologies, and to draw early lessons for the development of a more sustainable strategy.⁵⁷ Since then, the Programme has grown to include 51 registered partner countries, including 18 countries receiving support to NPs, and 29 that have received SNA-GP support. In 2013, the Programme also began coordinating direct bilateral REDD+ investments on behalf of the Norwegian government with Vietnam and DRC. These so-called Tier II investments are designed to build country experience with implementation modalities for REDD+.

48. Operating in accordance with the “Delivering as One UN” principle, the Programme is structured around the core competencies of the three UN partner agencies. FAO is responsible for giving technical assistance in measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems and related technical issues. UNDP advises on the development of institutional capacities related to governance, stakeholder engagement, safeguards, and fund management. UNEP provides normative guidance in areas related to sector transformation (green economic development), safeguards, and the realisation of multiple benefits (MB) from avoided deforestation.

49. The Programme is governed by the PB, composed of representatives from (i) nine NP countries, (ii) donors, (iii) civil society (CS) and Indigenous Peoples’ (IPs) organisations, and (iv) the three UN partner agencies.

⁵⁵ UN-REDD Framework Document (2008, p. 5)

⁵⁶ www.un-redd.org

⁵⁷ UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015, p. 1

Representatives from regional constituencies, including the UNFCCC, the World Bank, and international NGOs, as well as Programme staff may participate as observers.⁵⁸

50. Management functions are assured by (i) the SG, which oversees inter-agency coordination, and the hiring and performance of the Head of the Secretariat; (ii) the MG, which serves as the primary coordinating body for the development, delivery, and management of the overall Programme; (iii) the Secretariat, which assumes overall responsibility for the management of the SNA-GP, agency coordination, communications, knowledge management, and the preparation, coordination, and delivery of PB sessions,⁵⁹ and (iv) the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office, which acts as the administrative agent of the UN-REDD Programme fund. As of December 2013, USD 215,237,959 had been received from the following set of donors: Norway (the founding and largest REDD+ donor to date), the European Union, Denmark, Spain, Japan, and Luxemburg.⁶⁰

5.2 Programme Theory

51. As articulated in its 2011-2015 Strategy document, the goal of the UN-REDD Programme is to “promote the elaboration and implementation of National REDD+ Strategies to achieve REDD+ readiness, including the transformation of land use and sustainable forest management and performance-based payments.”⁶¹ By pursuing a change agenda that extends beyond the limited scope of a readiness focus, the Programme effectively straddles phases 1 and 2 (readiness and implementation) of the phased approach to REDD+ implementation.⁶² However, like the limited definition of REDD+ readiness itself,⁶³ the meaning and implications of the Programme goal – in terms of result expectations and performance indicators – are broad and not well defined.

52. Pursuant to the evaluation ToR, a proximate outline of the Programme’s theory of change was produced in light of relevant Programme documents and the input of stakeholders during the Inception Phase (see Exhibit 5.1 below). Though preliminary and designed to be updated on the basis of emerging evidence, the Evaluation Team was not able to refine the coarse logic of the proposed theory, nor the assumptions that support the suggested causal inferences. Despite such caveats, the basic elements of the UN-REDD Programme remain thoroughly aligned with the normative framework of the UNFCCC. The implications of the Programme’s theory of change form a critical point of analysis in the report.

53. Lastly, the Programme also subscribes to the five inter-related principles of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), namely: a human rights-based approach to programming, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, and capacity development.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Idem.

⁵⁹ Idem., p. 19

⁶⁰ By order of decreasing contribution amount, as per the MPTF Gateway. Accessed 04/11/2014 at http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/CCF00?fund_status_month_to=&fund_status_year_to=2013

⁶¹ UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015, p. 6

⁶² Streck et al. (2009)

⁶³ Wertz-Kanounnikoff and McNeill (2012)

⁶⁴ UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015, p. 16

Exhibit 5.1 Reconstructed Theory of Change



5.3 Programme Logic

54. As per the Programme Strategy for 2011-2015, UN-REDD is guided by an evolving set of core result areas, structured around seven major outcomes and associated outputs (see Exhibit 5.2, below).⁶⁵ While governed by the needs and priorities of national partners, programmatic interventions essentially focus on six core work areas: (i) MRV capacity development; (ii) credible and inclusive governance systems; (iii) stakeholder engagement; (iv) social and environmental safeguards; (v) multiple benefits; and (vi) green economy transformation.

55. At the output level, the Programme aims to: (i) develop various tools, frameworks, and knowledge products; (ii) promote inclusive, equitable, and transparent processes and mechanisms; (iii) assess the drivers of deforestation and identify REDD+ actions; and (iv) provide technical and advisory support in a wide range of areas, including forest monitoring and MRV, governance, stakeholder engagement, multi-sectoral coordination, and so on.

⁶⁵ In addition to the six work areas of the Programme Strategy, the outcomes listed under the SNA-GP results framework identify knowledge management (outcome 7) and effective Secretariat services (outcome 8). See the *Draft Monitoring Framework for the Support to National REDD+ Actions*, UN-REDD PB10, June 2013, Lombok, Indonesia.

56. The achievement of programmatic outputs rests on a number of assumptions. The Programme assumes that national partners will contribute knowledge and expertise and provide enabling conditions for social, political, and economic engagement. It further assumes that national collaborators and participants will retain their roles and responsibilities both during and after technical and capacity-building support is provided, that knowledge is effectively created and shared, and that Programme services are provided when and where they are needed.

57. At the outcome level, the Programme aims to develop monitoring systems, enhance governance mechanisms, increase participation and realise multiple benefits for REDD. It also works to ensure that REDD+ and green economy transformations are mutually reinforcing. The Programme assumes that countries will integrate, disseminate and apply the knowledge, tools and methodologies gained from the Programme. Critically, the Programme posits that participating countries will be able to access market and non-market sources of funding to experiment with, and engage in, results-based emission reductions from avoided deforestation.

58. To reach these results, the Programme assumes that national governments will engage with, and respect the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples' and civil society organisations. More fundamentally, the Programme posits that REDD+-related capacities, including stakeholder engagement, transparent and inclusive governance, and the equitable sharing of benefits will be achieved, monitored and enforced once external funding support ends. In other words, the Programme assumes that participating countries are committed to social and economic transformations, and that they will engage in the requisite policy reforms. To this end, the Programme anticipates that participating countries will commit to low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways and undertake system-wide change as required. Lastly but not least, the achievement of longer-term change hinges on the assumption that the external drivers of deforestation will be addressed and kept at bay.

59. Overall, the Programme posits that key inputs (i.e., technical support from the three UN agencies, donor investments and country-level capacities) and programmatic outputs will be leveraged to: (i) strengthen institutional capacities; (ii) develop national REDD+ strategies; (iii) support institutional and policy reforms; and (iv) deliver results-based emission reductions through experimentation and subsequent scale-up. Barring access to market and non-market financing opportunities, the Programme aims to “reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation through national REDD+ strategies that transform their forest sectors so as to contribute to human well-being and meet climate change mitigation and adaptation aspirations.”

60. The level of achievement of these results is analysed within the Effectiveness section of this evaluation report.

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Exhibit 5.2 UN-REDD Results Framework⁶⁶

Outcomes	Outputs
1. REDD+ countries have systems and capacities to develop and implement MRV and monitoring	<p>1.1 Activities, tools, and methods for MRV and Monitoring are developed at country level.</p> <p>1.2 Country-level capacities to implement monitoring and MRV functions are developed.</p>
2. Credible, inclusive national governance systems are developed for REDD+ implementation	<p>2.1 Nationally owned credible and inclusive systems of analysing, assessing, and addressing governance challenges are established.</p> <p>2.2 National implementation of REDD+ readiness is strengthened through National Programme support.</p> <p>2.3 Forest-related legal frameworks are analysed and strengthened for implementing REDD+ programmes and strategies at country level.</p> <p>2.4 National capacity for performance-based payments and inclusive benefit distribution systems is enhanced.</p> <p>2.5 Policies and measures related to sustainable forest management are identified and promoted at national level.</p> <p>2.6 Corruption risks in REDD+ are assessed and managed.</p> <p>2.7 Institutional capacity for land tenure (with a view to also address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation) is strengthened.</p> <p>2.8 REDD+ strategies are gender sensitive and women participate effectively in national REDD+ systems.</p>
4. Indigenous Peoples, local communities, civil society organisations and other stakeholders participate effectively in national and international REDD+ decision-making, strategy development and implementation	<p>4.1 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, civil society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders are informed of national and international REDD+ processes, policies, and activities.</p> <p>4.2 Principles, guidelines, and procedures for stakeholder engagement in national and international REDD+ processes are developed.</p> <p>4.3 Implementation of effective stakeholder engagement practices and guidelines is supported in REDD+ countries.</p> <p>4.4 Stakeholders are supported to engage in and influence national and international REDD+ processes.</p> <p>4.5 Private sector engagement in REDD+ readiness and broad stakeholder consensus on private sector engagement is built.</p> <p>4.6 Community-Based REDD+ (CBR+) is initiated to strengthen community capacity and engagement in REDD+ (recently adopted work area).</p>
5. Safeguards are addressed and respected and multiple benefits of REDD+ are realised	<p>5.1 Countries make use of tools, guidance, and support to develop approaches to capture multiple benefits.</p> <p>5.2 Countries make use of support to develop approaches to address and respect safeguards.</p> <p>5.3 Countries make use of support to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.</p>
6. Green economy transformation and REDD+ strategies and investments are mutually reinforcing	<p>6.1 A strong business case for REDD+ is made.</p> <p>6.2 Countries develop investment options and strategies for REDD+, with technical advice provided.</p> <p>6.3 Countries make use of technical advice and support to develop transition strategies for addressing drivers of deforestation.</p>
7. UN-REDD Programme knowledge is developed, managed, analysed and shared to support REDD+ efforts at all levels	<p>7.1 Knowledge management (KM) resources and systems are developed and improved.</p> <p>7.2 REDD+ knowledge is continuously generated, adapted, and shared for learning, advocacy, promotion, and capacity development.</p>

⁶⁶ As outlined in the *Draft Monitoring Framework for Support to National REDD+ Action 2013-2014, UN-REDD Tenth Policy Board Meeting* (June 2013). Due to their managerial and process-related focus, outcome 8 (timely and effective Secretariat support) is omitted from the present framework. The missing outcome 3 (i.e., Safeguards) was integrated with outcome 5, even though official numbering remains unchanged.

6. Findings

61. This section presents the core findings of the UN-REDD Programme evaluation, as per the requirements of the ToR. Findings in this section of the report are presented as succinct evaluative statements, derived from relevant sources of collated data, which attempt to provide an answer (key message or response) to one or more evaluation questions. They are based on evidence, focused on core issues, and attempt to tell the “whole story” in one or two sentences. They are symbolised by a capital “F” followed by the reference number.

6.1 Relevance

62. Following the OECD-DAC definition, relevance is used here to imply the extent to which the objectives of the UN-REDD Programme are consistent with the needs and priorities of key stakeholders. This section examines the relevance of the UN-REDD Programme from global and national perspectives, including its linkages to other REDD+ initiatives, its responsiveness to country needs, the appropriateness of its primary objective, and the soundness of its intended causal relationships. To assess the relevance of the UN-REDD Programme, the evaluators relied mostly on stakeholder perceptions, documented sources of evidence, and applicable scholarship.

6.1.1 Global Context

F1: The UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to UNFCCC negotiations and the emerging REDD+ agenda, but adapting to the dynamic state of the global environment is a continuous challenge.

63. UN-REDD’s integrated approach to reducing emissions from land use change processes and strong linkages to ongoing UNFCCC negotiations make it a highly relevant programme. Its objectives and Strategy for 2011-2015 are consistent with the global REDD+ agenda⁶⁷ and related efforts to improve the governance of the world’s tropical and sub-tropical forest biomes, including the multiple benefits that these systems provide. By doing so, the Programme exerts a positive influence on the need to: (i) reposition the critical importance of forest ecosystem services and benefits in national, regional, and global policy arenas; (ii) strengthen the rigour of the REDD+ agenda (e.g., MRV, safeguards, and stakeholder engagement); and (iii) build the capacity of partner countries to develop sustainable economic pathways that support the maintenance of forest resource systems.

64. Developed in the wake of the Bali COP and the assumption that a new climate protocol and results-based payment mechanism would be adopted before the end of the decade, the original memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the UN partner agencies focused on supporting country efforts to deliver actual, reliable, and measurable emission reductions. While a post-2012 agreement failed to materialise at the Copenhagen COP, developed countries nevertheless pledged to secure USD 30 billion between 2010 and 2012 and an additional USD 100 billion by 2020 for adaptation and mitigation purposes.⁶⁸ Building on the positive precedent of the Copenhagen Accord, UN partner agencies reciprocated their confidence in UNFCCC negotiations by extending their own commitment to supporting national readiness efforts to at least 2015.⁶⁹

65. While the commitments of the fast-start period⁷⁰ and subsequent negotiations are helping to create a favourable momentum for ongoing climate change negotiations, culminating with a possible international

⁶⁷ More than 80% of survey respondents believe that the UN-REDD Programme is consistent with the broader REDD+ agenda.

⁶⁸ The Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC, 2010, art. 8)

⁶⁹ UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015

⁷⁰ Collectively, the commitments made between 2010 and 2012, including the creation of the Green Climate Fund in Cancun (UNFCCC, 2011, art. 102) have come to be known as the “fast-start finance” period.

agreement by 2015 (in conformity with the Durban Platform),⁷¹ recent evidence suggests the need for a more critical appreciation of the evolving global context and the future of REDD+ financing.

66. Of the original commitments for 2010-2012, pledges of USD 3.1 billion were made for REDD+, a little more than half (USD 1.9 billion) has been deposited, and only USD 268 million have so far been disbursed.⁷² In 2013, new pledges for climate-related financing decreased by as much as 71% (compared to 2012),⁷³ and a recent report by the Interim Forest Finance (IFF) Project⁷⁴ suggests that overall market demand for carbon offsets and related investments in climate change mitigation programmes and projects is at an all-time low, with investments under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) literally grinding to a halt since Warsaw.

67. Moreover, despite the fundamental importance of REDD+ as a core mitigation strategy to combat climate change,⁷⁵ progress on nearly every aspect of the proposed mechanism is slower than expected (see Section 4.4). In particular, the likelihood of a viable performance-based financing mechanism remains a moving target. Even if a new climate agreement is reached in 2015, there is no clear global financing strategy for REDD+ until the new protocol takes effect in 2020. Assuming that a fully operational carbon market is in place by then – a proposition that is raising increasing scepticism amongst scholars and observers⁷⁶ – the IFF report warns that “[t]here is currently no source of demand to pay for medium to long-term emission reductions from REDD+ at the scale needed to meet emission reduction targets in tropical forest countries before 2020.”⁷⁷

68. Given that the integration of REDD+ credits in any market (whether national, regional or global) would likely reduce the value of carbon offsets and crowd out other mitigation efforts, Parties to the Convention would either have to: (i) increase global emission reduction targets; (ii) discount the value of REDD+ credits; (iii) limit the volume of allowable emission reductions from REDD+; or (iv) invite donors and international financial institutions to fill the gap between supply and demand.⁷⁸ The absence of an emerging Pareto-optimal solution for both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries points to difficult negotiations in the lead-up to Paris and potentially, the lack of an early agreement on the integration of REDD+ credits in a future global carbon market system.⁷⁹

69. Admittedly, the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (COP 19) provides technical guidance for the full implementation of REDD+⁸⁰ and includes a decision on results-based payments⁸¹ that clarifies the diversification of potential sources of REDD+ finance, including the role of the Green Climate Fund. However, the “promise of predictable, results-based finance by the international community,” as per the commitments of Cancun and Warsaw, has yet to be realised.⁸² The complexity of setting up a PES system and the difficult task of ensuring the

⁷¹ UNFCCC (2012, decision 2/CP.17, art. 4)

⁷² See GCP et al. (2014, Table 1) and Fransen et al. (2013). Readers should note that there is no consistent accounting of actual REDD+ financing. For instance, GCP et al. (2014) indicate that USD 4.5 to 6.1 billion may have been pledged, whereas Streck and Parker (2012, p. 124) report pledges of USD 4.17 billion at the end of 2011, with allocations of USD 446 million.

⁷³ Fransen et al. (2013, p. 10)

⁷⁴ GCP et al. (2014, p. 6)

⁷⁵ IPCC (2014)

⁷⁶ For example, see Angelsen (2013); Fosci (2013b); Lubowski and Rose (2013); Munden-Project (2011); Vatn and Vedeld (2013)

⁷⁷ GCP et al. (2014, p. 6). The authors of the report estimate that the supply of REDD+ credits is 13 to 39 times greater than the potential demand, for a 50% reduction in the rate of global deforestation by year 2020 (p. 8).

⁷⁸ Beltran et al. (2013); GCP et al. (2014)

⁷⁹ A Pareto-optimal or Pareto-efficient solution refers to a situation where everyone’s interest or payoff can be improved without making at least one person, group or – as in this case – country worse off.

⁸⁰ Climate Law & Policy. 2014. Briefing note. Unpacking the ‘Warsaw Framework for REDD+’. The requirements for implementing REDD+ under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁸¹ UNFCCC (2014, Decision 9)

⁸² GCP et al. (2014, p. 6). See also REDD+ Negotiations under de UNFCCC: from Marrakesh to Warsaw. Available at: <http://theredddesk.org/what-is-redd#toc-4>

permanence and additionality of avoided deforestation efforts are far from being resolved.⁸³ Moreover, agriculture – the leading cause of tropical deforestation – has not been a central focus of UNFCCC negotiations processes nor of REDD+ efforts in general.

70. Amidst the need to sustain and even fuel optimism for a global agreement at the 2015 Paris COP, most evaluation respondents, including senior UN representatives, reluctantly admit that a near-term agreement on the terms of a carbon financing mechanism is anything but certain. Within the current political-economic landscape, the continuing relevance of the Programme’s goal to support country efforts to achieve REDD+ readiness for results-based financing faces a challenging prognosis. Though the Programme appears to be adapting to the changing context (e.g., increasing focus on sustainable land management, green economy transformation, non-market solutions, policy reforms, secure and equitable resource rights, multiple benefits, etc.), there is as yet no emerging narrative, vision or consensus on what an alternative scenario for REDD+ might entail for UN-REDD. The need for positive incentives and long-term support (e.g., financing through voluntary or compliance markets, increased ODA, technical assistance, favourable trade agreements) is a truism recognised by all evaluation respondents, but assuming that societies will only change if they are paid to do so invariably limits the scope of allowable actions.

71. The dynamic landscape within which UN-REDD operates and the changes outlined in this finding point to important challenges in the road ahead and the need for global leadership on these issues. The upcoming Climate Summit in September 2014 might help to set the stage for positive action on climate change and efforts to address the funding gap that risks undermining the future of REDD+. The GEF-6 replenishment fund of USD 4.43 billion to tackle “the underlying drivers of environmental degradation” is another positive sign.⁸⁴ However, as emphasised in the press release, “issues... can only be effectively addressed if broad coalitions of stakeholders across countries and sectors can be brought together around a common action agenda.” The findings of this report suggest that the UN-REDD Programme is well positioned to become a critical player in such a global coalition for change. The question is whether more of the same will necessarily lead to better results.

6.1.2 National Context

F2: The UN-REDD Programme, though primarily UN-driven, is largely consistent with country needs and priorities, as expressed in relevant forestry, environment, and climate adaptation and mitigation policies, plans, and sector frameworks.

72. The objectives of the UN-REDD Programme are broadly consistent with the needs and interests of developing country partners. As evidenced by the strong willingness of national representatives to incorporate the REDD+ agenda in sector policies, plans, and related frameworks, the relevance of the UN-REDD Programme is strongest within the forestry and/or environment ministries. In Ecuador for instance, the REDD+ agenda responds directly to the state’s constitutional requirement to adopt “adequate and transversal measures for climate change mitigation, through the limitation of GHG emissions and of deforestation.” Consistency of this finding was noted across all the countries visited and the results of the Panama mid-term evaluation and completed NP evaluations for Indonesia and Vietnam.

⁸³ Angelsen (2013, p. 2); Angelsen and Rudel (2013); Lubowski and Rose (2013)

⁸⁴ See GEF-6 press release (April 14, 2014), available at: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/10428>.

73. Interestingly, none of the countries visited regarded the UN-REDD Programme as a strict framework for developing national capacities to engage in a future results-based payment mechanism. Recognising the slow and uncertain progress of climate change negotiations, country representatives tend to view the potential for results-based financing as an unplanned windfall, rather than the central purpose of their efforts. According to most stakeholders, the essential value of the Programme lies in the integrated approach it offers for achieving sustainable development outcomes. For instance, the Bolivian National Forest Management Plan of 2008, which forms the basis of current forest policy and the preamble of the UN-REDD national document, has the goal of “[e]ncouraging actions for the conservation, restoration and recovery of forests, not only with the aim of obtaining the goods they provide, but also towards their environmental function at a local and global level for reducing the risks deriving from climate change.” Similarly, in DRC, Nigeria, and Zambia, REDD+ is first and foremost viewed as a forest-management tool for realising multiple benefits, including meeting the needs of forest-dependent populations and managing resources at the landscape level. As one senior UN representative opined, “REDD+ in Africa tends to be viewed as a gateway to green development and integrated rural development. Mitigation is simply the key point of entry for sector-wide transformation.”

74. While the relevance of the Programme is broadly acknowledged,⁸⁵ a wide range of observers (CSOs, government representatives, and Programme staff) questioned both the reliability and validity of the process used to define country needs. Evaluation respondents note for instance that it is not clear who conducts national needs assessments, how reports are completed (i.e., based on what data), and what (if any) process is used to validate information and assumptions. A number of observers went so far as to suggest that National “[P]rogrammes are largely disconnected from the realities in the field” or that “UN-REDD agencies are arrogant,” imposing “their vision on countries” instead of supporting national goals and aspirations of country members. Given that the global REDD+ agenda and the conditional requirements it imposes upon participating countries are broadly defined by the existing multilateral and bilateral initiatives and not the participating countries,⁸⁶ such perceptions can hardly be considered surprising. To achieve REDD+ readiness and access related financing opportunities, countries must conform to a common set of institutional reforms and apply similar tools, frameworks, guidelines, and principles that leave little or no room for self-determination or country-driven

Stakeholder Perceptions on Programme Relevance

“REDD provides options to address the many challenges we face, including forest sector management, improving livelihoods, governance, capacity building, and forest protection.”

“We need greater emphasis on multiple benefits – carbon message is weak and of low relevance for the poor. We need to tell them how REDD+ will help feed them and improve their livelihoods.”

“UN-REDD has provided meaningful support to Vietnam in its forest protection and development mission.”

Stakeholder Perceptions on the Central Role of UN Agencies

“Toute la vision est tracée à l’avance, sans l’implication des pays.”

“Power lies with the agencies, not the countries.”

“... dans la plupart des cas, le Plan d’activités du Programme ONU-REDD est unilatéralement élaboré.”

“Le programme gagnerait à montrer une souplesse pour prendre en considération les besoins différenciés des pays et régions.”

“Some of the early interventions at national level were designed in a vacuum without proper guidance from the negotiations and without a basic understanding at the country level.”

⁸⁵ Over 80% of survey respondents agree to some extent that the Programme’s objectives are relevant to country needs.

⁸⁶ Angelsen (2013); Buizer et al. (2014); Gallemore and Munroe (2013); Jagger et al. (2012); Thompson et al. (2011)

variation, though the absence of an international agreement will likely make it easier for alternative approaches to emerge over time.⁸⁷

75. Developing country partners (including CSO and IP representatives) can influence REDD+ negotiations at the global level through the UNFCCC, and across the UN-REDD Programme via the Policy Board, but the fact remains that the three UN agencies are the primary custodians of the Programme, and what is offered largely depends upon the choices of the UN partner agencies. Formally, countries decide how resources are allocated at the PB, but in practice, investment priorities and objectives are determined by the agencies and submitted to country representatives for their approval, not for input and debate – an observation that UN partner agencies attribute to the very nature of joint programme arrangements. Input and debate are said to be far greater at the country level.

6.1.3 Relevance to Key Stakeholders

F3: The UN-REDD Programme enjoys strong buy-in from host ministries downward. Support at higher policy-making levels, across sectors, and at the community level is more variable.

Policy-Makers

76. In nearly every country where it operates (whether through NPs or the SNA-GP), the UN-REDD Programme can count on the support of the highest-ranking civil servants of its host institution (usually the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources or the National Forest Authority). This is crucial for ensuring the Programme's success and ongoing relevance. Beyond this, support by public administrators (whether elected or appointed) varies across NPs. In DRC, the national REDD+ strategy was adopted by ministerial decree, and the Minister of Finance presides over the Inter-Ministerial Committee, which oversees the implementation of the country strategy and the capitalisation of the National Fund. Yet, implementation partners, CSO representatives, and Programme staff all expressed strong reservations regarding the actual commitment of policy-makers, underscoring the fact that the committee largely exists on paper only. Such observations are consistent with the results of a recent comparative study, which points to weak political ownership in DRC.⁸⁸ Similarly, despite an oft-cited presidential commitment to reduce emissions from deforestation in Indonesia, recent empirical data suggests that political support for REDD+ is considerably weaker than what some analysts argue.⁸⁹ Specifically, the president's ability to drive change is limited by the lack of support from parliamentarians and bureaucrats, who control national decision-making processes and maintain fairly strong relationships with land-based industries and agribusiness that have a stake in maintaining the status quo.⁹⁰

77. By contrast, REDD+ in Vietnam enjoys strong buy-in at the highest levels of government, cross-sectoral support, and political commitment to change.⁹¹ In Nigeria, interview respondents confirmed the national government's intent to support REDD+ efforts (e.g., declared a moratorium on forest exploitation) and the crucial backing of the governor in whose jurisdiction the most densely forested areas of the country lie. While high-level political support is not sufficient to ensure strong national commitment to REDD+, it is necessary. Without it, as the case of Tanzania reveals,⁹² movement away from business-as-usual trajectories towards

⁸⁷ Buizer et al. (2014, p. 5)

⁸⁸ Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014)

⁸⁹ Larrabure and Moeliono (2013)

⁹⁰ Luttrell et al. (2014)

⁹¹ Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014); Stewart and Swan (2013)

⁹² Gapare and William (2013)

transformational change⁹³ risks being slow and arduous (see further discussion under “Cross-Sectoral Support,” below).

Cross-Sectoral Support

78. Despite a handful of examples that appear to demonstrate stronger political support for the pursuit of a national REDD+ agenda, evidence from the seven countries visited during this evaluation, inquiries conducted at regional and international levels, as well as reviews of relevant sources of scholarship all point to weak overall political commitment to REDD+ action. In addition to the lack of wider political engagement in the UN-REDD Policy Board and questionable support at the country level, the evaluation notes that for the most part, ministries or departments dealing with finance, national planning, agriculture, industry, commerce, and education are conspicuously absent from the relevant discussion tables. For instance, the REDD roundtable in Ecuador does not have any representation from ministries other than that of the Environment. There is an inter-ministerial committee on Climate Change, but according to participants, it meets irregularly and is attended by representatives that are low in the hierarchy of their ministries. In several other partner countries (e.g., DRC, the Philippines, and Zambia), key ministries are invited to the REDD+ coordination and consultation committees, but do not attend regularly, if at all.

79. Reasons for the lack of political engagement and cross-sectoral support for REDD+ include: (i) the limited convening power of the forestry and/or environment ministries where the Programme is usually located; (ii) the entrenched path dependencies of vested interests; (iii) collusive government-business nexus; (iv) weak or absent domestic coalitions that can challenge the distributional outcomes of business-as-usual policies; (v) weak political ownership over the development and implementation of REDD+ policies; (vi) failure to link the purpose of REDD+ to the broader development interests of participating countries; and (vii) limited international efforts to tackle the liberalisation dynamics of trade, market demand, and the need for growth, which compel governments everywhere to limit barriers to domestic and foreign investments (e.g., investor-friendly policies, pro-development subsidies, exclusive resource rights, and weak social-environmental regulatory frameworks or enforcement thereof).⁹⁴ Though acknowledged to some degree in the design of the Programme (e.g., anti-corruption work, the creation of national roundtable discussions, green economy transformation), these observations and those previously noted (see “Policy-Makers”) raise the need for a more cautious appreciation.

80. Achieving political commitment to sustainability and equity-enhancing institutional change is an arduous process under the best of circumstances. As any cursory review of history would reveal, the difficulty of securing and sustaining such support betrays the longstanding challenge of achieving system-level change. Moreover, as one of several REDD+ initiatives operating in a country at any given time, it would be disingenuous to attribute such challenges solely to UN-REDD. Still, difficult questions need to be asked. To what extent are programmatic investments attentive to, and aligned with, the national needs and interests of participating countries, as opposed to the requirements of REDD+ itself? As one senior UN official phrased it, “we are developing REDD+ for whom and for what?” At a rhetorical level, nearly any country will support the idea of increased sustainability, and given the opportunity, most will engage in low-cost activities that bring in resources to strengthen capacities and potentially deliver long-term gains. Moving beyond the sphere of good intentions to that of actual change can be a major leap. Though the issues outlined above and throughout the remainder of this report could be interpreted to mean that readiness simply requires more time and that the fruits of change will arise when countries enter into the implementation and investment phases, such a strategy is not risk-free (see F1) and could potentially limit incentives to overcome the political and cross-sectoral challenges discussed

⁹³ Brockhaus and Angelsen (2012)

⁹⁴ Brockhaus et al. (2013); Costanza et al. (2013); Di Gregorio et al. (2012); Meyfroidt and Lambin (2011); Weinzettel et al. (2013)

above. As a programme created to test various risk formulae and develop country-level experience with REDD+ processes, UN-REDD is well positioned to take a leadership role on these issues.

Private Sector

81. The need for private sector involvement in the development of REDD+ solutions is the subject of various UN-REDD publications, in addition to being listed as a priority area for stakeholder engagement in the SNA-GP results framework. For the most part however, relations with the private sector have been slower to materialise, both at the national and international levels. Considering the slow pace of private sector engagement in REDD+ in general, the Programme’s situation does not appear to be unusual. Other than the technical service providers and firms⁹⁵ involved in the provision of consultancy services and/or carbon offsets through voluntary markets – such as those operating in DRC, Ecuador, and Vietnam⁹⁶ –, examples of private sector engagement in REDD+ processes remain limited overall.⁹⁷ Though some interview respondents suggest that this is because the “business case for REDD+ has yet to be made,” our analysis points to a more complex set of reasons.

82. Within the scope of the UN-REDD Programme, the term “private sector” is used in reference to three categorically different sets of actors: resource-intensive industries, small to medium enterprises serving mostly domestic markets, and prospective investors for carbon offsets, including banks and micro-credit providers. This section focuses on the first two interpretations only.

Survey Responses on Private Sector Involvement

“Private sector involvement has been minimal at [the] country [level], as most [operators] do not understand how their interest will be covered, especially from [an] economic point of view.”

“The private sector has been marginalised from the process in various countries and at the global level. There has not been to date a private sector observer at the Policy Board.”

83. With respect to more traditional resource-intensive industries (e.g., mining, logging, pulp and paper producers) and agribusiness engaged in large-scale commodity production, disincentives to REDD+ involvement include: (i) the high opportunity costs of REDD+;⁹⁸ (ii) the predominance of path-dependent processes and the absence of any demonstrated political will to alter the existing distribution of benefits;⁹⁹ (iii) the related ability of elite actors to direct political-economic decisions in their favour (i.e., engage in rent-seeking behaviour – whether through legal or extra-legal means);¹⁰⁰ and (iv) compared with the World Bank, UN agencies do not have as strong a history of engagement with the private sector. While such factors help rationalise the absence of large industrial players in REDD+ processes in general, they do not explain why local engagement in UN-REDD-supported efforts remains relatively weak or why the Policy Board should still be deprived of a private sector representative. Because the private sector includes some of the principle instigators of deforestation, it is clear that private sector engagement is crucial to the development of viable country strategies.

⁹⁵ The “private sector” tends to be interpreted very loosely by REDD+ proponents at the country level. As in the case of DRC, the “private sector” refers to any organisation that complies with the national registry for commercial operators and can thus receive and manage funds through verifiable accounts in an established financial institution. As such, the “private sector” in DRC is used to designate NGOs, firms, or contractors that can provide payable services to the government or any one of the active REDD+ funds.

⁹⁶ Examples worth highlighting include Vietnam’s PFES (Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services) programme, which is funded in part from national government and private sector contributions, and the Mai Ndombe REDD Project in DRC, which is financially supported by the German-based company *Forest Carbon Group AG*. It should be noted that the UN-REDD Programme does not specifically engage with service providers and firms involved in the provision of carbon offsets through voluntary markets.

⁹⁷ According to survey results, only 25% of respondents agree to some extent that the private sector is adequately involved in national REDD+ decision-making processes.

⁹⁸ Angelsen and McNeil (2012); Fosci (2013a)

⁹⁹ See also North (1990); North (1994)

¹⁰⁰ Brockhaus et al. (2013); Knight (1992); Luttrell et al. (2014)

84. There are some who argue that private sector involvement in REDD+ discussions will be accelerated once countries move into the implementation phase, but changing the trajectory of business-as-usual will take time. In the same way that UN-REDD has been successful in harnessing the confidence and involvement of civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organisations, there is reason to believe that early involvement of private sector representatives at the national and global levels (e.g., Policy Board) would be to everyone's advantage.¹⁰¹ A recent addition to the Programme's green economy outcome for 2014-2015 (i.e., a global initiative aimed at strengthening ties with the "Private Sector and Private Sector Finance to Achieve REDD+," including ways to address agriculture and forest risks associated with commodity supply chains) is a step in the right direction.¹⁰²

85. Country-level stakeholders report that small and medium enterprises operating in domestic markets have not been as actively solicited for input in national REDD+ discussions and the search for viable policy solutions. Yet, there are many puzzles to solve in order to make small industries (e.g., charcoal, timber and non-timber forest products, food production) sustainable and viable under REDD+ scenarios.

86. As recent experiences in LAC demonstrate, cases where investments to conserve forests have been effective (e.g., 'FONAFIFO' in Costa Rica, and 'Socio Bosque' in Ecuador) could not rely solely on market-based incentives to compensate for opportunity costs. They required additional measures to stimulate voluntary forest conservation efforts. In marginal forests, some have reported that payments (and other benefits) can sometimes tip the balance in favour of forest maintenance activities,¹⁰³ but so can the decentralisation of collective choice rights or the statutory recognition and enforcement of community ownership.¹⁰⁴ Designing efficient context-specific solutions for achieving desired ends at the least cost requires considerable experimentation and learning. Delaying such activities to later stages of the phased approach would not be an advisable strategy.

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Organisations

87. For CSOs and IPOs, the relevance of UN-REDD primarily rests on the convening authority of the Programme, and the unique platform it has given them to voice the equal rights and interests of their respective constituencies, in local or global decision-making arenas. The implementation of safeguards (including free, prior and informed consent) and related veto rights are regarded as significant contributions to the democratisation of the REDD+ regime. Within this overall positive appreciation, several challenges remain.

88. At the country level, the general view is that CSO and IPO consultations have noticeably increased over the years, but participation in *public decision-making and policy revision* processes remains limited. For instance, in Ecuador, the REDD+ roundtable provides seats to two Indigenous Peoples' organisations, but the table itself only has consultative functions. In the end, decisions are solely made by the government. Similar situations have also been noted or reported for other partner countries, including Cambodia, Nepal, the Philippines, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Zambia. According to interviewed stakeholders, the main stumbling block to CSO participation in DRC was not the government, but Programme appointed staff, though the latter shared a different opinion.¹⁰⁵ Yet, as the case of Panama amply demonstrates, if a civil society or Indigenous Peoples' organisation (in this

¹⁰¹ The private sector is inherently risk-averse, and learning how businesses make decisions, minimise their exposure to risk, and ensure profitability is critical to guiding the development of successful policy reforms, including issues related to tenure and resource rights for local and indigenous communities. The potential to address unmet needs (e.g., risk mitigation, assurance mechanisms, investment strategies that minimise deforestation and increase socio-economic well-being) and use the convening authority and neutrality of the UN to address fundamental issues, such as the relative absence of agriculture in REDD+ and UNFCCC processes, and full disclosure protocols for global supply chains and deforestation-free products are just some of the actions that UN-REDD could proactively support.

¹⁰² See UNREDD_PB11_III_3a_Annex_SNA Budget Revision.pdf.

¹⁰³ Arriagada et al. (2012)

¹⁰⁴ Larson et al. (2010); Ostrom (1990); White (2011)

¹⁰⁵ See "Mémorandum de la société civile environnementale congolaise sur le processus REDD en R.D. Congo." Available at: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2013/05/memorandum-de-la-sc-au-fcpf.pdf>

case, COONAPIP) fundamentally disagrees with the turn of events in a National Programme, it can literally grind operations to a halt until the underlying issues are addressed. This landmark event in the evolution of the Programme firmly tested the resolve of the UN partner agencies to uphold the principles by which UN-REDD is governed – in Panama, it has helped to strengthen the position of IPs in REDD+ decision-making processes.¹⁰⁶

89. Another challenging aspect of civil society engagement is the question of representation: the groups in whose name they speak and the constituencies they represent are more diffuse compared to Indigenous Peoples' organisations. Consequently, the comparatively less organised non-IP communities, composed of mostly poor migrant and rural households, are neither well identified in UN-REDD Programme documents nor as clearly represented in national and global arenas. In Paraguay, the national IP representation (FAPI) is part of national implementation. While non-IP groups should be represented in the National REDD+ Committee (CONAREDD), this is still not in place. In the Ecuador national REDD+ roundtable, there is one non-IP forest-dependent community representative (and two seats for IP representatives), but in the absence of a dedicated national or regional organisation, this non-IP seat is occupied by a local group with no direct regional or national affiliation. In Cambodia, the Programme is making efforts to engage non-IP communities in community-protected areas, community forestry, and through the existing Community Fisheries Network. Across UN-REDD, the relatively weak representation of non-IP communities is recognised by Programme staff and rationalised in terms of a conscious effort to initially target historically marginalised constituencies. Outreach to non-IP communities is expected to increase in the near to mid-term future.

90. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, relatively little has been done so far regarding the most contentious issues affecting IPs and forest-dependent communities, namely land rights, carbon rights, tenure reform, and benefit sharing mechanisms under REDD+ scenarios. Modest efforts to address the rights of local populations are being observed in a number of countries supported by the UN-REDD Programme (mostly at the project level).¹⁰⁷ New policy frameworks such as FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Land, Forests, and Fisheries have been endorsed by over 100 countries, and as of 2013, strengthening institutional capacity to address tenure (Output 2.7) has been added to the SNA-GP results framework for immediate action. These are positive developments, but more will be needed to change the deep-seated political-economic interests and power structures that underlie the right to use, manage, and exclude others from a designated common-pool resource system.¹⁰⁸ Without such reforms, as Australia's experience with the Kalimantan Forest Carbon Partnership¹⁰⁹ and detailed scholarship on these issues demonstrate,¹¹⁰ efforts to reduce forest-related emissions are unlikely to achieve their intended impact. REDD+ and the recent push to secure related carbon rights now threaten to recentralise forest rights and benefits altogether.¹¹¹ Strengthening safeguards, clarifying benefit sharing mechanisms, and adopting a rights-based approach to REDD+ implementation are just some of the issues that will need to be addressed in order to secure the interests and continuing support of IPs and forest-dependent communities.¹¹² To this end, the Evaluation Team recognises UN-REDD's significant contributions to stakeholder engagement and FPIC (as a means of familiarising IPs and local communities with their rights) and encourages the Programme to continue its innovative leadership in these areas.

¹⁰⁶ See Mid-term evaluation report of National Programme Document (August 2013), and several press releases dealing with the situation of the UN-REDD Programme in Panama (e.g., Thomson Reuters Foundation – June 13, 2013; www.mongabay.com – June 25, 2013; www.redd-monitor.org – August 30, 2012; www.rtcc.org – December 13, 2012; www.un-redd.org – December 10, 2013)

¹⁰⁷ Larson et al. (2013); William D. Sunderlin et al. (2014)

¹⁰⁸ See Larson et al. (2010); Schlager and Ostrom (1992)

¹⁰⁹ See <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/07/04/australia-shuts-down-the-kalimantan-forest-carbon-partnership-a-lot-of-funds-spent-and-very-little-progress/>.

¹¹⁰ See Section 4.4 on REDD+ Challenges, footnote 108 below and the recent study by W. D. Sunderlin et al. (2014)

¹¹¹ Boer (2013); Phelps et al. (2010); RRI (2013, 2014); See also GLOBE International (2013) The GLOBE Forest Legislation Study. Available at: www.globeinternational.org/index.php/legislation-studies/publications/forest-legislation-study

¹¹² Ribot and Larson (2012); Schroeder and McDermott (2014)

6.1.4 Linkages to Other REDD+ Initiatives

F4: The Programme’s comparative advantage in the global REDD+ arena is becoming clearer, and coordination with other REDD+ initiatives is steadily increasing at the national level.

91. Since its creation in 2008, the Programme’s comparative advantage has become progressively clearer, and today, it is broadly recognised for its normative and technical contributions to the global REDD+ agenda. As noted by interview respondents in all three regions, the Programme is praised for its standard-setting approach to: (i) stakeholder engagement; (ii) safeguards and free, prior and informed consent; (iii) governance and anti-corruption efforts; and (iv) forest measurement, reporting, and verification. It is responsive to the demands of its country partners (i.e., ten-day response period for SNA requests) and stands alone in terms of its ability to rapidly initiate NPs and disburse funds as required. Presence at the country level and use of resident technical experts to support NP implementation were likewise considered important by country representatives for building national capacities.

92. Within the global REDD+ arena, the UN-REDD Programme shares similarities with a number of other initiatives, particularly with the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). In effect, the two initiatives have played a critical role in shaping the emerging REDD+ agenda,¹¹³ leading to the adoption of common frameworks (e.g., Readiness Preparation Proposals or R-PPs), tools (e.g., the Joint FCPF and UN-REDD Programme Country Needs Assessment), and processes (e.g., the phased approach to REDD+ implementation) that have come to define the standards by which participating countries will be judged. With shared decision-making venues (i.e., back-to-back meetings of the UN-REDD Policy Board and the FCPF Participants Committee), increasing efforts to engage in joint programming and delivery through UNDP (e.g., DRC, Cambodia, Congo-Brazzaville, Indonesia, Peru, and Vietnam), and the production of joint reports and action plans, the improving levels of coordination between the two framework approaches were praised and encouraged by observers in all three regions. In addition to the recognition of UNDP as a delivery partner of the FCPF, the UN’s approach to rights-based programming and historic role as a neutral actor are increasingly being solicited to support FCPF work in sensitive socio-economic and cultural settings (e.g., Cambodia, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, and Suriname).

93. While such developments are encouraging, several observers argued that the co-occurrence of the two readiness programmes within the multilateral system creates confusion and possible inefficiencies through the duplication of efforts. Overlaps are more obvious for the readiness phase than for implementation, where the FCPF and others (e.g., the Forest Investment Programme) have a clear comparative advantage (i.e., well-resourced funds and experience managing a results-based payment mechanism).¹¹⁴ Yet, similarities with other organisations and initiatives do not end with the FCPF. REDD+ readiness efforts are also supported by NGOs (e.g., World Wide Fund for Nature, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and Winrock International), dedicated bilateral funds and institutions (e.g., Australia, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, the UK, and the USA), and multilateral arrangements (e.g., Forest Investment Programme, GEF). With many of these efforts occurring in the same countries where the UN-REDD Programme operates, the need for coordination and joint-programming approaches is clear. Though governments have a critical role to play in coordinating the broad range of players involved in REDD+ processes, development agencies and associated contributors to national or local REDD+ efforts also bear responsibility in making sure their contributions add value.

¹¹³ L. G. Williams (2013)

¹¹⁴ Though the World Bank houses the Readiness Fund, the Carbon Fund, and the BioCarbon Fund, it is also plagued with significant time lags in the disbursement of funds, and comparatively higher transaction costs than UN-REDD. For instance, according to the recent Global Program Review of FCPF (August 2012, pp. 26-29), grant disbursements (for a total of USD 4.9 million in grants) took on average 14.5 months to deliver, between 2010 and 2012 (at a cost of USD 22 million). The report is available at: http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/reports/fcpf_gpr.pdf.

94. Along similar lines, many countries have been engaged in sustainable forest management efforts over the past decades. While communication between the bearers of past efforts and the champions of REDD-related interventions may be less than adequate for a number of countries, as some have emphasised to the Evaluation Team (e.g., as one interviewee summed up, “we don’t talk to each other, we simply build another silo called REDD+”), there is mounting evidence that harmonisation across these efforts is occurring. For instance, in places where REDD+ and other processes coincide (e.g., Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade – FLEGT in Cameroun, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire or Ghana), country leaders are actively seeking ways to leverage the lessons, tools, and processes derived from related efforts to increase the impact of prior investments. The FAO FLEGT team has recently been called upon to explicitly strengthen linkages between REDD+ and FLEGT national processes. Building on the positive precedent of these and other similar efforts, the Evaluation Team expects that coordination between related initiatives will increase over time.

95. Currently, some efforts are made at country level to coordinate the different initiatives, but there is little evidence of actual joint programming and joint implementation. Such a role has been played by UN-REDD in DRC, for instance, whereas in other places (e.g., Colombia and Ecuador), REDD+ national coordinating committees or taskforces were established prior to the arrival of UN-REDD. The general consensus amongst consulted stakeholders is that more coordination and joint programming are needed at all levels of REDD+, with an emphasis on using existing coordination mechanisms. It was not uncommon for the observation to be made that UN agencies do not engage with others at the country level and build on existing efforts – this remains fully dependent upon individuals, as no formal process for doing so exists within the UN-REDD Programme. Placing the national REDD+ focal point or coordinator at the head of such structures would be a step in the right direction.

96. One critical component to coordination and improving the delivery of REDD+ capacity-building efforts, technical assistance or other related products is the need to clarify what national and international partners aim to achieve. The absence of a common definition or interpretation of REDD+ readiness and what it implies constitutes a serious drawback to improving coordination.

6.1.5 Appropriateness

F5: The Programme’s strategy no longer appears sufficient to address the evolving needs of country partners.

97. In the absence of a climate change agreement to operationalise REDD+ in accordance with UNFCCC principles, efforts to achieve emission reductions from avoided deforestation are unlikely to yield their desired impact. Moreover, evidence suggests that the idea of REDD+ has consistently acquired new meanings since 2008, and few countries today see it as a strict performance-based mechanism for securing emission reductions.¹¹⁵ These developments create both challenges and opportunities for the UN-REDD Programme. On the one hand, the level of effort needed to reduce the rate of global deforestation is greater than what early advocates had assumed, and the financing for achieving such ends never materialised.¹¹⁶ Yet, the scientific consensus on the need to safeguard tropical forests to meet IPCC targets for a maximum increase of 2°C before the end of the century – to which we should add climate change adaptation efforts, the protection of biological diversity, and the sustainable development goals of the international community – points to an unprecedented demand for REDD-related reforms, along with a fundamental shift from the current business-as-usual trajectory.

98. Given the emerging context of REDD+ and uncertainties over future developments, is the UN-REDD Programme – in terms of its design, strategy, and result expectations – appropriate for achieving its end goal of

¹¹⁵ Angelsen and McNeil (2012); Buizer et al. (2014); den Besten et al. (2014); McDermott (2014); Pistorius (2012)

¹¹⁶ GCP et al. (2014); IWG (2009)

reducing emissions through avoided deforestation? Tentative answers to such a question varied significantly across the populations of interviewed stakeholders. However, without the development of compliance markets that actually recognise or accept REDD+ emission credits; robust commitments by the international community to meet the projected funding gap for 2015-2020; and solutions to such complex problems as land and carbon rights – including measurement, reporting, and verification thereof – efforts to achieve tangible results (i.e., reduced emissions and reduced deforestation) will likely remain a struggle.

99. With negotiations not progressing at their desired pace, the impetus to achieve REDD+ readiness for a strict emissions reduction scheme appears to be losing ground in some countries. During the evaluation, this was perceived by high-level representatives of the three UN agencies (one of whom pointed out that “REDD+ has become a moving target, and I sincerely doubt if the Programme is flexible enough to keep up with the pace of change in the target”), and in the strict mandate that some government representatives are given (e.g., “We have been given two years by our president to achieve REDD+ readiness. If at that time there are no concrete external investments, we must stop our efforts.”).

100. Views on the most appropriate course of action for the UN-REDD Programme differed substantially. Though many suggestions may be gleaned from relevant sources of scholarship, there is no emerging consensus on how emission reduction targets will be met, with or without a new climate deal. Given the complexity of REDD+ and the many uncertainties that underpin its achievement, some of the interviewees argued that a stronger case for forests and the multiple benefits they provide has to be made in order to fully integrate such values in the sustainable development strategies of participating countries. Some suggested that a no-regrets¹¹⁷ strategy would offer a more appropriate course of action for the so-called interim period, assuming that a new climate change agreement comes into force in 2020. Others insisted that any movement away from emissions reduction to “low-carbon, climate-resilient development options” would result in “another set of vague policy ideas that could be used to justify nearly anything,” while losing sight of REDD’s “simple” and clear goal of “using performance-based payments to reduce deforestation.”

101. Of course, policy and tenure reforms, effective governance, green economic development, as well as forest mapping and monitoring are all vital for reducing emissions from deforestation. But if the end goal remains tied to securing access to performance-based payments (whether from market or non-market sources), and this either fails to materialise or proves insufficient to meet the emerging demand, then the incentive to pursue such strategies may wither away (see F1). Re-examining the value-added of the UN-REDD Programme so as to strengthen its appropriateness in the current post-Cancun and post-Warsaw context appears more critical than ever.

102. At the output level, the UN-REDD Programme has steadily adapted to the shifting global and national contexts wherein it operates. Today, the Programme offers a broader conceptualisation of REDD+ than that of a strict performance-based system. As articulated in National Programme documents and by country-level representatives, the Programme is ambitious in seeking to undertake the transformation of entire socio-economic development pathways away from deforestation. To do so, it uses a variety of means that are not all subordinate to the outcome of future climate change negotiations. For instance, better forest governance and benefit sharing mechanisms are fundamental to any viable conservation effort, and neither is dependent on UNFCCC processes. In Ecuador, contributions to the green economy component aim to identify the sectors that are more likely to decrease deforestation as a result of cost-benefit comparisons, including full-cost accounting of the multiple benefits that such forests provide. As part of a nationwide anti-corruption effort, Indonesia is now emphasising the need for strict anti-corruption measures in REDD+.

¹¹⁷ The term “no-regrets” refers to activities, which – regardless of future decisions or outcomes in terms of REDD+ financing or the creation of carbon markets – are needed to ensure sustainable resource governance.

103. As country partners highlight, REDD+ has the potential to become a fundamental game changer in the way land and resources are used, managed, and governed throughout the developing world. The problem, according to most interviewed stakeholders, is that changes in the underlying context are not apparent in the design and end goal of the Programme, including the allocation of resources. Though there is no actual consensus on what readiness means, the predominant focus of the Programme remains strongly anchored in developing national capacities to access performance-based payments for reduced deforestation (i.e., MRV, reference levels and the administration of [future] funds, and adequate stakeholder participation to achieve such ends). Meanwhile, evidence suggests that creating enabling conditions for transformational change (e.g., forest management and governance, tenure, national and international trade and investment policies, agricultural reforms, equitable benefit sharing mechanisms, safeguard enforcement) is far more important to achieving emission reductions than learning how to measure such changes or manage potential market returns. While the 2011-15 Strategy may no longer be consistent with the evolving needs of national partners and the contexts within which they operate, the Programme is adapting to changing circumstances. By modulating its investments and support in light of rich and varied data sets (e.g., institutional and context analyses [ICAs], the recent development of the country approach to safeguards tool [CAST], participatory governance assessments, emerging efforts to address tenure), the UN-REDD Programme is helping to ensure that its contributions remain relevant to the needs of country partners and the challenges they face in terms of achieving sustainable outcomes.

6.1.6 Programme Logic

F6: Though the Programme’s logic is anchored in the global REDD+ agenda, the absence of a clear theory of change weakens the Programme’s ability to ensure that it is doing the right things to achieve its intended results.

104. The UN-REDD Programme and its 2011-2015 Strategy aim to build the capacities of partner countries to achieve REDD+ readiness. It is broadly aligned with the global REDD+ agenda, the results of UNFCCC negotiations, and the joint UN-REDD/FCPF framework for assessing country readiness. Yet, the Programme itself is not structured around an explicitly stated theory of change (ToC). This makes it difficult to assess the rigour of the proposed causal relationships among the six work areas outlined in the Strategy or the eight result outcomes specified in the Global Programme. Therefore, the extent to which these joint outcomes are sufficient to graduate countries from the preparation to the investment phase is difficult to assess.

105. During the inception stage, the Evaluation Team developed a proximate ToC based on their best understanding of the Programme’s design, logical framework, and assumptions. The emerging theory (Exhibit 5.1) assumes that with key inputs from the Programme (technical and financial support), countries will be able to achieve immediate outcomes in the form of increased capacities and mechanisms (MRV, safeguards, stakeholder engagement, governance, green economy alternatives) that attract REDD+ financing from market and non-market sources and contribute to human well-being. Collectively, such efforts should lead to avoided deforestation and related emission reductions. The theory is focused on a post-2012 scenario that is no longer fully aligned with current UNFCCC negotiations and the evolving nature of REDD+, including the need for non-market incentives. Such changes are acknowledged by Programme staff, but have not been formally recognised in Policy Board decisions.

106. Moreover, a number of the assumptions needed to support the underlying logic do not appear to hold. Crucially, in order for the theory to work, one must assume that developing countries will commit to low-carbon, climate-resilient development practices. However, public declarations and signed commitments do not make the world turn (see F3). Buy-in from policy-makers and sector representatives is conspicuously low in most countries. For the most part, development priorities – even in places that show relatively strong progress towards REDD+ readiness (e.g., DRC, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Vietnam) – continue to be based on business-as-usual trajectories that give priority to agribusiness development, mining, and conventional forestry concessions,

with subdued responses to the need for tenure reform or other progressive measures. Where visible changes are occurring, the problems of deforestation have not necessarily disappeared: more often than not, they are exported to a less progressive state.¹¹⁸ The lack of clarity on what the Programme intends to achieve, low country ownership, and the unrealistic expectations it creates are identified as core challenges to the achievement of results by well over half of survey respondents.

107. There is a need to carefully reconsider whether the underlying logic of the Programme is robust enough to achieve the goal of REDD+ readiness. In accordance with the UN-REDD Framework Document, the Programme intended to: (i) assist developing countries in the preparation and implementation of national REDD strategies and mechanisms; and (ii) support the development of normative solutions and standardised approaches to REDD. As currently implemented, however, the Programme does not aim to develop, test, and implement viable solutions to the context-specific drivers of deforestation and forest degradation until the implementation or investment phase. Drawing on the insights gained from this, completed NP evaluations and other emerging sources such as the preliminary findings of the Independent Evaluation of the Climate Investment Fund,¹¹⁹ evaluation data suggests that the continuing soundness of the current approach needs to be re-examined. The fact that no country has been able to achieve the planned level of development within the allotted timeframe and/or budget, as discussed in the next section, is a revealing lesson for all REDD-related efforts.

6.2 Effectiveness

108. Effectiveness relates to the extent to which the objectives of the UN-REDD Programme were achieved or are likely to be achieved.¹²⁰ To this end, the evaluation focused analytical attention on the eight work areas of the Programme and sought to measure progress relative to the following set of parameters:

- The degree to which programmatic results are being achieved as planned;
- Whether the Programme is effective in moving countries towards REDD+ Readiness; and
- Whether the Programme is yielding unintended effects or results.

109. This section aims to provide evidence of results achieved (at the outcome level) to meet accountability requirements and to foster discussion and learning around the factors that have shaped or conditioned such achievements. However, one should keep in mind that in a context marked by overlapping investments and programmes, attribution of results is a critical issue for all REDD+ investments. Many of the countries supported by the Programme are also supported by other initiatives (e.g., FCPF, FIP, GEF, FAO/FIN, bilateral funds, NGOs). As such, the UN-REDD Programme is but a part of a larger constellation of actors, and the extent to which successes or challenges can be borne entirely by the Programme is difficult to determine.

¹¹⁸ Meyfroidt and Lambin (2011); Meyfroidt et al. (2013)

¹¹⁹ On the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), the report notes in Section 4.4 that (i) “most FIP plans fail to show clearly how individual projects [will] jointly achieve sectoral transformation and associated institutional and policy changes, shifts in forest management paradigms, and re-orientation of sector strategies and investment priorities, all crucial for scaling up and sustainability;” (ii) most “FIP investment plans fail to address drivers”; and, in Exhibit 5.7, that (iii) “FIP investment plans give insufficient consideration to challenges, risks and trade-offs to achieve... developmental benefits,” including “a logical theory of change.” See Independent Evaluation of the Climate Investment Fund (version for public comment), consulted May 31, 2014 at: http://www.cifevaluation.org/cif_eval_for_comment.pdf.

¹²⁰ OECD-DAC (2002). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

6.2.1 Programme Results

F7: The UN-REDD Programme is effective in terms of producing key outputs, and progress towards outcomes is improving.

110. Overall, the evaluation finds that results are being achieved across the entire spectrum of the Programme (NPs and the SNA-GP), with relatively high degrees of achievement at the output level and more modest gains in terms of outcomes. This perspective is consistent with the results of the survey, where 67% of respondents agree to some extent that the Programme is achieving its intended results.¹²¹ At the output level, notable achievements have been made in the areas of forest monitoring and MRV, stakeholder engagement, and the development of national REDD+ governance systems, including the introduction of social and environmental safeguards (SES), FPIC, and work on anti-corruption measures. In terms of multiple benefits and green economy transformations, achievements to date have mostly centred on knowledge products, with some country-specific analyses of emerging opportunities. As more and more countries graduate from readiness to implementation, demand for these two work areas is expected to increase.

111. In terms of outcomes, progress has been observed on a number of fronts. In addition to raising awareness on the need for stakeholder engagement, the Programme has been instrumental in helping Indigenous Peoples' and civil society organisations to have a stronger voice in national forest policy dialogues and global debates around the REDD+ agenda. It is widely praised for its capacity-building support in the area of MRV and forest monitoring and for its efforts to ensure that safeguards, FPIC, and inclusive governance systems and processes are applied. Finally, the Programme has also helped to expand the paradigm of development to include forest valuation, the sustainable use of ecosystem services and products, and the need for inter-sectoral collaboration.

112. The evidence supporting stated achievements (see Exhibit 6.1) stems from a number of sources. Among survey respondents, the three most commonly identified strengths of the Programme are, by order of importance: (i) technical assistance, capacity building, and the creation of related knowledge products; (ii) stakeholder engagement and cooperation (especially with IPs and CSOs); and (iii) awareness-raising and advocacy on REDD/REDD+ concepts, including climate change. Similarly, country visits in Latin America revealed that the Programme played an important role in instigating active discussions around FPIC principles, and securing their integration in national REDD+ efforts and forest governance in general. Most of the countries supported by UN-REDD (e.g., Cambodia, DRC, Ecuador, Nigeria, Panama, and Paraguay) report considerable progress in terms of including IP considerations in national REDD+ efforts. Lastly, advances in the area of MRV, notably in DRC, Panama, and Vietnam, were regarded as some of the Programme's leading contributions to national readiness efforts.

113. Despite the many successes listed herein, progress towards outcome-level achievements remains a challenge. The importance for getting REDD+ on national policy agendas is recognised by all, and some countries have been successful in securing high-level approval from policy-makers (e.g., DRC, Indonesia, Peru, and Vietnam). However, according to recent studies, only Vietnam shows signs that it is actually willing to implement and enforce such changes.¹²² Similarly, inter-sectoral coordination is increasingly recognised as a necessary

Survey Responses on Key UN-REDD Programme Achievements

"Increased awareness of the need for cooperation between all sectors and the necessity to involve all stakeholders at all levels, providing them with appropriate and full information and safeguards."

"Mobilizing and involving different stakeholders in the sector including CSOs and IPs."

"Raising awareness of the importance of placing REDD+ within the broader development agenda as a mean[s] to deliver REDD+ and to secure its long-term impact."

¹²¹ Regarding survey results, see comment in the Limitations section (3.3).

¹²² Brockhaus et al. (2013); Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014)

condition to achieving measurable and permanent emission reductions, and some partner countries (as above) are actively trying to set up multi-stakeholder platforms or inter-ministerial committees to support dialogue.¹²³ However, such coordination is likewise proving difficult to achieve or maintain.¹²⁴ Moving from rules in form to rules in use is a giant leap for most countries. In addition to the variable commitments and shifting priorities of country partners, interviewees indicated that Programme implementation is also hampered by procedural delays (e.g., needs/situational analyses, hiring of staff, establishment of a functional coordination mechanism). For their part, survey respondents note agency-related management and coordination difficulties, poor coordination and collaboration at the country level, inadequate implementation, weak communication, and the absence of a clear focus or sense of direction.

114. Drawing on evidence from country visits, completed evaluations, survey results, and relevant Programme documents, Exhibit 6.1 below presents a summary of the Programme’s main achievements, relative to each of its work areas. Outcome statements are derived from the SNA-GP framework and work areas identified in the Strategy for 2011-2015.

Performance Grading Scale for Exhibits 6.1 to 6.3

4-point scale (FCPF)	6-point scale (UN-REDD Evaluation ToR)
Green – Significant progress	HS – Highly Satisfactory
Yellow – Progressing well, further development required	S – Satisfactory MS – Moderately Satisfactory
Orange – Further development required	MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory U – Unsatisfactory
Red – Not yet demonstrating	HU – Highly Unsatisfactory

¹²³ According to the 2012 Mid-term evaluation of the DRC NP, the national coordination unit is actively engaged in agricultural reform processes in support of REDD+ requirements, and the World Bank is reportedly financing two large agroforestry projects.

¹²⁴ See Brockhaus et al. (2013); Di Gregorio et al. (2012); Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014); Luttrell et al. (2014); Murdiyarso et al. (2012)

Exhibit 6.1 Observations on Outcome-Related Achievements

OUTCOMES	OBSERVATIONS
<p>Outcome 1: REDD+ countries have systems and capacities to develop and implement MRV and monitoring. Overall score: MS</p>	<p>Nearly 80% of survey respondents feel that the Programme is effective in meeting this outcome. The evaluation notes that technical capacities are indeed improving, but whether countries will have the resources/means to sustain such achievements over time remains a point of concern. These findings concur with the evaluation of Norway-supported MRV activities, of which UN-REDD MRV activities form part.¹²⁵</p> <p>A key issue for MRV and other technical areas of the Programme is the strong reliance on international experts, and the tendency to engage in capacity substitution, instead of capacity building. Capacity-building efforts are generally focused on a limited number of individuals, rather than on institutional capacity building or “training-of-trainers” approaches. Retaining capacity after funding ends is uncertain because of high staff turnover in most countries.¹²⁶</p> <p>There is also a strong focus on carbon accounting, to the detriment of other forest values. Apart from forest ecotypes, other characteristics such as forest functions (ecosystem services), biodiversity, customary/commercial/industrial/agricultural land uses and drivers are not actively mapped, though parallel efforts are undertaken under the rubric of multiple benefits to address this lacuna. Tanzania has reportedly engaged in carbon and biodiversity mapping, and thorough open-access systems are being developed for DRC, PNG, and Paraguay.</p> <p>The technical qualities of the work associated with this outcome and the heavy reliance on international experts (FAO Rome, WCMC) render it susceptible to isolation from the greater purpose of the Programme and potential complementarities with other result areas. Also, progress depends largely on the initial situation, which explains why Ecuador for instance (with significant previous mapping progress) has much more tangible results than Paraguay (with no mapping experience).</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Credible, inclusive national governance systems are developed for REDD+ implementation. Overall score: MU</p>	<p>Overall, only 38% of survey respondents feel that the Programme is effective in achieving this outcome. This is an ambitious outcome, given that the meaning, implications, and process used for improving REDD+ governance are not well defined.</p> <p>REDD+ Corruption Risk Assessments have been carried out in a number of countries, leading to: (i) the creation of a dedicated inter-sectoral Task Force in Kenya; (ii) the recognition of corruption risks in Nepal; (iii) the integration of safeguards in DRC’s REDD+ framework strategy, and REDD+ Fund and Investment Plan; (iv) and an initiative to strengthen the capacities of IPOs to monitor illegal logging in Peru.</p> <p>Multi-stakeholder platforms have been established in most NP countries, expanding the dialogue on REDD/REDD+, but as shown in DRC, Ecuador, and Panama, representation is unclear and incomplete, and these platforms’ role in governance is limited.</p> <p>In most countries, REDD+ is primarily dealt with through the environment/forest sector. While fully integrated national governance systems do not yet exist (see Relevance), the Programme is proactively seeking the engagement of all concerned actors through the creation of inter-ministerial committees. Policy Board advice on how this could be strengthened is lacking, however.</p> <p>The Programme has brought considerable attention to the interests of vulnerable groups, but their ability to influence national REDD+ agendas remains limited.</p> <p>Progress has been made in terms of fiduciary arrangements to mitigate fund management risks (noted in DRC and Vietnam), thanks to extensive UNDP support. The need for such arrangements stands to vary from one country to another.</p> <p>Nationwide assessments of the drivers of deforestation are conducted in a few countries, but strategies for addressing these, including related governance implications, are absent.</p>

¹²⁵ LTS International et al. (2013)

¹²⁶ Ibid.

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OUTCOMES	OBSERVATIONS
<p>Outcome 4: IPs, CSOs, local communities, and other stakeholders participate effectively in national and international REDD+ decision-making, strategy development and implementation. Overall score: MS</p>	<p>67% of survey respondents believe the Programme is effective in securing stakeholder participation, especially of IPs and CSOs. The evaluation notes high degrees of participation by IPs and CSOs in international decision-making processes (e.g., Policy Board) and increased engagement in national-level consultations.</p> <p>However, the integration of IPO and CSO perspectives in actual REDD+-related national decisions and policies is not evident in many countries (e.g., Ecuador, Indonesia, Vietnam); is developing favourably in some (e.g., DRC, Panama); and is positive in others (e.g., Paraguay).</p> <p>Selection criteria and processes for IPO and CSO involvement are variable at the national level. In some countries (e.g., Cambodia, Ecuador, Paraguay), a transparent process to select and include major IPOs was used, while in others (e.g., DRC), the process was more ad hoc.</p> <p>The representation and involvement of non-IP forest-dependent communities, smallholders and rural populations in general (including migrant communities) are as yet limited. This is because the initial focus of the Programme has been on forest-dependent IPs and CSOs (see Relevance).</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Safeguards are addressed and respected and multiple benefits of REDD+ are realised. Overall score: MS</p>	<p>Nearly 53% of survey respondents consider the Programme effective in terms of introducing the notion of social and environmental safeguards. The evaluation observes that safeguards are developed and being considered in various pilot activities, though their practical/operational applications are unclear or they are too cumbersome (e.g., 70+ indicators) to be realistically applied. The new reporting requirement under COP 19 should help streamline implementation, including the newly developed country approach to safeguards tool (CAST).</p> <p>Just over 50% of survey respondents consider that the Programme is effective in incorporating multiple benefits in national REDD+ strategies and decision-making processes.</p> <p>The evaluation notes that multiple benefits are increasingly being considered (e.g., participatory mapping and studies on ecosystem services in DRC, Panama, Tanzania, and Zambia), but operational, statutory or customary implications (including safeguards for benefit sharing) have not yet been defined for any of the countries. Given the absence of formal change in the forest management practices of partnering countries, including tenure and resource rights more broadly, the extent to which safeguards, benefit sharing and other related considerations are actually respected and/or realised cannot yet be evaluated.</p> <p>Some countries, such as Nigeria, have placed the realisation of multiple benefits at the centre of their national REDD+ efforts, making the generation of immediate and tangible benefits for forest-dependent communities a precondition to the advancement of REDD+ readiness. Ecuador relies on a strong set of safeguards that were defined by a participatory safeguards committee, prior to the UN-REDD Programme. Now, however, several members of that committee consider that the existing safeguards are overly detailed and unfeasible to implement completely, which constitutes an important lesson for the Programme about the possible trade-off between the completeness of safeguards and the feasibility of their effective implementation.</p>
<p>Outcome 6: Green economy transformation and REDD+ strategies and investments are mutually reinforcing. Overall score: MU</p>	<p>Discussions on green economy opportunities have just begun to take place in some countries and at the global level. Accordingly, only 36% of survey respondents feel that the Programme is effective in pursuing this outcome.</p> <p>Work in this area remains limited to a few studies, and currently, there are no REDD+ investments supporting green economy transformation, nor are there concrete mechanisms that would lead to such changes. This is expected to change as more and more countries graduate to implementation.</p> <p>At both the national and global levels, the direct (e.g., the private sector in general, large-scale agro-industries; timber, paper, and mining industries; forest-dependent rural and migrant communities) and indirect (e.g., ministries of finance, trade, agriculture, industry, rural development) drivers of deforestation are absent from the negotiating table.</p>

OUTCOMES	OBSERVATIONS
<p>Outcome 7: UN-REDD Programme knowledge is developed, managed, analysed, and shared to support REDD+ efforts at all levels.</p> <p>Overall score: MS</p>	<p>Knowledge management and dissemination is a shared responsibility of the three UN agencies and the Secretariat, with the Secretariat taking the lead role.¹²⁷ In the case of UN-REDD, knowledge management is defined as “the process whereby the Programme reflects on and shares experiences and then collectively builds on them to improve the way the Programme works.”</p> <p>Over the past four years, the Programme has generated an impressive number of high-quality knowledge products in the form of policy briefs, lessons learned studies, synthesis studies, and best practice guidelines. These have covered many critical topics: legal issues on REDD+, tenure of IP territories, gender mainstreaming, safeguards and FPIC, private sector involvement, and benefit distribution, to name a few. Global and regional workshops in all three continents have been held to share global best practices and country experiences. A REDD+ community of practice is also being built via online workspace platforms (i.e., UNREDD.net and UNREDD.org). Accordingly, 58% of survey respondents noted that the Programme is effective in achieving this outcome.</p> <p>While the Programme is relatively effective in producing REDD+ knowledge products, it is viewed as being comparatively weaker in terms of producing knowledge for decision-making purposes. To this end, nearly all MG and SG members noted that the Programme is relatively weak in terms of providing the information they need to manage the Programme effectively.</p> <p>Feedback from regional and country interviewees noted that learning exchanges should continue to focus on South-South learning and should be more reiterative. The evaluation also noted that the heavy emphasis on output reporting at all levels is not conducive to generating the kind of knowledge that is needed for strategic or programmatic-related decision-making purposes.</p>

¹²⁷ SNA-GP Framework Document, p. 70

6.2.2 REDD+ Readiness

F8: Countries participating in National Programmes are not progressing as planned. Achieving REDD+ readiness is a long-term process requiring sustained efforts, investments, and technical support.

115. According to nearly 80% of survey respondents, the UN-REDD Programme is effective in moving partner countries towards REDD+ readiness. Yet, only a third believe that the duration of NPs is sufficient for developing REDD+ strategies. As acknowledge by the broader REDD+ community as whole – including countries, delivery partners, experts, and scholars – the time, effort, and resources needed to achieve REDD+ readiness were greatly underestimated. Even countries that are considered “highly motivated” and relatively well advanced within the UN-REDD Programme face important challenges. For instance, the terminal evaluation of the Vietnam NP¹²⁸ states that “Vietnam is not REDD+ ready [...] some systems essential to NRAP implementation such as BDS and MRV have been explored [...] but key pieces of REDD+ architecture are not yet in place” and that “several more years of piloting and capacity building will be required.” In Ecuador, after two years of implementation and with several other major initiatives supporting readiness, this evaluation observed that MRV and safeguards are well implemented; green economy issues are theoretically developed, but stakeholder participation is still partial. There is no inter-sectoral coordination, and future investment strategies are not concrete. In DRC, after years of effort and considerable investments from both bilateral and multilateral sources, national management arrangements and coordinating bodies are in a precarious state. Many readiness requirements have been fulfilled, and the country is now entering into Phase II arrangements, but the national coordination body no longer has the technical resources¹²⁹ needed to support such ends; political commitment is unclear; national and inter-ministerial committees are inoperative; there is growing distrust between CSOs and UN representatives; and though the drivers of deforestation have been identified, solutions are not forthcoming. Finally, with regards to MRV, an extension of the financial support allowed the team to consolidate its achievements. As of April 2014, the system was not yet fully operational.

116. In accordance with the requirements of this evaluation, Exhibits 6.2 and 6.3 below present summary assessments of readiness efforts for each of the countries visited during this evaluation, including NPs that were recently reviewed (please refer to the colour legend

shown above in Section 6.2.1). To this end, output-level results, contained in NP strategy documents, were used as proxies for measuring progress towards national REDD+ readiness. The resulting table clearly illustrates the different rates of progress, with some countries demonstrating satisfactory achievements in many areas, while others pale in comparison, despite receiving similar levels of support. Overall, none of the countries reviewed achieved satisfactory ratings in all programming areas. Though DRC comes close, progress was achieved, as one senior officer put it, “through intense accompaniment.”

“... the average progress of the program is moderately unsatisfactory with most satisfactory progress in terms of Outcome 2 (technical capacity to monitor, measure, report and verify emissions reductions from deforestation and forest degradation) and less satisfactory progress in terms of Outcome 1 (institutional capacity established for the efficient coordination and implementation of the REDD+ National Strategy in Panama).”

Panama – Mid-term Evaluation Report, Draft, p. 15.

¹²⁸ Vietnam Terminal Evaluation Report, p. 16, section 6 (Impact)

¹²⁹ Towards the end of DRC’s NP in 2012, core technical team members either left the national coordination unit (CN-REDD) or were relieved of their duties for misconduct. As of December 2013, none of the remaining staff – with the exception of the director – had been paid in 2013. According to the remaining staff, none have benefited from training opportunities or technical support from the Programme. The functional resilience and capacity of the CN-REDD is unclear.

Exhibit 6.2 REDD+ Readiness Assessment (Part 1)

PARAGUAY	ECUADOR	PANAMA	VIETNAM
(evaluators' assessment)	(evaluators' assessment)	(external review assessment)	(external review assessment)
<i>Outcome 1: Improved institutional and technical capacity of Government and Civil Society organisations to manage REDD activities in Paraguay</i>	<i>Outcome 1: National forest monitoring system designed and implemented</i>	<i>Result 1: Institutional capacity established for the efficient coordination and execution of the REDD+ national strategy in Panama</i>	<i>Outcome 1: Improved institutional and technical capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in VN – S</i>
1.1 REDD National Action Plan – U	1.1 National Forest Assessment – HS	1.1 Validated legal frame for the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy – U	1.1 National coordination mechanism established (Original Output: "National coordination mechanism") – HS
1.2 National Environmental (SEAM) and Forest (INFONA) Information System to measure and evaluate reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation – MU	1.2 Historical Map of deforestation, degradation, and carbon sequestration-related activities – HS	1.2 Operational Framework for the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy – U	1.2 Data and information for national REL/RL for REDD available (Original Output: "National reference scenario for REDD") – MS
1.3 National carbon accounting and data management system – U	1.3 Reference Scenario for emissions from deforestation, degradation, and carbon sequestration activities – MS	1.3 Sectoral, institutional, municipal, and individual capacities strengthened for the implementation of REDD+ National Strategy – U	1.3 Framework National REDD+ Action Programme Strategy ("Framework National REDD Program [Strategy]") – MS
1.4 Equitable and transparent payments and benefit sharing system – MU	1.4 National GHG MRV Monitoring System for the Forestry Sector – S	1.4 One system for payment and distribution of benefits was validated and made operational – MU	1.4 Performance-based, transparent benefit sharing payment system from national to local levels (Original Output: Same) – MU
<i>Outcome 2: Capacity established to implement REDD at local level</i>	<i>Outcome 2: Process of consultation with and involvement of civil society, communities, Indigenous Peoples and nationalities, Afro-Ecuadorian people, Motubio people and communes for REDD+ implemented nationwide</i>	<i>Result 2: Technical capacity to monitor, measure, inform, and verify the reduction of the emissions of deforestation and the degradation of the forests</i>	1.5 Communications material produced for sharing lessons nationally and internationally (Original Output: "Communications material for sharing lessons internationally") – MS
2.1 REDD Demonstration project – HU	2.1 Dissemination of REDD+ information among key stakeholders – S	2.1 A national forests and carbon inventory and monitoring system – S	1.6 National MRV system designed (Original Output: Not in original Log frame) – S
2.2 REDD project proposals designed for other forest areas – HU	2.2 Development and implementation of the "Civil Society Involvement Program" – MS	2.2 Establish national reference levels – S	<i>Outcome 2: Improved capacity to manage REDD and provide other payment for Ecological Services at provincial and district levels through sustainable development planning and implementation – MS</i>

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PARAGUAY	ECUADOR	PANAMA	VIETNAM
<i>Outcome 3: Increased knowledge and capacity building on REDD for forest-dependent communities, especially Indigenous Peoples and other relevant stakeholders in the country</i>	2.3 Monitoring System to assess the effectiveness of the engagement of key stakeholders and good governance – HU	2.3 An accounting system for carbon and the generation of emission information – MS	2.1 District-level forest land-use plan mainstreaming REDD potential (Original Output: “REDD potential mainstreamed in provincial and district-level forest land-use plan”) – MS
3.1 National REDD campaign – U	<i>Outcome 3: Policies and instruments for the implementation of REDD + developed</i>		2.2 Participatory C-stock monitoring (PCM) system operational (Original Output: “Participatory C-stock monitoring system”) – MU
3.2 Training and consultation on REDD with Indigenous Peoples – MS	3.1 Socio-economic analysis of the implementation of a REDD+ mechanism in Ecuador – MS		2.3 Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems defined (Original Output: “Equitable and transparent benefit sharing payment systems”) – MS
3.3 Training and consultation on REDD with small, medium, and large producers, and other stakeholders – MU	3.2 Design of policies and actions for the effective implementation of REDD+ – S		2.4 Awareness on REDD+ created at district and local levels (Original Output: “Awareness raising at provincial, district and local levels”) – MS
	<i>Outcome 4: Development of the necessary operational framework for the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism</i>		<i>Outcome 3: Improved knowledge of approaches to reduce regional displacement of emissions – U</i>
	4.1 Module for tracking and monitoring REDD+ initiatives, developed within the national registration system – S		3.1 Drivers of regional emissions displacement and inter-sectoral leakage assessed (Original Output: “Quantification of regional displacement of emissions risk”) – U
	<i>Outcome 5: Multiple environmental and social benefits guaranteed</i>		
	5.1 Multiple benefits monitoring system – HS		3.2 Regional synergies and collaboration on REDD+ enhanced (Original Outputs 3.2, 3.3: “Regional dialogue on displacement of emissions risk,” “Analysis of opportunities for linkage with non-REDD initiatives to reduce cross-border flow of illegal timber”) – U
	5.2 Definition of the multiple benefits to leverage strategy – S		
	<i>Outcome 6: Design and implementation of the benefits distribution system</i>		
	6.1 Mechanism for benefits distribution validated and in process of implementation – MU		

Exhibit 6.3 REDD+ Readiness Assessment (Part 2)

CAMBODIA	DRC	ZAMBIA	INDONESIA
(evaluators' assessment)	(evaluators' assessment)	(evaluators' assessment)	(external review assessment)
<i>Outcome 1: Effective national management of REDD+ readiness process and stakeholder engagement</i>	<i>Component 1: Organise and consult in preparation for REDD+</i>	<i>Outcome 1: Capacity to manage REDD+ readiness strengthened</i>	<i>Outcome 1: Strengthened multi-stakeholder participation and consensus at national level</i>
1.1 National REDD+ readiness coordination mechanism established – HS	1a. National readiness management arrangements – MU	1.1 REDD+ readiness coordination and management bodies established and functioning – HS	1.1 Consensus on key issues for national REDD+ policy development – S
1.2 Stakeholders are engaged in REDD+ readiness process – HS	1b. Stakeholder consultations and participation – S	1.2 REDD+ readiness process integrated into national development planning process – U	1.2 REDD lessons learned disseminated – S
1.3 Stakeholders are accessing information on REDD+ and the readiness process – HS	<i>Component 2: Prepare the REDD Strategy</i>	1.3 Communication and advocacy strategy for REDD+ developed and implemented – S	1.3 Communications programme developed and implemented – U
<i>Outcome 2: Development of the REDD+ national strategy and implementation framework</i>	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Forest Policy and Governance – MS	Output 1.4 Mapping and gap analysis of relevant REDD+-related initiatives – S	<i>Outcome 2: Demonstration of REL, MRV, and fair payment systems for REDD</i>
2.1 Development of individual REDD+ strategies and implementation modalities – MS	2b. REDD strategy options – S	<i>Outcome 2: Broad-based stakeholder support for REDD+ established</i>	2.1 Improved capacity and methodology design for forest carbon inventory, including sub-national pilot implementation – S
2.2 Evaluation of REDD+ co-benefits and studies on revenue and benefit sharing – MS	2c. REDD implementation framework – MS	2.1 Stakeholder engagement process functioning – HS	2.2 REL proposed at provincial level (central Sulawesi) – S
2.3 Options developed for a REDD+ funding mechanism and revenue sharing – MS	2d. Social and environmental impacts – S	2.2 Conflict resolution and redress mechanism reviewed – MU	2.3 Harmonised fair and equitable payment mechanism at provincial level – U
2.4 Policy and legal framework developed for REDD+ implementation – abandoned due to lack of funding.	<i>Component 3: Develop reference emission level and reference levels</i>	<i>Outcome 3: National governance framework and institutional capacities for REDD+ strengthened</i>	2.4 Toolkit for priority setting towards maximising potential carbon benefits and incorporating co-benefits (e.g., poverty reduction – MS
2.5 Safeguards and monitoring of co-benefits developed – MS	3a. Evaluation of historic data – HS	3.1 National REDD+ strategy and institutional capacity to implement it developed (ongoing) – MS	<i>Outcome 3: Capacity established to implement REDD at decentralised levels</i>
<i>Outcome 3: Improved capacity to manage REDD+ projects at sub-national level</i>	3b. Assessment of DRC national circumstances – HS	3.2 REDD+ strategy integrated into national development planning process – U	3.1 Capacity for spatial socio-economic planning incorporating REDD at district level – MS
3.1 REDD+ pilot project guidelines developed and approval of funding for demonstration sites selected – MS	<i>Component 4: Design a monitoring system</i>	3.3 Legislative framework to enable REDD+ implementation strengthened – U	3.2 Empowered local stakeholders are able to benefit from REDD – U

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CAMBODIA	DRC	ZAMBIA	INDONESIA
3.2 Implementation of pilot project activities – HS (Three ongoing pilots have been supported)	4a. Design a measurement/monitoring, reporting, and verification system – HS	3.4 Mechanism to administer REDD+ finance established – MS	3.3 Multi-stakeholder engagement in district REDD implementation plans – U
<i>Outcome 4: MRV monitoring system and REL framework designed and capacity built for implementation</i>		3.5 Benefit sharing model developed and approved – MU	
4.1 MRV capacity built – MRV/REL technical team established – S		<i>Outcome 4: National REDD+ strategies identified</i>	
4.2 Cambodia monitoring system plan developed – S		4.1 Study on drivers of deforestation completed – S	
4.3 Review of forest-cover assessment completed – S		4.2 Candidate activities for REDD+ implementation identified – U	
4.4 National forest inventory designed to enable measurement of emissions and removal factors for REDD+ – HS		<i>Outcome 5: MRV capacity to implement REDD+ strengthened</i>	
4.5 Support for the establishment of REDD+ GHG reporting system – MU		5.1 REDD+ integrated into forest inventory system (ILUA) – S	
4.6 Cambodia RL/REL framework developed – U		5.2 Operational land monitoring system established and institutionalised – MS	
		5.3 An estimate of GHG emissions and removals from forest land completed – HS	
		<i>Outcome 6: Assessment of RL and REL levels</i>	
		6.1 Historical rates of forest area and carbon stock changes reviewed – MS	

6.2.3 Unplanned Results

F9: The UN-REDD Programme is helping to reposition the critical importance of forests in national and global policy arenas and provides forest-dependent communities with a unique platform to voice their rights, needs, and concerns.

117. The UN-REDD Programme has helped to put forest governance and conservation back into global and national policy arenas (see Relevance). In particular, it has helped to highlight the importance of forest ecosystem services, not only for climate change, but also for the broader sustainable development agenda as a whole. Through its close linkages to UNFCCC negotiations, the Programme has contributed to making the REDD+ agenda a critical rallying point for climate change negotiations – a perspective that is widely shared by survey respondents, who consider awareness-raising and advocacy to be amongst the Programme’s key achievements.¹³⁰

118. By striving to integrate a rights-based approach to programming, the Programme has also contributed to the democratisation of forest policy and climate change arenas at national and global levels. It has effectively provided an unprecedented platform for Indigenous Peoples’ and civil society organisations to voice not only their concerns, needs, and interests, but in fact their rights – whether to free, prior and informed consent, customary or statutory land rights, resource rights, or equity in benefit sharing processes.

6.2.4 Unintended Effects

F10: The UN-REDD Programme has unintentionally contributed to the development of a complex and externally driven change agenda.

119. Instead of internalising incentives and building on the energy, capacities, and willingness of individuals, communities, and societies to address the problems they face relative to the maintenance of forest resource systems, the complexity of the REDD+ agenda and its performance-based architecture tends to externalise the incentives, knowledge, and capacities needed to achieve change. By reducing the utility of a complex whole (i.e., forest-related social-ecological systems) to a single measurable variable (i.e., carbon), REDD+ creates risks. Efforts to deal with such risks have brought about unparalleled levels of complexity in the global thrust to reduce emission-causing deforestation and forest degradation.¹³¹ From debated technical matters (e.g., reference levels), to the safeguards and guidelines needed to navigate the contested boundaries of rights and benefits, REDD+ effectively multiplies the number of actors and structures needed to address the myriad issues that come from monetising and maximising a single element across a complex set of ideas, values, interests, and beliefs. In short, the espoused simplicity of the REDD+ ideal (i.e., a low-cost win-win solution for climate change mitigation) is turning out to be “by far the most complex international forest governance venture ever attempted.”¹³²

120. The complexity of the REDD+ agenda means that the solutions for dealing with the direct and indirect causes of deforestation also tend to be beyond the reach of developing countries. Reliance on external technical assistance becomes necessary, as does the financial backing that is required to support the sought-after transformations. Moreover, as per the central premise of REDD+, whether financing is met by an eventual

¹³⁰ 62% of survey respondents believe that the Programme is successful in terms of creating a sense of shared commitment towards the global objectives of the Programme. Similarly, 57% think that the Programme is making notable contributions towards changing stakeholder values, beliefs, and behaviours regarding forests.

¹³¹ McDermott (2014)

¹³² Ibid., p. 18; see also Angelsen (2013); Visseren-Hamakers et al. (2012)

compliance market or performance-based assistance,¹³³ as is currently the case, the basic assumption is that “external incentives will provide the necessary impetus for reforms.”¹³⁴ While many correctly argue that the reason why REDD+ has gained such prominence in national and global policy agendas is precisely because of the incentive mechanism that lies at the heart of the proposed framework, the cost¹³⁵ and complexity of achieving REDD+ also means that success is inextricably tied to the continuation of externally provided technical and financial support.

121. As revealed in the survey and interview responses, the task of achieving REDD+ readiness is formidable, and perspectives on what the Programme aims to achieve vary widely. The lack of focus or clear sense of direction and the necessity to manage country-level expectations were likewise highlighted as key challenges for the Programme. How UN-REDD and others decide to confront these challenges is a question that lies beyond the scope of this evaluation. Social, economic, and political solutions to the maintenance of forest ecosystems necessarily require national buy-in. Country-driven solutions might take more time and different forms of incentives and support, but they might also prove more effective, in the end.

6.3 Efficiency

122. The term efficiency refers to how well the UN-REDD Programme uses available resources – including both financial and human resources, time, and other organisational capacities – to meet its objectives. By convention, efficiency is defined in terms of costs per unit of output, and measurement is determined by the extent to which aggregated outputs (and, by extension, outcomes) represent a reasonable return on investment.¹³⁶ Thus, efficiency focuses attention on the means used to achieve valued ends and whether these were delivered at the least possible costs and risks or with the greatest amount of benefit per unit of resource used.

123. In this section, efficiency is drawn from the perceptions of stakeholders and their alignment with budgetary expenditures. Specifically, the evaluation sought to determine:

- The degree to which the Programme relies on sound management systems to track, monitor, and evaluate the use of resources;
- Whether the distribution of resources appears reasonable or appropriate, relative to:
 - National and Global Programme components;
 - The quality and timeliness of key outputs;
 - The contributions of the three UN partner agencies.
- Whether inter-agency coordination is contributing to improved efficiency gains; and
- Whether agency capacities are being fully leveraged.

6.3.1 Management Systems

F11: At the global level, the Programme relies on a transparent open-access framework – the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – to report on the use and distribution of funds across the three UN partner agencies. How

¹³³ Angelsen and McNeil (2012); Angelsen (2013)

¹³⁴ Angelsen (2013, p. 7); see also Karsenty and Ongolo (2012). It is important to note that Angelsen’s point about external incentives specifically refers to what he calls “performance-based aid.” However, there is no theoretical difference between a payment that fulfills a market condition and one that responds to donor conditionalities. In either case, the motive for performance rests on the anticipated gains.

¹³⁵ GCP et al. (2014); IWG (2009)

¹³⁶ Lusthaus, Charles, et al. (2002). *Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance*, IDRC/IADB, Ottawa/New York

such resources are allocated and used by each UN agency is less clear to everyone, both within and outside the three partner agencies.

124. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) is a pass-through fund management mechanism used to administer funds committed by participating donors, on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme and the three participating UN agencies in particular. As such, it strictly follows the decisions of the Policy Board on the management of Programme funds and provides transparent reporting on these funds. The GATEWAY, which is the MPTF open-access financial reporting system,¹³⁷ provides a clear overview of the distribution and use of funds across the three partner agencies, and between the SNA-GP and NP components, including spending and rates of disbursement in each of the NP countries. In addition, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the MPTF Office, prepares a consolidated annual progress report containing a general narrative and financial information on the Programme, including a short description of key achievements by country. However, the information in these documents is cumulative, and the UN agencies are expected to maintain a record of these allocations and report in more detail on their respective budget allocations.

125. As such, available budgets and the planning of spending are clear and detailed for both the SNA-GP and the country partners, with regards to their respective NPs. For the SNA-GP, a consolidated annual budget and work plan is prepared and submitted to the Policy Board for approval. The work plan presents, for the different outcome areas, the expected outputs and activities, the agency responsible for each one, and the budget allocation according to five categories (i.e., staff and personnel, supplies/materials, contractual services, travel, and general operating costs). It also outlines the percentages of funds for the SNA-GP that are allocated to international support functions, country specific functions, and the Secretariat. For example, in the last budget/work plan from December 2013, the respective percentages were 21%, 55%, and 23%. Lastly, one of the Programme's central challenges is its de facto reliance on annual funding allocations that limit long-term planning efforts on the basis of predictable resource flows. Though funder commitment has been relatively stable, the exact amount of available resources is never known ahead of time, making it nearly impossible to plan with confidence.

126. At the country level, there is a detailed annual budget planning process involving the government and the three UN agencies jointly. NP annual budgets and work plans identify for each outcome the planned activities, amounts allocated to each UN agency, and their description according to the above-mentioned budget categories. How much money is allocated to a specific country or project can generally be found in the agency-managed websites set up for such purposes (e.g., open.undp.org).

127. Beyond this, the management of funds is more elusive. Countries and UN agencies provide annual reports in a general manner, only reporting on outputs. Therefore, when and where resources are spent, on what, by whom, and why are not clear to the Evaluation Team or between the different partner agencies, as this information is not shared internally. This is a noted point of contention between the agencies, as confirmed by a number of key informants. More than one of the budget holders directly declared: "I do not know where the other agencies spend their money." The UN-REDD Secretariat does not have any insight on the available budget, beyond general categories, and an NP coordinator said: "I have no idea what the individual agencies spend and what money they have available at a given point, for a given kind of activity." Another international advisor in an NP country asked one of the UN agencies for an explanation of its budgeting and accounting processes and could not get a clear response. Even though each of the partner agencies is required to report expenditures in accordance with the UNDG budget categories, none of them share their work plans and detailed budgetary allocations for the portion of money they receive. Being a tripartite (i.e., separate and independent) arrangement, no centralised accountability mechanism is used, other than the MPTF, to: (i) plan, monitor, and

¹³⁷ <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/CCF00>

evaluate the use of resources; (ii) identify and mitigate cost drivers; (iii) ensure the strategic and operational relevance of outputs; and (iv) annually account for/report on the use and distribution of funds (e.g., compare administrative and operational costs, the efficiency of different delivery mechanisms, the use or relevance of direct technical assistance versus theoretical or knowledge-related contributions).

128. An additional problem is that UN agencies use different contracting and accounting rules and procedures. For example, for UNDP, the UN-REDD National Project Document is a legal document, whereas for UNEP, a separate grant agreement with the country needs to be developed. The UN agencies also have different ways of making decisions. UNDP devolves decision-making on specific activities to country offices; FAO's decisions are taken in Rome or by regional heads; and with respect to UNEP, decisions are usually taken by headquarters, but budgets may be administered by other agencies (mostly UNDP) at country level. As it stands, each agency follows distinct delivery modalities, with the implication that instead of having a unique UN-REDD delivery/management mechanism for the Programme as a whole, partner countries are obliged to contract separately with each agency of a "One-UN" system. Furthermore, interview and survey respondents both underscored the fact that the absence of a uniform resource management framework has led to perceived (or real) impressions of differential treatment across the Programme, depending on which agency one works for.

129. Finally, each agency abides by strict management guidelines and firewalls that are designed to ensure accountable and transparent use of funds. None of the senior Programme managers hold direct oversight over the use and allocation of funds. All are subject to strict agency procedures, requiring the approval of accounting offices and the signature of division or department heads. Nevertheless, as sustained by NP interviewees, the procedures in place tend to create inefficiencies and delays that ultimately affect the overall progress and performance of the Programme.¹³⁸

6.3.2 Resource Distribution

F12: The distribution of resources across the Programme is not linked to a clearly articulated strategy.

130. Based on available data, it is not possible to link the distribution of resources to a clearly articulated strategy, the recommendations of partner countries, PB debates, programmatic results, or any other strategic decision-making procedure, mechanism or instrument. While NP budgets are developed by countries with the support of Programme staff, there are no clear strategic guidelines for the development of these budgets. Moreover, in spite of the fact that countries are placed in the driver's seat, several government officials and agency staff members that participated in the development of National Programme documents admitted that in practice, directions mostly come from the passenger's seat (i.e., the UN agencies). Informants point to the existence of lobbying and competition among the agencies for activities in the budget, leading to activities that might not always be aligned with intended results. As one regional staff member put it: "Apart from the friendly joint meetings, you have to be smart and find the country reps in their private time to convince them to have your [agency] contribution enhanced." Another openly remarked that "X didn't do a good job in country Y; she is keen and knowledgeable on technical issues, but not senior enough to get out a big enough piece of the cake for us."

131. Likewise, for a country-led programme whose primary goal is to build the capacity of participating countries to achieve REDD+ readiness, the rationale for committing the bulk of available resources (approx. 60%) to the SNA-GP instead of sustained investments (i.e., NPs) is not well substantiated.

¹³⁸ This finding is supported by the evaluation of Norway's contribution to MRV activities (LTS International et. al. 2013), which notes that while MRV activities are "well-aligned with [...] national priorities; multilateral channels have not been sufficiently adaptive to national circumstances" and "given the wide dispersal of funding, the level of progress [of MRV activities channelled through UN-REDD and FCPF] is generally more limited compared with that achieved through the bilateral partnerships."

132. Finally, nearly 80% of survey respondents consider that the Programme is effective in terms of building on existing capacities and knowledge at the country level. However, during country visits, interviewees emphasised strongly that the quality of technical experts is variable and that not enough consideration is given to using national and regional experts. Informants explained that partner agencies face strong incentives to promote in-house capacities in lieu of local solutions. To this end, the evaluation notes that no apparent mechanism is used to weigh the efficiency gains of Programme delivery through agency staff or international technical consultants versus locally/regionally established experts/specialised NGOs. For instance, in both Paraguay and Ecuador, locally established NGOs and private companies with considerable expertise in REDD+ and related technical areas confirmed that getting recognised, let alone invited, by the Programme – once it comes in the country – is a challenge. Although these experts now take part in national roundtable discussions in Ecuador and even engage in joint project delivery with UN-REDD (through external funding), none of the experts consulted have been recognised as delivery partners of the Programme, even though it would be in the latter’s long-term interest to do so (i.e., to ensure the sustainability of NP results).

133. Obviously, such observations cannot be generalised, as the case of DRC demonstrates, where the joint development of the national MRV system is viewed as an unequivocal success. Similarly, in the Asian region, several countries (e.g., Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka)¹³⁹ have a long and rich experience in collaborative engagement.

6.3.3 Costs and Value

F13: There is no system in place to track and monitor the quality and value of Programme results (output/outcome levels).

134. As alluded to above, the UN-REDD Programme does not rely on an integrated management system to track and monitor the use of available resources, nor the quality and value of results achieved at the output and outcome levels. This makes it difficult to undertake more complex analyses (i.e., value-for-money or cross-agency comparisons), let alone make decisions on how best to allocate available resources to achieve established objectives.

6.3.4 Inter-Agency Coordination

F14: Coordination between the three partner agencies is improving, but the challenges to joint programming and implementation remain considerable.

135. At the management level, inter-agency coordination is thought to have improved significantly since the Programme was first created. Management-level discussions are viewed as being open, constructive, and productive. Programme coordination is principally achieved through the MG, which sets the tone of the relationship as well as the agenda for action and achievement of programming results. As noted by senior officials from all three agencies, the commitment and capacity of the current MG is unprecedented in the Programme’s short history. In moving ahead with the challenges posed by joint programming and implementation, senior officials iterated their confidence in the Group’s ability to solve emerging issues and build a stronger and more unified Programme, capable of “delivering as one.”

136. Overall, the joint coordination meetings of the MG are regarded as being helpful for identifying areas of complementarity, knowledge sharing, and pursuing joint strategies. While a joint UN approach does not imply that agency capacities are *jointly leveraged* (e.g., technical experts from two or more agencies working jointly

¹³⁹ The Philippines is viewed as an exceptional case, as the entire implementation was sub-contracted to NGOs for certain reasons.

towards the delivery of a common result), it does mean that areas of intervention may be jointly decided upon, and the potential for duplication or overlap, avoided.

137. However, beyond the core management structure, views on the efficacy of inter-agency coordination differ considerably. For Programme staff and country partners alike, inter-agency coordination implies higher transaction costs in terms of meetings and redundant verification and validation processes that seldom translate into improved delivery mechanisms at the country level. In addition to the MG's oversight functions, which are perceived to be too broad and requiring too many people (see F32), National Programme documents and reports have to be signed by three agencies; the three agencies each have different budgeting and budget expenditure arrangements; the administration is done by three financial departments with different procedures; and monitoring is done separately by each agency. These issues are also raised in the final evaluation of the Tanzania and Vietnam NPs.

138. Regarding the UN-REDD Programme, the added value of experts outside of responsible units from the same agencies has not been optimally leveraged. For instance, FAO has extensive experience with forest financing and governance, but this expertise is not availed by UN-REDD. Similarly, UNDP has substantial expertise with economic development sectors as well as with biodiversity monitoring, but the division of tasks or responsibilities appears to make the evaluation of such expertise more difficult.

139. In some cases, REDD funding has led to the development of parallel structures (e.g., FAO Forestry vs. Natural Resources Departments), though potential overlaps are gradually being addressed (e.g., engagement between GEF-UNDP and the Environment and Energy Group [EEG]) at the agency level, with increasing overall collaboration at the global level (e.g., on green economic transformation between UNEP and UNDP, on governance and tenure between UNDP and FAO).

140. Global expertise, mostly located in Rome (FAO), Geneva, New York and Oslo (UNDP), as well as Cambridge (WCMC/UNEP) and Nairobi (UNEP), is either channelled through the regional hubs or provided directly to the partner country. When the latter occurs, incidences of unannounced and therefore uncoordinated interventions were noted in every country visited.

141. Due to the proximity of peers from the different agencies, more consistent efforts to coordinate were observed at the regional level. In spite of the fact that not all agencies have a regional coordinator position (e.g., until recently – FAO in LAC and UNEP in Africa) and that regional staff have different positions within the agency system (implying more or less autonomy), amiable coordination, meetings, and joint mission planning are taking place (in some regions more frequently than in others).

142. At the country level, the benefits of inter-agency coordination and collaboration have yet to affect implementation. Working with the UN-REDD Programme entails

inescapable transaction costs, such as the need to operate through three distinct budget lines, internal procedures, and complex decision-making. In this context, coordination among the three UN agencies is in practice a matter of inter-personal dynamics. Although there are positive examples of inter-agency coordination (e.g., Cambodia, Colombia, Indonesia, Zambia), in most countries, it is a challenge. In Paraguay, there is an

Interview Responses on Inter-Agency Coordination

“Overkill of sharing of information, of exchanges and consultations that slow down the pace and process.”

“Cohesion within the inter-agency safeguard group is improving, but coordination creates inevitable transaction costs.”

“Coordination incentives are low. People want ownership of results and outputs, which makes it a disincentive to collaborate or cooperate. Much relies on personal relationships at the moment. Corrections will require changes in the underlying incentives.”

“Collaboration needs to be integrated in performance management – make it part of the evaluation process.”

“Right now, everything hinges on people knowing each other personally.”

“Delivering as One is forced.”

evident conflict in the coordination between FAO and UNDP/UNEP. In part, this is due to the different governmental agencies they are associated with, but the UN agencies have not succeeded in improving coordination. In Bolivia, after the government requested a change of focus for the NP, in parallel to a high-level joint mission to Bolivia, the agencies lobbied the government separately. According to a Bolivian government representative who witnessed the entire episode, this caused distrust in one agency and boosted confidence in another agency to such an extent that the remainder of the Programme will be executed by practically only one agency. For its part, the conflict situation in Panama prompted the launch of a high-level mission by two agencies, but the third decided not to participate and was therefore only marginally involved in conflict resolution. Finally, in Ecuador, there is a coherent, well-structured management unit, but different members have different response lines, and the national coordinator can only partially fulfil her task in supervising the team. Also, different contractual arrangements have resulted in very different labour conditions among peers. Interestingly, such inter-agency conflicts were not observed in the countries visited in the Asian and African regions, perhaps due to differing socio-cultural contexts. The final evaluation of the Vietnam Quick Start Initiative indicated that during the Programme, the UN Agencies mostly learned to work together, rather than adapt and improve their operations.

143. Evidence related to this finding leads the Evaluation Team to conclude that, in the absence of improved harmonisation and more clearly defined, formal coordination mechanisms, inter-agency coordination will remain a challenge. Though the Secretariat should, in principle, provide the glue that holds all the moving parts of the UN-REDD Programme together – facilitating communications and interactions among the three agencies and between these and country partners –, it does not have the clarity of mandate to fully take on such a role (see F32). This observation is largely consistent with one of the emerging lessons of the Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, which points to “a lack of clarity and shared vision among UN organizations and stakeholders concerning the desirable extent of integration and how it can best be achieved, including [...] how coordination is perceived and approaches to enhance it.”¹⁴⁰

F15: The complexity of the UN-REDD governance structure is generally considered essential for maintaining trust amongst UN partner agencies and across the Programme’s diverse range of constituencies, but it also creates high transaction costs, delays in implementation, and administrative redundancies.

144. The UN-REDD Programme is supported by an expensive and time-consuming decision-making structure that includes weekly inter-agency Management Group meetings, quarterly Strategy Group meetings, large bi-annual Policy Board sessions, and agency-specific management teams for each of the UN partners. Apart from these formal decision-making bodies, there are several decision-making processes within each agency, which differ across the agencies. As a result, key Programme documents, such as National Programme Documents, may be reviewed, commented, and approved by up to ten different offices (including national and regional UN agency offices, the MG, the Secretariat, department heads, the PB, and occasionally the SG), before they are formally endorsed.

145. Amidst all of these decision arenas is an administrative Secretariat with the main tasks to support the delivery of Programme services, including administrative and logistical support to the other bodies, facilitate knowledge sharing, manage partnerships and external relations, and develop a donor relations strategy. According to its Terms of Reference, the Secretariat principally has a support and liaison role and no coordination authority or executive functions to streamline processes, or provide administrative oversight to the Programme. It has no decision-making role, but it develops plans, strategies, and monitoring frameworks, all of which need to be approved by the MG or SG. The members of the Secretariat are contracted by the three different agencies and have double reporting lines. The Head of the Secretariat is a member of the panel for

¹⁴⁰ See <http://www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone/pdf/mainreport.pdf>, p. 83.

recruitment of Secretariat staff and provides input to performance evaluations, but the final recruitment decisions are taken by the agencies. The limited authority of the Secretariat is not only apparent from the Terms of Reference, but was confirmed by interviews with Secretariat staff (e.g., “We cannot decide on anything.”) and Programme staff in all three regions.

146. Whether the Programme’s heavy governance structure and cumbersome decision-making arrangement are needed to ensure transparency, accountability, and stakeholder buy-in is a question that needs to be seriously considered. For external and even internal stakeholders, it is unclear who actually “runs the show” and makes strategic and programmatic decisions on priority areas and the allocation of resources. Though the PB is tasked with making the final decision on nearly all aspects of the Programme, votes are on motions and previously decided budgetary plans. Budgetary allocations within each of the partner agencies are not openly shared or discussed. Both past and present national representatives in the PB commented that they did not have enough information to provide a balanced judgement on budgetary plans. Also, as one representative said: “Budget plans are always the first to be approved during PB meetings and [take] the group by surprise.” These various facets of the current governance structure raise doubts over the ability of the Board to fulfil its fiduciary responsibilities, including the setting of priorities in alignment with strategies, objectives, and trade-offs. In this regard, the evaluation seconds the findings and recommendations of the PB external review.

147. Viewed as a whole, the overlapping structures of the UN-REDD Programme make it difficult to track the rationale for decisions, link these to a clear and overarching theory of change, make adjustments in light of changing circumstances, and monitor how the additionality of a given intervention contributes to the achievement of clearly articulated programmatic results. Moreover, they create high transaction costs.¹⁴¹ According to survey respondents, operational issues related to inter-agency coordination, administration, and overhead (including staffing and consultancies) are the most important cost drivers of the Programme.¹⁴² Though some qualify such burdens as “the cost of doing business in a One-UN system,” others point out that there is considerable room for improvement, but that this may also require a “political will to push beyond the structural constraints of the UN,” whether real or perceived.

6.4 Impact

148. Impacts are broadly defined as “the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, [whether] directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”¹⁴³ Within the scope of this evaluation, a prospective approach to the likelihood of impact was used. The evaluation sought to understand, first, whether the internal logic of the Programme is valid and likely to support the achievement of its intended impact, and second, whether current investments are helping to create the necessary conditions for achieving net positive benefits in terms of:

- Reduced deforestation and forest degradation;
- Improved integration and application of sustainable forest management practices;
- Changes in the values, beliefs, and actions of national actors, including government, the private sector, civil society, and resource-dependent populations;
- Improved socio-economic conditions and opportunities for poor and resource-dependent populations; and

¹⁴¹ According to survey results, less than 30% of respondents believe that the Programme exerts low transaction costs.

¹⁴² Costs relating to the Programme itself, whether in terms of scope (number of activities, work areas, countries) or processes (types of activities, including stakeholder engagement, MRV, capacity development), accounted for a third of responses.

¹⁴³ OECD-DAC (2002). Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance.

- Cross-sectoral reforms and changes in the institutions that directly and indirectly affect the use, management, and governance of forests.

6.4.1 Programme Logic

F16: As currently designed, the likelihood of broader development impact largely lies beyond the Programme’s reach.

149. The UN-REDD Programme was initiated as a catalyst for achieving REDD+ readiness, at which point countries would be in better position to undertake measures to reduce deforestation, gain social, economic, and environmental benefits, and be rewarded for the resulting reduction in emissions. Until a global climate agreement is reached, the success of REDD+, within the current logic of the Programme, will depend upon the ability of partner countries to secure long-term financial support from either market or non-market sources (i.e., carbon funds, bilateral or multilateral investments, and the private sector). Therefore, a key assumption of the Programme is that financial incentives will drive change. However, the future of such financing is unclear (see F1), and the road to REDD+ readiness (Phase I) and implementation (Phase II) faces numerous challenges (see Sections 4.4, 6.1, and 6.2). Within its current design therefore, the Programme’s ability to achieve its stated impact (i.e., emission reductions through avoided deforestation) rests on external conditions that lie beyond its reach or capacity to influence.

150. As many participating countries are now beginning to realise, financial incentives alone will not bring about the level of social, political, and economic transformations needed to achieve the REDD+ agenda. When survey respondents were asked about the main challenges of UN-REDD, the lack of financial resources scored surprisingly low (10 out of 150+ responses), while over half of all responses mentioned management and coordination (within the UN, between the UN and government, and across government sectors) and uncertainty (on the future of REDD+, the concept of readiness, governance) as main constraints to the success of UN-REDD.¹⁴⁴

151. Both inside and outside of the UN, the logic of the REDD+ agenda and the Programme’s related theory for achieving impacts are increasingly being questioned: “There is little evidence to date regarding the effectiveness of REDD+ in achieving emissions reductions, let alone the many other objectives it holds for diverse actors.”¹⁴⁵ As stated in a recent internal review of the FCPF,¹⁴⁶ given the scale, cross-sectoral nature, and uncertain prospects of future REDD+ financing, “the Bank [and arguably the UN] needs to step back and think about where it is going with REDD+.” And “until there is greater clarity about the contours of future REDD+ financing,” priority should be given to “*no regrets* investments and activities” (e.g., land tenure reform and improved forest governance) that stand to create positive benefits, independently of future developments regarding REDD+ financing. While this approach provides a median solution between what was anticipated in 2008 and what might emerge from future UNFCCC negotiations, it does not solve the more fundamental challenge of defining a robust theory for emission reductions that can be operationalised and sustained indefinitely.

¹⁴⁴ Readers should note that the survey was conducted in January 2014, after the Warsaw COP.

¹⁴⁵ McDermott (2014, p. 18). Among many others, see also Agrawal et al. (2011); Buizer et al. (2014)

¹⁴⁶ IEG (2012, pp. 38-39)

6.4.2 Sustainable Forest Governance

F17: The UN-REDD Programme is helping to create enabling conditions for collective action at the country level, but it remains too early to tell what effects the Programme will have in terms of reduced deforestation, sustainable forest resource use, and improved socio-economic conditions.

152. The UN-REDD Programme seeks to develop robust institutional environments that are aligned with the safeguards, standards, and principles of the REDD+ agenda, wherein the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation can be addressed in an inclusive, transparent, and equitable setting. While it is generally accepted that the UN-REDD Programme helps to create favourable conditions for the adoption of more sustainable forest management practices and for addressing the drivers of forest loss, it remains too early to tell what effects the Programme will have in terms of reducing deforestation, improving sustainable forest management or increasing socio-economic benefits. When asked to comment on this, survey and interview respondents tend to rationalise achievements to date by commenting that five years is too short a period to realise such results, or that the purpose of this first phase is to establish the “building blocks” for readiness, not implementation. To this end, only 36% of survey respondents believe that the Programme is successful in testing and scaling up strategies.

Survey Responses on the Achievement of Programme Objectives

“In my view, it is too soon to assess the Programme's contribution to these long-term objectives. The absorption capacity of recipient countries was highly overestimated and the readiness process will take many more years before these long-term goals can be effectively tackled.”

“UN-REDD program contributed in raising awareness and changing people's altitude toward forest governance. However, some of project impacts e.g. contribution in biodiversity conservation, reducing deforestation rate and poverty reduction need cannot be easily assessed in the short life span of the project.”

153. The Evaluation Team concurs with stakeholder observations on this point. Within the current design of the Programme, the drivers of deforestation are generally identified early on during the readiness phase, but efforts to tackle some of these issues tend to begin relatively late in the process, usually through pilot initiatives and theoretical contributions. The Programme's rationale is that the drivers will be more effectively addressed during the implementation phase, but evidence from ongoing efforts suggests that this might not always be an efficient or effective approach. In Ecuador for instance, one of the most advanced partner countries in terms of readiness, negotiations for funding from the REDD+ Early Movers Programme were recently put on hold after the country failed to show actual reductions in deforestation trends. In other jurisdictions such as DRC, Indonesia, and Paraguay, land rights constitute critical underlying issues for dealing with shifting cultivation or concessionary land-holds by agribusiness and timbering industries. Yet these issues will not be resolved overnight: early and sustained engagement for funding viable solutions is crucial. In the case of DRC, tenure is identified in the national REDD+ strategy as a key area for action.

154. Efforts to identify the underlying drivers and issues that affect deforestation or forest degradation are occurring in the various NPs, such as in Zambia, where the NP recently organised an “indaba” or national consultation with charcoal producers – an important direct driver of deforestation in the country. However, such initiatives remain timid in light of the structural forces (i.e., social, political, and economic) that underlie deforestation in the world today.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, even though the Programme promotes a multi-sectoral approach, evidence from the countries and PB indicates that the Programme has had limited success in terms of effectively engaging policy-makers and cross-sectoral representatives, including the private sector, on REDD+ and the factors that affect forest trends (see F3). If history is any indication of the hurdles that lie ahead,

¹⁴⁷ Kissinger et al. (2012); Lambin and Meyfroidt (2011); Meyfroidt and Lambin (2011); Meyfroidt et al. (2013)

postponing the search for viable solutions with key stakeholders that have the power to shift the business-as-usual trajectory of continuous deforestation is unlikely to bring the Programme closer to achieving its impact. The absence of credible commitment and context-specific efforts to reduce human pressure on forest resource systems represents a serious impediment to the achievement of net positive benefits.

155. Notwithstanding the many challenges that will need to be addressed in order to secure demonstrable impacts in terms of sustainable forest governance, the fact remains that REDD+ is a work in progress for all involved countries as well as bilateral and multilateral supporting agencies. Difficulties in the implementation of such a bold and innovative agenda are to be expected. While the Programme is helping to inform readiness efforts and REDD+ processes more generally – creating a legacy of knowledge and experience on which to build, the evaluators also note that as a result of the Programme’s strong emphasis on setting up the technical components to REDD+ readiness (MRV, stakeholder engagement, fund management, safeguards), the lessons of past and present efforts to achieve sustainable resource governance have only recently begun to be explored. Conceptual work on multiple benefits, tenure, and green economy transformation has been initiated, but evidence suggests that the wealth of existing scholarship and experiences on such matters as sustainable forest governance and management, conservation, land tenure, poverty alleviation, rural development, sustainable agriculture, structural reforms, and even corporate risk management have yet to percolate through the Programme’s overall approach. As some scholars argue, “[u]sing available evidence obviates the need to reinvent the wheel.”¹⁴⁸

6.4.3 Institutional Change

F18: The UN-REDD Programme has contributed to the development of more inclusive and transparent forms of stakeholder engagement, as well as some policy and regulatory reforms. Changes in the rules that condition the use, management, and governance of forests at national and sub-national levels will take longer to achieve and require higher levels of commitment.

156. As used here, institutions refer to the formal and informal rules people use to coordinate their actions and improve joint outcomes. Such rules are informed by the values, ideas, and beliefs that shape the contexts wherein they are applied. As experienced by the UN-REDD Programme, changes in these underlying variables are inherently difficult to achieve within short timeframes.

157. As mentioned earlier, the Programme is credited with raising awareness and multi-sectoral coordination at the country level, especially amongst representatives from the environment, conservation, and natural resource sectors, as well as among IPs and CSOs. The Programme has also promoted transparent and inclusive governance mechanisms at the national level in some countries, and successfully championed the necessary guidelines, principles, and safeguards for achieving REDD+ readiness. A successfully resolved case in point is the crisis that emerged in Panama as a result of disagreements between the government and IP groups. Today, coordination between these actors is actually considered to have improved as a result of the application of the Programme’s core principles of transparency, integrity, and free, prior and informed consent of all stakeholder groups.¹⁴⁹

158. Contributions to policy and regulatory reforms have also been noted in many NP countries. Ministerial and even presidential decrees officiating national engagement in REDD+ processes and the creation of various instruments, tools or committees have been observed in Bolivia, DRC, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Vietnam, among others. Bolivia’s efforts to adjust the NP to match changes in its approach to climate change mitigation and

¹⁴⁸ Agrawal et al. (2011, p. 390); see also Blom et al. (2010); Bray (2013); McDermott (2014); Murdiyarsro et al. (2012); White (2011)

¹⁴⁹ To address the Panama case and the validity of the claims made by COONAPIP, UN-REDD relied on a compliance review investigation and complementary programmatic evaluation to understand the issues and address emerging concerns.

adaptation posed considerable challenges for UN-REDD, but it did nevertheless confirm the high level of importance that the country placed on REDD+ as a key component of its overarching strategy.

159. Together, these elements help to create increasingly recognised multi-stakeholder platforms for discussing REDD+ issues, and demonstrate the willingness of national governments to create enabling conditions for achieving the changes sought by the Programme. Yet, evidence that the Programme is able to influence the institutions that directly and indirectly affect forests and land use is more limited. Ministerial decrees are a step in the right direction, but such contributions lie within the discretionary authority of a government and do not, therefore, require political debate and discussion, leading to legislative enactments and parliamentary approval.¹⁵⁰ Secondly, the bigger challenge is in implementation (i.e., actually applying and enforcing said rules), which necessitates resources and political commitment. Finally, recent studies¹⁵¹ show that instead of increasing the willingness of national governments to address the fundamental issue of land rights and solicit the involvement of local governments or sub-national decision-making bodies, REDD+ appears to have a negative effect on what appeared to be a global trend towards greater decentralisation and community land rights, up until 2007.¹⁵² Despite the recognition by countries and leading international REDD+ initiatives of the need to clarify tenure, progress towards increased IP and local community ownership decreased fivefold between 2008-2013, compared to 2002-2008 – a trend that RRI argues is linked to the increasing reluctance of national governments to cede the potential rewards of carbon rights as well as to the absence of international standards in this area.¹⁵³

160. While institutional changes lie beyond the immediate control of the Programme, engagement with those who hold collective choice rights over the use and management of natural resources is well within its sphere of influence. The absence of key political and economic actors (e.g., policy-makers, planning and finance ministries, the private sector) from the Programme's various decision-making arenas is a serious risk factor for the achievement of net positive benefits and will invariably limit the prospects of long-term change and impact. The promise of REDD+ financing has so far shown to be a weak incentive to secure meaningful engagement from policy actors.¹⁵⁴

6.5 Sustainability

161. Sustainability focuses attention on the degree to which the benefits (i.e., results) of an intervention are likely to continue, once formal arrangements come to an end. Within the context of this evaluation, sustainability was considered in light of: (i) the global context of the REDD+ agenda and its implications for the UN-REDD Programme; and (ii) the more specific country-level contexts wherein the Programme operates.

6.5.1 Global Context

F19: Uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing places the sustainability of Programme results at risk.

162. The Government of Norway recently confirmed its intention to support the UN-REDD Programme until at least 2020.¹⁵⁵ Though this is good news for the Programme, no comparable core funding commitments have been made by others, and the situation for REDD+ financing in general is anything but certain at the moment. There are credible concerns regarding the projected funding gap for 2015-2020, and the integration of REDD+

¹⁵⁰ Indonesia and Vietnam are particularly striking examples. See Brockhaus et al. (2013); Korhonen-Kurki et al. (2014); Luttrell et al. (2014).

¹⁵¹ RRI (2013, 2014); L. G. Williams (2013)

¹⁵² Agrawal et al. (2008)

¹⁵³ RRI (2014)

¹⁵⁴ Angelsen (2013); Karsenty and Ongolo (2012); McDermott (2014)

¹⁵⁵ See <http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter43/FifthAnniversaryatOsloREDDExchange/tabid/131876/Default.aspx>.

emission offsets in either compliance or volunteer markets faces a number of unresolved challenges (see F1). In a context where existing and projected demand for REDD+ financing far exceeds available supplies, and the demand for carbon offsets appears to be diminishing,¹⁵⁶ the extent to which partner countries will be able to sustain REDD+ activities once Programme interventions end (i.e., implementation and investment phases) appears to be at risk.

163. Ultimately, the sustainability of REDD+, and the Programme’s results in particular, will depend to a large extent on the outcomes of UNFCCC negotiations and the confidence that countries place in these processes. Failure to achieve progress in this regard could dampen the momentum for REDD+ actions. However, this would not bring an end to the global imperative to protect the world’s remaining tropical forests and the many services they provide.

6.5.2 National Context

F20: The Programme is helping countries to develop comprehensive REDD+ strategies, but the capacities needed to support and sustain such efforts are proving more difficult to develop.

164. Thanks to considerable technical and financial support from the Programme, countries are able to progress in their efforts to develop REDD+ roadmaps. A few countries – namely DRC, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Vietnam – have nearly graduated from the readiness process and are actively seeking funding to support implementation. While evidence that UN-REDD is helping country partners achieve their readiness objectives can be gleaned from nearly any NP, the extent to which such capacities are being institutionalised and sustained is less evident. Based on available data, three factors appear to affect the “readiness” of participating countries to manage their own affairs.

165. **Capacity substitution.** The exigencies of the Programme are considerable. Within a relatively limited timeframe, countries are expected to develop a broad range of tools, studies, and capacities that cumulatively lead to the development of a roadmap or strategy for the implementation phase. Managing such a process, including organising the many different levels of consultations while producing the requisite deliverables, requires a great deal of effort and resources. To achieve such ends, the Programme tends to employ international consultants with the demonstrated expertise to deliver such products and services on time. The problem that arises is that instead of supporting the national government to achieve these ends, the appointed experts sometimes find themselves drawn into situations where they need to assume greater leadership and responsibility for the production of Programme deliverables than what would otherwise be advisable. Such a situation was highlighted in DRC, where the NP experience proved to be a missed opportunity. Pressure to produce key outputs collided with growing tensions between national and international staff over wage considerations. This produced a situation where the bulk of the work was carried out by internationals, with limited national staff support. Though views on the reasons underlying the turn of events differed considerably amongst interviewed respondents, the end result was just the same. As one senior government official summed it up: “Nous avons dépensé USD 7,3 millions et l’on ne sent pas l’impact.”

166. Far from being an isolated example, this problem was underscored by national representatives who consistently emphasised the need to hire, work with, and support more national and regional resources, who also have a long-term interest in the realisation of the desired results. But in a field that is dominated by an incessant thirst for short-term results, capacity substitution is a common and difficult issue to manage. Technical support by nationals is reportedly occurring in places like Bangladesh and Myanmar, but more needs to be done to encourage investments in local/regional capacities. International experts offer an expedient means of

¹⁵⁶ GCP et al. (2014)

ensuring the achievement of Programme outputs, but the process is just as important (if not more) than the short-term results of completed reports and strategies.

167. **Turnover and leakage.** Finding, recruiting, and maintaining well-qualified national staff is a challenge in many developing countries, and in particular on the African continent. Confronted with poor wages, limited career advancement opportunities, and job insecurity, civil servants often face strong incentives to use the opportunities emanating from international development projects in order to move up the professional ladder and out of their current situation. Such dynamics create a number of challenges.

168. Working for a Programme like UN-REDD clearly boosts the credentials of national staff. Training and international exposure from the Programme improve their capacities, create potential for higher wages, and enhance their career advancement opportunities, including horizontal movements to other donor-funded projects. As NPs near final stages of implementation, hired national staff face strong incentives to find alternative opportunities.

169. More problematic are the potential conflicts and tensions regarding the differential pay scales and what some call “double standards” for local versus international staff. The near dissolution of the national coordination unit in DRC and the subsequent leakage of the technical workforce were essentially triggered (rightly or wrongly) by perceived inequities among staff. A similar situation was raised by national staff on Programme contracts in Cambodia and government representatives from the Environment Ministry: while the latter noted their lower salaries, the former highlighted the challenge of developing trust and collaboration, as a result. Discontent over wages and benefits, between civil servants and NP teams, was noted in most of the countries visited. Similarly, reliance on financial incentives, either in the form of supplements to the base salary of government employees or inducements for stakeholder participation and engagement, was also a source of contention (including the holding of workshops in luxury hotels and DSAs [Daily Subsistence Allowances] for study tours).

170. The lack of clarity concerning future REDD+ financing, especially as NPs near the end of their allocated funds under Phase 1, is another source of concern. Faced with uncertainty about their future, some staff will invariably search for alternative employment opportunities. As one reviewer commented: “There’s a high turnover of government officers working on REDD. This isn’t something UN-REDD can necessarily address – it is symptomatic of the fading interest in REDD because long-term finance isn’t committed yet.” Moreover, staff seconded to the UN-REDD Programme are always subject to government-initiated reallocations or transfers to other units or departments (e.g., the REDD+ focal points in Ecuador and Paraguay), which can lead to a precious loss of capacity. Of course, such observations are not unique to UN-REDD. They are symptomatic of international development support in general, though efforts can always be made to lessen their impact (e.g., fully decentralised government ownership of the REDD+ agenda).

171. Given these constraints, it is difficult to determine conclusively whether the capacities and processes developed by the Programme will be sustained over time. Apart from MRV, which requires continuous technical assistance through dedicated teams of specialists, the evaluators found few examples where ongoing capacity-building efforts could be taken over or institutionalised by governments in their programmes and strategies. Reliance on international consultants to head REDD+ coordination units or the delivery of key Programme components, along with the absence of strategic capacity development efforts (i.e., clear career paths or opportunities for skilled resources), can only exacerbate such problems.

F21: Due to the lack of sufficient inter-sectoral buy-in and country ownership, the sustainability of national REDD+ efforts largely depends upon external support.

172. The achievements of the Programme in relation to norms and standards, capacities, and institutional processes are likely to be absorbed into existing work processes, but will largely be limited to the forestry and

environment ministries, where the NP is housed. REDD-related efforts to reduce the human impacts on forests are unlikely to continue, if external investments are not maintained. Two factors lead the Evaluation Team to this conclusion.

173. First, few countries involved in the UN-REDD Programme provide either direct (budgetary allocations) or indirect (in-kind contributions) support to move their national REDD+ agendas (other than the time, dedication, and salaries of several civil servants). Based on feedback from country interviews, government expectations were that donor funds would become available under the UNFCCC negotiations for the purchase of carbon offsets, and that these funds could be used to support REDD+ actions (e.g., forest conservation, and implementation mechanisms at the country level). In effect, the provisioning costs associated with efforts to build country capacities for REDD+ readiness are fully assumed by the international community. This is hardly surprising, given the underlying narrative of REDD+ (i.e., “payment” for ecosystem services), the perception by many least developed countries of a “climate debt” by developed countries,¹⁵⁷ and the way the Programme has so far been promoted in developing country contexts (i.e., financial rewards for growing and preserving trees). Though the end goal of REDD+ is to reduce forest-related emissions through both market and non-market financing, entry into the REDD+ arena is treated as a public good (i.e., it is accessible to all and non-subtractable [conceptually, at least]). This creates fundamental tensions for UN-REDD. In the absence of clear incentives to share the provisioning costs of the Programme, actors (whether individuals or governments) will invariably tend to withhold from making substantive contributions, in the expectation that others (i.e., donors) will foot the costs. Ultimately, this weakens the sense of ownership and the incentives for maintaining results.

174. As formulated, this ownership proposition goes against one of the central premises of REDD+, namely that developing countries will only act if they are paid to do so (see text box). In addition to being challenged by both defenders and sceptics of REDD+, the pursuit of this principle raises fundamental questions about the sustainability of such efforts. For instance, what happens if resource flows do not

materialise and/or unforeseen changes in the global political-economic context bring an end to such an experiment? Observations noted in findings 1, 3, 5, 10, 16, 19, and 29 question the plausibility of achieving and sustaining social transformation without a demonstrated show of commitment. This point was also made in recent NP evaluations (i.e., Panama, Tanzania, and Vietnam), which observed that the lack of commitment and ownership from stakeholders would likely hamper the sustainability of Programme results. As long as there is external funding, countries will continue to support REDD+. If resources diminish, the incentive to maintain results will likewise fade, unless the fundamental message of REDD becomes institutionalised and championed

“The UN-REDD [P]rogramme takes on the enormous breadth and depth of issues that REDD+ entails based on country demands and needs. [Two] issues that we may need to spend more [time] thinking [about:] Green investments to include REDD+, so REDD+ is implemented within the context of the economic and development trajectory at the national level; [D]emand for REDD+ credits, right now supply will exceed demand. This is the main motivating factor for countries to engage in REDD+. If this incentive falls through, the momentum for the multiple benefits beyond carbon to be realised is also threatened.”

- Survey respondent

“[...] Intact forests are worth much more to the global community (for their climate change, biodiversity values, etc.) than to national governments, especially in developing countries that lack capacity and funds. It would be naïve to expect national governments to fund forest protection. REDD is helping to transform the agenda in some countries [...]. But I assume it's a 10-20 year process to achieve that transformation in many countries.”

- External Reviewer

¹⁵⁷ <http://climate-debt.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Bolivia-Climate-Debt-Proposal.pdf>

by communities and governments alike. As one senior UN economist observed: “We need self-interested [national] motivation and incentives for building country commitment to change, not hand-outs! Money can be distracting and the source of moral hazards.”

175. The second and related challenge concerns the fact that national governments are not homogenous entities. Forestry and environment ministries may be committed to the Programme and fully grasp the potential of REDD+ (as noted in the country interviews).¹⁵⁸ However, in order to create a sense of national ownership, such enthusiasm and awareness need to be shared by others, both across sectors and vertically, from national to local governments and communities. As shown in a recent study of 32 REDD+ readiness proposals (R-PPs), horizontal and vertical coordination were considered important in the vast majority of reviewed submissions.¹⁵⁹ While 59% of R-PPs state the importance of high-level political buy-in for managing cross-sectoral challenges, only 25% propose mechanisms to coordinate REDD+ across scales, such as including sub-national governments in REDD+ decision-making bodies.

176. The need for cross-sectoral coordination is broadly undisputed, as are the Programme’s efforts towards “stakeholder engagement.” However, without a vertically integrated approach that involves local decision-making bodies in whose jurisdiction forests are principally located, the likelihood that any forest conservation effort succeeds is minimal – especially if financial resources remain centralised, as is currently the case. Finally, vertically integrated approaches also signify the willingness to address claims related to territorial rights and tenure in general. Less than a third of the reviewed R-PPs proposed concrete steps to address these concerns.

177. Such levels of support have not been achieved by any of the countries considered in this evaluation. Even countries that are seen as having made successful progress (e.g., DRC, Ecuador, and Vietnam) still have limited political buy-in. The external evaluation of Vietnam reads: “The programme cannot yet claim [political] sustainability of REDD+ in Viet Nam. Crucial political backing from the Vice-Minister level, and above, [...] remains elusive.” In Ecuador, the National Programme has not yet managed to actively engage with the most obvious sector outside environment (i.e., agriculture). In both countries, the governments’ own contribution to the Programme was limited to in-kind contributions, as is the case for most other countries.

6.6 Cross-Cutting Issues

178. As per the requirements of the ToR, this evaluation considered the performance of the UN-REDD Programme relative to the following cross-cutting issues, including: (i) gender mainstreaming; (ii) resource-dependent communities; (iii) capacity development; and (iv) norms, guidelines, and safeguards. This section explores these different facets of the Programme.

6.6.1 Gender Mainstreaming

F22: The importance of, and need for, gender mainstreaming in UN-REDD is reflected in most policy and programmatic documents and guidelines, but the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities at the country level is not taking place in a cohesive and systematic way throughout the Programme.

179. Given that the Programme’s initial focus was on capacity building for MRV, inter-sectoral coordination, and stakeholder engagement mainly at the national level, it is understandable that limited attention was paid to gender mainstreaming in the readiness phase. As a result, only 25% of survey respondents commented on gender, and of these comments, the majority focused on gender balance within the staffing of the Programme

¹⁵⁸ On the issue of poor cross-sectoral buy-in, one external reviewer noted that “keeping others out may also be a strategy to keep the REDD-readiness money within the institution.”

¹⁵⁹ L. G. Williams (2013)

itself, rather than on substantive gender mainstreaming in the Programme. Several UN-REDD policy and Programme documents refer to the need for “mainstreaming gender concerns” (e.g., the National Programmes, R-PP, FPIC, and SEPC guidelines). Two global studies and one situation analysis of the UN-REDD Programme have been undertaken;¹⁶⁰ a regional scoping study was conducted in the Asian region in fall 2013,¹⁶¹ involving multi-sectoral and stakeholder dialogues within country-specific case studies in Cambodia and Sri Lanka; and some local activities in pilot initiatives at the country level have been carried out as well. However, whether recommendations from these studies and the various guidelines have been implemented in the form of concrete gender mainstreaming activities in Programme countries appears limited. This occurs only when a UN-REDD gender-sensitive advocate is “on the ground” and sensitising stakeholders on the benefits of gender mainstreaming (e.g., in Vietnam). As it stands, the lesser focus on gender is partially due to the fact that there are no dedicated gender focal points in the Programme (even the UNDP gender focal point has other responsibilities) at global, regional, and country levels. Secondly, government partners do not see gender as a priority aspect of the Programme that requires their immediate attention.

180. In Indonesia, gender aspects were incorporated into social safeguards in the pilot project site (WOCAN). In Zambia, Finland recently financed a gender specialist, located in the FAO office, to partly support UN-REDD. In Vietnam, an “equality of payments for REDD coefficient” was developed to measure the effect of multiple benefits according to different criteria, including gender. In Ecuador, a gender specialist position is included in the stakeholder participation component of the Programme, and gender is integrated into the design of participatory tools. During country interviews, very limited information was shared about gender concerns, and related mostly to stakeholder engagement (i.e., for some pilot projects, both men and women were involved and consulted regarding their needs and priorities).

181. With regard to Programme staffing, the balance between women and men appears to be generally equal, according to survey results (60% of respondents feel that Programme staffing is gender-balanced, though some comments suggest that this is less the case for management) and the evidence collected during country visits. In some countries (e.g., Ecuador and Paraguay), women outnumber men at many levels of the NP, including management. In other countries (e.g., Cambodia and Zambia) women are well represented in UN-REDD Programme teams.

182. Drawing on the insights of relevant sources of scholarship focused on the gender/natural resources interface, it is clear that Criterion 8 of the Programme’s Social and Environmental Principles needs to be put into action “on the ground.” Given the UN’s extensive expertise on gender, ongoing work programmes that consider gender in the forest sector (e.g., ENERGIA, Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, The Forests Dialogue/WOCAN, Rights and Resources Initiative), and the existence of relatively robust research on gender and natural resource governance (e.g., see contributions to the International Association for the Study of the Commons), there are already sufficient lessons, expertise, and capacity that the Programme can use and build on in the implementation phase.

183. As the Programme shifts its attention towards implementation, attention to integrating gender concerns, especially at the local level, will be important if the Programme is to better address all the drivers of deforestation. This will also be important for ensuring sustainable livelihoods and agricultural practices, and promoting greater equity in the sharing of burdens and benefits at the household and community levels. As one

¹⁶⁰ The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+ (December 2011); Guidance Note on Gender Sensitive REDD+; Gender Situation Analysis Report, Jaime Webb (2013)

¹⁶¹ Scoping Study on Gender Mainstreaming in UN-REDD in Asia and the Pacific (2012) – a joint initiative with WOCAN and USAID’s LEAF programme, designed to identify practical entry points for women’s inclusion in REDD+. A similar USAID LEAF study was also completed in the Philippines as part of the joint initiative.

reviewer commented, “failure to understand women's specific uses and needs will lead to greater burdens and losses for women.”

6.6.2 Resource-Dependent Communities¹⁶²

F23: The Programme provides an enabling platform for Indigenous Peoples’ and civil society organisations to influence global discussions on REDD+. Influence at the country level is more limited. Non-indigenous communities are not well represented as yet.

184. This finding considers the participation of resource-dependent communities through three distinct constituencies: (i) Indigenous Peoples; (ii) non-indigenous populations (including both forest- and non-forest-dependent communities); and (iii) civil society.

185. The UN-REDD Programme is recognised for its ground-breaking effort to bring Indigenous Peoples and civil society into the global decision-making arena of the Policy Board, and for granting them veto rights equal to those held by all other Board members. In this way, the Programme has given these previously marginalised groups an invaluable platform to express their ideas, values, and concerns regarding the development and implementation of the Programme. Such a level of engagement constitutes a significant achievement for forest-dependent populations the world over.

186. At the global level, the general consensus is that the concerns of IPs and CSOs are well received and fairly treated. Respect for due process has helped to build the trust and confidence of IPO and CSO representatives within the Policy Board. At the national level, CSO and IPO representatives are more cautious in their assessments. While they may have a seat in the discussions surrounding REDD+, whether or not their voice is heard and heeded by the relevant authorities – including both government and Programme representatives – remains a point of contention. Follow-up on their input tends to be partial at best, and participation is generally taken to imply consultation, as opposed to joint deliberation and decision-making. For instance, the well-organised REDD+ roundtable in Ecuador has balanced participation of all stakeholder groups, but is formally considered by the government as a consultative group with no decision-making authority (see F3). Similar situations were noted in nearly all NP countries visited (the obvious exception being Panama, for the time being).

187. For their part, some national representatives and Programme staff openly question the legitimacy, representativeness, and motivations of some local CSOs and, to a much lesser extent, IPOs. Some even go so far as to suggest that REDD+ has literally opened the door to the development of self-appointed “professional” CSO representatives, with ill-defined constituencies and mandates. Such perceptions are not helpful in building trust and commitment amongst actors, but they do illustrate fundamental tensions in the way the Programme seeks to engage CSO and IPO representatives. As reported by civil society representatives in DRC, CSOs are asked to comment on more or less everything that is related to REDD+ in the country. Yet, such contributions are entirely voluntary and the absence of feedback, interaction or integration gives the impression that they are more procedural than consequential.

188. One critical constituency that is not satisfactorily represented or engaged in the various UN-REDD policy arenas are the non-indigenous communities that are likewise dependent on forests and/or agriculture. More heterogeneous in character, with less clearly defined customary or legal claims to land and resources, the term “non-indigenous” is used here to define settlers, migrants or transient individuals, households or communities

¹⁶² In the opinion of the evaluators, “resource-dependent communities” should be favoured over “forest-dependent communities,” which falsely subsumes that only the needs and interests of those with more or less clear linkages to forests matter, when in fact agriculture (and therefore land use) is the primary driver of deforestation.

that exercise different forms of pressure on forests, whether directly or indirectly. As pressure for land and resources increase due to climate change, ecosystem degradation, social conflict or even perverse subsidies (i.e., road building across previously closed forested landscapes), attending to the legitimate needs and concerns of such populations is likely to become increasingly important for the protection of forests in tropical and sub-tropical climates.

189. Up to now, there are only a few examples where other forest-dependent communities are being engaged and consulted in the REDD+ readiness process (e.g., national REDD+ platforms in Ecuador, Honduras, and Paraguay include *campesinos*; in Zambia, charcoal producers have been recently engaged in the process). Even though it may be challenging, more efforts will need to be made to systematically engage these groups in the REDD+ implementation phase.¹⁶³

190. UN-REDD has a clear comparative advantage in promoting a rights-based approach for IPs and other forest-dependent communities. The Programme has raised government awareness on the inalienable rights of IPs (land, livelihoods, resource, and customary rights) in the context of REDD+ implementation. While slightly more than half of survey respondents indicate that the Programme has been

Programme Contributions to Long-Term Change – Survey Responses	
Support land and forest tenure reform:	36%
Help address contentious resource rights issues:	32%
Test and scale up successful strategies:	36%
Provide viable economic development alternatives:	32%
Establish clear benefit sharing mechanisms:	29%
Livelihood development and poverty reduction:	29%

effective in terms of establishing national social and environmental safeguards, the recognition and enforcement of such rights remain a challenge. Clearly, land and resource rights, the development of clear benefit distribution mechanisms, and the monitoring and enforcement of safeguards will require more work and indeed, a stronger political will. The need to provide summary information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected, as required in the Warsaw Framework,¹⁶⁴ is a step in the right direction, but more effort will be required,¹⁶⁵ and the Programme is well positioned to support such efforts.

¹⁶³ Recent studies suggest that FPIC inherently disfavours those without property rights, asserting that FPIC is not designed to promote equal opportunity for landless and fully disenfranchised members of society (McDermitt et al., 2012, p. 407). See also Vatn and Vedeld (2013).

¹⁶⁴ UNFCCC (2014)

¹⁶⁵ Mahanty and McDermott (2013); Murdiyarmo et al. (2012); Naughton-Treves and Wendland (2014); Ribot and Larson (2012); RRI (2013, 2014); Schroeder and McDermott (2014)

6.6.3 Capacity Development¹⁶⁶

F24: Institutional uptake and mainstreaming of newly acquired capacities constitute important challenges for most countries.

191. The UN-REDD Programme seeks to strengthen technical (e.g., MRV, fund management) and process-oriented (e.g., stakeholder engagement, safeguards) competencies. To achieve these ends, it uses a broad range of tools and methods, including workshops, one-on-one coaching, just-in-time technical inputs, South-South learning, joint implementation of National Programmes, and the production and distribution of relevant knowledge products (e.g., lessons learned reports, documents, policy briefs, guidelines). As evidenced by the country visits and responses to the online survey,¹⁶⁷ the Programme delivers well in this aspect, and country partners find these outputs useful and relevant to their needs. Although the Programme employs a balanced set of approaches and techniques to reach targeted audiences, for institutional uptake, and mainstreaming (see F20), available evidence points to both conceptual and operational challenges.

192. First, in spite of its alignment with the REDD+ agenda and the findings of various national and global needs assessments, the Programme’s content is not determined by participating countries or by the Policy Board directly.

The UN-REDD Programme is first and foremost defined by the three UN partner agencies as a response to international concepts and progress on REDD+ (see F2). This is understandable, because ultimately the Programme has to reflect the core competencies that each agency brings to the table. The challenge lies in achieving a balance between the agencies’ expertise and comparative advantages and the need to maintain a country-driven approach in which the Programme addresses the priorities of partner countries. Thus, while 65% of survey responses indicate that National Programme objectives are based on stakeholder priorities, a significant number of country interview responses noted that the Programme should focus more on country needs and priorities. Striking the right balance is difficult when needs and capacities vary as widely as they do, especially for a Programme that now includes over 50 country partners. The overwhelming impression amongst country stakeholders is that the Programme is essentially “UN- and supply-driven,” but as one external reviewer noted, this also has a potential advantage: “A UN- [...] driven [approach] is where the UN imposes a multi-stakeholder approach, compared to country-driven strategies that are not, in fact, country-driven but driven by one set of bureaucrats in one or two relatively marginal government agencies.”

Survey Comments on Capacity Building

“[The] role of Technical Advisors or Coordinators must be very clear so that the implementation is based on country needs[,] not on international assumptions.”

“I think there is a clear need for more interaction between the Management Group and the implementation officers of UN agencies as there is a clear disconnect. The Management Group rarely (if at all) seeks feedbacks from the field to understand how implementation is going, what are the needs, what priority countries are, etc. Rather, the management group seems to blindly respond to PB requests and political pressure from donor countries (mainly) and partner countries (to a certain extent). In other cases, priorities seem to reflect the agencies' priorities but not country needs. The selection of new National Programmes therefore appears random and so is the allocation of new funding.”

“Apart from international agenda, National Program Planning should consider national or local circumstances and [inputs] from stakeholders.”

¹⁶⁶ Following the OECD-DAC, capacity refers to the ability of individuals, organisations and/or societies to manage their own affairs. Capacity development, as understood by UNDG, is used in this report to imply processes by which individuals, organisations and societies develop, strengthen, create, adapt or sustain capacities over time, so as to further their own goals or priorities (the latter borrows from UNDG and other UN agency definitions).

¹⁶⁷ More than a third of survey respondents identify capacity building – including technical and strategic support, as well as knowledge creation/sharing – as one of the key achievement areas of the Programme.

193. Related to these questions is the challenge of supporting the Programme’s purpose of achieving REDD+ readiness. Developing capacities to achieve such ends is conceptually different from strengthening capabilities for engaging in collective action. In the first instance, the focus is on the gaps for achieving REDD+ readiness so that country partners can access further funding to realise emission reductions. This has resulted in the Programme’s strong reliance on international experts and consultants for targeted support and ongoing technical assistance.

194. Regarding the short-term consultancies provided through the SNA-GP, experiences and perceptions on the value-added of such approaches are mixed, and the linkages to the overall purpose of the Programme (building REDD+ readiness) are less clear. In short, one-off activities do not generate results unless they are part of a larger effort. While the performance of NPs can readily be evaluated (i.e., results tied to a focused programme intervention), how the global programme’s broad assortment of activities, products, and services coalesce to create stronger institutional capacities is both more difficult to determine and harder to relate to verifiable country needs, strategies, and outcomes. This does not shed doubt on the usefulness of many SNA-GP interventions, as demonstrated by the country demand for targeted support on anti-corruption, multiple benefits, green economy solutions, safeguards, legal preparedness and just-in-time actions to supplement existing national efforts (MRV being a prime example).¹⁶⁸ Rather, the challenge for UN-REDD lies in creating stronger linkages to existing national REDD+ readiness efforts, such that the value-added of the SNA-GP becomes inextricably linked to the Programme’s success. As comments in the text box show, there are many people – especially at the country level – who question this value proposition¹⁶⁹ and the reasons why it deserves a greater share of the budget.

Interview Responses on SNA-GP Support

“Provides a full bandwidth of expertise.”

“Drops of money that [provide] no tangible incentives to change policies.”

“Need clarity on what targeted support means.”

“Not taking into account country needs – developing a flurry of tools and guidelines, while countries need capacity.”

“A lot of duplication and no coordination.”

“Need to justify/clarify demand side – need reflection and internal coordination.”

“What is the additionality of the Global Programme?”

195. With respect to NPs, technical assistance is generally considered to be of high quality (e.g., 72% of survey respondents believe that the Programme is consistent in its efforts to deliver high-quality technical assistance – a result that is in part attributable to the large percentage of responses from Programme staff). However, country-level input also points to difficulties in mainstreaming such knowledge and tools into existing national institutions. This has been the case in DRC, Cambodia, and Paraguay. In Cambodia, technical assistance is provided through working groups composed largely of individuals in the forest and environment ministries, but transfer and institutionalisation of capacity reportedly remains a challenge. In DRC’s CN-REDD, assistance was likewise provided to a core group of nationals, but these were mostly consultants with no clear linkages to the Ministry of the Environment. When the Programme ended, the knowledge and skills that were acquired left with the individuals themselves.¹⁷⁰ In Paraguay, the baseline of knowledge and capacity (e.g., existing forest inventory and mapping) was far lower than the UN-REDD tools and approaches required, which is one of the reasons why there are no concrete results as yet (see also F20).

¹⁶⁸ Recent examples in Africa include the work on anti-corruption and studies on environmental services in Kenya, the development of a fund management system and finalisation of the Forest Monitoring System in DRC.

¹⁶⁹ This is the unique value the Programme can offer to its clients compared to other initiatives – it combines the Programme’s value added and comparative advantage.

¹⁷⁰ This, however, lies in stark contrast with the strong institutional linkages of the approach used to build MRV capacity in DRC.

196. One missing link to UN-REDD capacity-building efforts is the use of effective results-based monitoring tools and instruments, including results-based performance indicators. Current reporting focuses on output-level results (see F7 and Exhibit 6.1) and not on whether learning is taking place; skills are being used; behaviours and approaches are changing; and capacities are being replicated across the supported agencies. There is no systematised or dedicated process in place to monitor what works, what does not, under what circumstances, and why.

197. Finally, there is a high demand for knowledge-sharing opportunities, including South-South exchanges and peer-led horizontal learning. Regional learning exchanges, such as those organised by the Bangkok and Panama regional teams, and the Peru-Ecuador binational meetings were particularly appreciated for the opportunities provided in terms of learning from neighbouring countries that face similar challenges. Some individuals (e.g., IP and CS leaders) and countries (e.g., Ecuador, Mexico) are also becoming skilled at strengthening capacities through South-South cooperation – a positive development that should be further supported and promoted. In fact, many countries hold experience in participatory development approaches, and the ability of local actors to self-organise to find durable solutions to the problems they face is well documented in the commons-related literature. As Bangladesh’s highly successful horizontal learning programme shows, however, supporting such efforts does require a fundamental reconsideration of traditional development modalities.¹⁷¹

6.6.4 Norms, Guidelines, and Safeguards

F25: Programme contributions to social and environmental safeguards are helping to raise awareness at national and global levels, but the operationalisation of such principles remains a challenge.

198. “Safeguards” refer to “procedures and approaches that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities ‘do no harm’ to people or the environment.”¹⁷² They are about addressing the unintended risks and impacts of a project or investment.¹⁷³ The need to address safeguards in the context of REDD+ was first introduced as an annex to the Cancun Agreement (COP 16), not in the text itself. Moreover, consistent with the need to respect state sovereignty, the requirements were kept purposefully vague.

199. UN-REDD has committed itself to a “rights-based approach” to REDD+ (in contrast with the risk-based approach taken by the World Bank), developing the UN-REDD “Framework for Supporting the Development of Country Approaches to Safeguards” as its main guidance document. In all, the Programme has developed no less than 11 tools, guidelines and methodologies to support the development of country safeguard approaches.

200. UN-REDD contributions to safeguards, anti-corruption, and good governance are recognised and praised by development partners, country partners, CSOs, and IPOs. Explicit reference to free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and “other forest-dependent communities” make them more explicit than World Bank safeguards and the FCPF’s strategic environmental and social assessment requirements.¹⁷⁴ Hence, UN-REDD is credited with helping to both develop and mainstream a more robust set of safeguards, which are in turn contributing to a stronger normative framework for REDD+ implementation. However, the operationalisation of such principles remains a challenge.

201. A critical issue for Programme staff at the country level concerns the lack of clear guidance on exactly how the SES are to be implemented. As one interview respondent put it: “It’s a great shopping list of tools and

¹⁷¹ A prime example of successful South-South cooperation is the World Bank’s Bangladesh Water and Sanitation Programme, which has developed a horizontal learning initiative that is rapidly being expanded to all areas of development in Asia – see <http://horizontallearning.net/index1.php?Language=1>.

¹⁷² Peskett, L. and K. Todd: Putting REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information Systems into Practice. UN-REDD Policy Brief Issue no. 3.

¹⁷³ McDermott et al. (2012)

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

requirements, but totally unrealistic in terms application.” Yet, as the survey reveals, views on this are mixed: just over half of survey respondents consider that the Programme is effective in establishing national safeguards that minimise social and environmental risks. However, when asked to identify the Programme’s chief contributions, only a handful of respondents mention safeguards. Among the challenges identified by interview and survey respondents are the absence of a coordinated approach or consolidated framework to support implementation; the lack of clarity on relevant issues such as benefit sharing; and how they are to be monitored and potentially enforced. Further, Programme staff question the realism of implementing 25 criteria and the task of validating these against more than 70 indicators. What constitutes an adequate safeguard and how different values ought to be prioritised (e.g., carbon versus biodiversity versus social benefit) are, in this regard, questions that have not been clearly answered as of yet.¹⁷⁵ The absence of clear regulatory frameworks for safeguards, carbon rights, and benefit sharing are reoccurring themes in the broader REDD+ literature.

202. Another concern that is clear in the relevant literature is that, while necessary to protect the interests and rights of forest-dependent people, the focus on safeguards, environmental justice issues, and participation has likewise helped to draw political attention away from the need to actually address the drivers that underpin deforestation, along with the substantial reforms that are needed to achieve such ends.¹⁷⁶ In other words, discussing safeguards is a more politically palatable activity than actually changing the rules that directly and indirectly condition deforestation and forest degradation. As one survey respondent put it: “Issues like safeguards and carbon monitoring... are [all] important, but entirely secondary behind a coherent strategy to actually reduce deforestation, which is currently lacking.”

F26: The UN-REDD Programme has been a strong voice in the prioritisation of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) principles and the recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in the implementation of UNFCCC¹⁷⁷ safeguards, especially in decision-making fora.

203. IP rights to free, prior and informed consent about activities that could potentially impact their lands, territories, and cultural, intellectual, religious, and spiritual rights are embodied in the UN Declaration on the Rights of IPs (UNDRIP) and in various international standards and social safeguard policies.¹⁷⁸ The UN-REDD Programme is considered by both partner agencies and relevant sources of scholarship as one of the primary instigators and advocates of FPIC in REDD+ today.

204. Given the mandate and role of the UN to promote international norms and standards, the UN-REDD Programme has incorporated FPIC (i.e., consent as opposed to consultation) as a core principle of stakeholder engagement in its strategy and took up the challenge to support the precise definition, standardisation, and codification of FPIC in the context of individual partner countries. Between 2010 and 2013, a series of regional workshops in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were held to share experiences and lessons learned on FPIC, which brought together governments, IPs, CSOs, and development agencies in a global effort to develop stronger definitions and guidelines. The meetings resulted in the development of guidelines for FPIC implementation,¹⁷⁹ which were subsequently reviewed at an Experts’ Meeting in Geneva in 2012.¹⁸⁰ Parallel to this global effort, the Programme has supported pilot work and capacity building workshops in partner countries to raise awareness and test emerging principles with IP communities and governments (e.g., Ecuador, Indonesia, Panama, and Vietnam).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Brockhaus et al. (2013); McDermott (2014)

¹⁷⁷ See Safeguards in Appendix 1 of UNFCCC (2011).

¹⁷⁸ Cariño and Colchester (2010); World Bank (2005); UNDRIP (2008)

¹⁷⁹ UN-REDD Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (January 2013)

¹⁸⁰ Available on UNREDD.net

205. Government response to FPIC has been generally positive, and the evaluation notes relevant examples of uptake. For instance, Indonesia, PNG, and Vietnam governments are working on country-specific national and sub-national FPIC guidelines; Ecuador has developed a national FPIC protocol; Costa Rica is in the process of developing national FPIC guidelines; FPIC “roadmaps” have been initiated in Honduras, Kenya, and Paraguay; and in DRC, WWF supported the development of FPIC guidelines, which are being considered by the government for official adoption.

206. The application of FPIC principles in the overall REDD+ architecture faces at least two critical challenges. First, property rights over stored forest carbon are still to be determined (similar to the case of mining). Second, given the widespread concerns – especially among IP and forest-dependent communities – that REDD+ will lead to dispossession of lands and livelihoods, FPIC tends to be seen as a “panacea”¹⁸¹ rather than one critical element of a more detailed rights-based approach that is still in development. As noted by observers for this evaluation, one element that is currently lacking in the Programme’s overall approach is a formal grievance and accountability mechanism – a lacuna that is currently being addressed by the Programme. Though the situation in Panama was not directly addressed through the application of FPIC principles (see paragraph 156 and complementary footnote), it set a clear and unambiguous message regarding the importance of respecting the rights of indigenous communities the world over, by testing the Programme’s resolve to uphold and abide the principles by which it stands.

F27: Through its work on anti-corruption and participatory governance assessment, the UN-REDD Programme is helping to establish more robust standards for REDD+ governance.

207. UN-REDD has developed a framework for country-led participatory governance assessments (PGA) for information sharing and learning on how REDD+ governance safeguards can be addressed and respected in a systematic manner. This framework is being pilot tested in four countries at the provincial level – Ecuador, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Vietnam – and examines the following aspects of governance: legal and policy frameworks; capacities of REDD+ actors at national and sub-national levels; impact of existing laws and practices; as well as anti-corruption and conflict issues.

208. All four PGA countries are at different stages of implementation. In April 2012, at the request of the four pilot countries, a knowledge exchange meeting was held in Bogor, Indonesia that brought together the four PGA pilots as well as Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, and Sri Lanka to exchange their experiences and learn from each other. A main conclusion from the workshop was that “anti-corruption is not surprisingly, one of the governance issues which has been prioritized in the PGA pilots in Indonesia as well as in Nigeria.”

209. In Indonesia, progress has been noted in the Jambi province in central Sumatra (containing 9 districts, with a population of 3 million), which has committed to developing a forest governance index “to track its progress or regression” (in the words of the Governor) in forest governance. A set of sanctions for public officials to encourage non-corrupt practices was developed in collaboration with the government, and a conflict resolution mechanism was also developed. More recently, a study visit between Indonesia and Vietnam was set up to share lessons from the Indonesian PGA process.

210. UNDP initiated the PGA process in Ecuador, but in spite of being approved over one year ago, it was still not in place at the time of the country visit, because it was not considered to be in line with national priorities and capacities. However, some funds are now being used strategically to finance additional activities on SES monitoring.

211. Given that governance issues are very complex, politically and culturally sensitive, and require a multi-sectoral approach, the Evaluation Team agrees with the holistic governance approach adopted by the

¹⁸¹ Mahanty and McDermott (2013)

Programme and notes that a good foundation has been laid through the four PGA pilots. While concrete lessons for scaling up PGA efforts are now emerging,¹⁸² the evaluation found several other weak points that warrant the Programme's attention. These include the lack of: (i) engagement with non-forest/non-environment ministries; (ii) practical solutions and action on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; and (iii) the absence of integrated (i.e., vertical) and cross-scale (i.e., horizontal) approaches in partner countries. The realisation that bringing an end to deforestation and forest degradation will require cross-cutting reforms in nearly all areas of government is an issue that has to be taken seriously by participating countries.

6.7 Factors Affecting Performance

212. The design and implementation of the UN-REDD Programme is greatly affected by the enabling conditions and policy environment within which it operates and the related country capacities to absorb and institutionalise the concepts, tools, methodologies, and technical considerations associated with the emerging REDD+ agenda. The evaluators have come across several instances where a highly committed head of a forestry department was changed mid-way, and the Programme had to face an uncertain situation with the replacement, or where national elections diverted the attention of country counterparts for many months at a time. When considered carefully, the number of external factors, events or changes over which the Programme has no control would likely be quite extensive. Related to this is the fact that many partner countries face serious capacity constraints and institutional limitations, tempered by structural forces that invariably limit the pace and extent of change that any government may willingly concede. In considering the factors affecting the Programme's performance, the focus was thus placed on the elements that lie within its span of control.

213. The picture that emerges from the previous sections of this report is mixed: there is satisfactory performance in several areas, but there are also many challenges. This section draws attention to the factors that have conditioned the Programme's overall performance, in part or in whole. The areas considered are: (i) Programme design and structure; (ii) partnerships and cooperation; (iii) Programme management and coordination; (iv) financial and human resource management; and (v) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

214. Because this section attempts to highlight the core issues that affect the Programme's performance, overlap with previously discussed findings was unavoidable. Where feasible, efforts have been made to refer to previous discussions instead of reiterating the same issues, though this was not always possible due to the logic of argumentation.

¹⁸² The draft guide, with lessons learned, is available on the UN-REDD workspace. See: [Draft Practical Guide to the Participatory Governance Assessment](#).

6.7.1 Programme Design and Structure

F28: The performance of the UN-REDD Programme is affected by its ambitious nature and corresponding absence of a clear and explicit theory of change.

215. Taken as a whole, the UN-REDD Programme is highly ambitious, in terms of its scope (targeting two of the most important global environmental issues: deforestation and climate change), scale (number of countries), the range of areas it seeks to affect (forest measurement, management, governance, and finance) and the level of change that it intends to achieve (inter-sectoral coordination, full participation and transparency, enabling policy environment, strongly increased institutional capacities, involvement of the private sector, etc.).

“The Programme is oversized – doing too much and too spread out.”
- Survey Response on Programme Design
“The goal of making Viet Nam ‘REDD ready’ by 2012 was recognised as being ill defined and overly ambitious early in implementation. The timeframe was too short, capacities in the forestry sector too low and international negotiations too inconclusive for this goal to be realistic. Focused on fewer activities, the programme could have been more effective.”
- Final Evaluation of the Viet Nam NP, p. 7

All stakeholder groups ubiquitously shared observations of this nature during the evaluation, from government and non-government representatives to Programme staff, development partners, and external observers, including survey results and the Panama and Vietnam NP mid-term and final evaluations, respectively. While this agenda is commendable, there is only so much that such a joint UN Programme can accomplish, given its resources and capabilities, as well as the differing capacities, histories, and resources of country partners themselves. Turning capacity, motivation, and resources into a collectively actionable agenda requires a plan or theory that lays out the causal pathway of the proposed change.

216. The Programme is aligned with the phased approach to REDD+ and is therefore coherent with the overall intent of the mechanism, as defined by continuing UNFCCC negotiations. However, it is also clear that UN-REDD and the FCPF have played a key normative role in defining both the contours and contents of the emerging global REDD+ agenda (see F2). The findings of this evaluation suggest that the normative framework and phased approach of REDD+ are insufficient, in and of themselves, to achieve REDD+ readiness, and ultimately, the goal of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

217. Achieving any one of the proposed outcomes of the Programme within a five-year span is a monumental task. Apart from the more technical MRV component, the Programme’s other outcome areas all involve substantial behavioural and institutional transformations. The problem

Interview Responses on Programme Direction
“No clear road map for how to achieve intended goals.”
“No clear methodology for achieving readiness.”
“How do we orient REDD+, what are UN-REDD norms and standards?”
“Clear lack of strategic planning – all focused on short-term thinking.”

is that change in the formal and informal rules that govern social, political, and economic relationships is notoriously difficult to achieve, and past efforts to incentivise changes or reforms have not shown themselves to be effective.¹⁸³ At best, they may help create enabling conditions, but ultimately, changes in the underlying rules of the game are nearly always modulated by power-holders in society.¹⁸⁴ Together with the many uncertainties

¹⁸³ Angelsen (2013)

¹⁸⁴ Knight (1992); North (1990); Powell and DiMaggio (1991)

of REDD+, the feasibility of alternative development schemes, and the opportunity costs of pursuing such strategies, efforts to achieve the changes outlined in the UN-REDD Programme face many hurdles.

218. To counteract such challenges, one needs a measurable and verifiable theory that can explain how programmatic outputs will lead to outcomes, and how these collectively translate into impact. Without an articulated ToC, it is nearly impossible to develop a plausible strategy for achieving results, set priorities, efficiently allocate resources, adaptively manage implementation, or develop sufficiently robust design principles for achieving sustainable outcomes in different social-ecological environments. This evaluation suggests that in the urge to implement REDD+, insufficient attention was given to the lessons of past development efforts, reforms, multilateral agreements, and sustainable resource governance writ large. As one reviewer commented: “The application of these previous [...] lessons in the design, approach, implementation, and ambitions of the UN-REDD Programme would have been useful.”

F29: Reliance on international structures (i.e., financial and technical assistance) limits the resilience of Programme results and their appropriation by the partner countries.

219. As discussed in previous sections, the UN-REDD Programme was designed and implemented during an optimistic period of the UNFCCC negotiations. The prospects of an imminent agreement on a performance-based payment mechanism created high expectations within the international community and across countries with high percentages of residual forests. Efforts to deliver on those expectations have led to two core dependencies: (i) a dependence on international structures; and (ii) a reliance on financial incentives to drive reforms.

220. In the first place, central to UN-REDD’s founding rationale was the idea that it could help countries to bridge the divide between existing systems, processes, and capacities, and the requirements for REDD+ participation under UNFCCC rules and guidelines. Drawing on the core competencies of the three UN partner agencies, the Programme was designed to

According to interviewed Programme staff and national representatives, newer REDD+ programmes appear to be fostering a greater sense of ownership than past efforts (e.g., Argentina, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Mexico, and Nigeria). Whether such fervour will persist over time is unclear at this point, but close monitoring to draw emerging lessons would be useful.

- Evaluation Team Observation

address the gap between existing and required readiness standards, thus alleviating the delivery risks that donors faced and the implementation challenges faced by partner countries. However, in the global urgency to act and support country demand for entry into the REDD process, the design of the Programme was hastened, leading to what one observer characterised as “going to scale without ever taking it out for a ride first.”

221. To its credit, UN-REDD was initially launched to inform UNFCCC processes and country negotiating positions through on-the-ground experience, thus supporting the design and implementation of REDD+ from the bottom-up. However, in order to achieve this ambitious change agenda within the then-anticipated timeframe of the UNFCCC process (leading to the Copenhagen COP), greater emphasis was placed on international technical assistance. As a result, the dynamics of change shifted from country-driven demand to supply-assisted responses. Consequently, countries are successfully engaging in REDD-related processes, but the sustainability and indeed the resilience of such results – whether in terms of increased national capacities or demonstrated country ownership – remain partially or strongly reliant on dedicated international structures. How this might affect the Programme’s overall impact in terms of emission reductions is too early to tell, but in the absence of

“whole-of-government responses and contributions to national REDD+ strategies,”¹⁸⁵ the Programme’s ability to achieve its intended outcomes and development impact will remain a challenge.

222. The second consideration regarding the Programme’s reliance on external incentives to drive change has been discussed already (see F21). However, several points are worth emphasising. The extent to which any single instrument (i.e., REDD+ financing) can provide the necessary incentives to address the massive dilemmas associated with the maintenance of tropical forests in developing countries is simply not supported by empirical research or any other historical precedent. As recognised in the Programme’s founding framework document, complex causations require complex solutions, and the Programme as a whole offers a broad range of tools for tackling such problems. Overreliance on the promise of REDD+ financing to fuel change exposes the Programme to potential risks, in terms of achieving and sustaining results over time.

223. Efforts to widen the solution base (through the development of non-market-based payments, green economy, incentives, etc.) are beginning to be explored in some partner countries (e.g., Colombia, Ecuador, Kenya, Peru, and Vietnam), but efforts to date have been mostly theoretical. Likewise, community-based REDD experimentation, in collaboration with UNDP-GEF, offers an alternative (non-centralised) framework for understanding the dynamics of community-driven forest resource management and governance – an area supported by more than three decades of research. Still missing are a clear political willingness to decentralise REDD+ efforts across governing structures and a cohesive empirically validated framework (i.e., ToC) for organising and structuring programming efforts.

“Increased revenues alone will also not do the job; good land use planning, stable policies and institutions and effective law enforcement (the right enabling environment) are as important.”

- External Reviewer

F30: Though the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are being identified, the Programme is not designed to proactively address them.

224. The design of the Programme has not paid enough attention to the direct and indirect drivers of deforestation, and the development of viable strategies to address these are absent. In most cases, it was assumed that this knowledge was available at the national level (e.g., as part of national communications to UNFCCC). While in the case of quick-start countries, the process of identifying the drivers was placed near the end of the readiness phase, newer partner countries find that it is to their advantage to map these at the outset, to better direct the National Programme. Still, identification of the drivers needs to be followed up with actions. Though theoretical work (e.g., studies) and consultations (e.g., on charcoal production in Zambia) are taking place, the Programme has not made tangible progress in terms of addressing these drivers at the country level. As a result, many countries still have no clear idea what to do once concrete REDD+ support (potentially) becomes available.

Survey Responses on Drivers of Deforestation

“The private sector has been marginalised from the process in various countries and at the global level. There has not been to date a private sector observer at the Policy Board.”

“A lot of emphasis has been put on human rights and REDD, however the main drivers of deforestation around the world are linked to [the] agro-industry. [The a]gro-industry has not been effectively involved in UN-REDD programmes in countries in general. This is partly due to [a] lack of clarity about what they can gain/lose in the short to medium term.”

225. A clear example is Ecuador, where drivers were defined previously in national communications to UNFCCC and are now being analysed and mapped in UN-REDD. However, the strategies that are being developed to deal with these drivers are considered very general and are not mainstreamed in the sectors that represent them (agriculture,

¹⁸⁵ UN-REDD Framework Document (p. 8).

infrastructure, energy, and mining/oil). Therefore, there is only an emerging plan to invest eventual future funds to avoid further deforestation. This situation is repeated across both graduated REDD+ countries (e.g., DRC and Vietnam) and National Programmes that are in less advanced stages of readiness. The assessment of drivers and strategies to address these is included in the multiple benefits component, but not integrated in approaches of benefit distribution and forest governance strategies. This is also strongly related to the lack of trans-sectoral involvement.

6.7.2 Partnerships and Cooperation

F31: The UN-REDD Programme is successful in terms of forging partnerships and mutually beneficial cooperation, which are helping to strengthen the Programme’s comparative advantage and value-added at all levels of interaction.

226. Considering the recognised difficulty of joint UN agency programmes, the fact that UN-REDD has successfully convened three UN agencies to address a global issue (emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation) represents a significant achievement in itself, in spite of all remaining challenges to optimise this inter-agency collaboration.

227. Due to the frequency of interactions and the need for joint decision-making, collaboration between the UN partners appears to be strongest at the global and regional levels. In countries, the degree of cooperation is more variable and ultimately governed by existing inter-personal dynamics and the level of importance that is attributed to UN-REDD. While such relationships are helpful for improving cohesiveness, they do not imply increased efficiencies per se, since each organisation still requires country partners to comply with their respective administrative requirements. This situation is as much a factor in “Delivering as One” countries (Vietnam, Tanzania) as it is in others. Moreover, as discussed already, Programme implementation has been confronted with the duplication of activities and competition for political influence, among other things.

228. A key achievement for the Programme is the strong relationship it now enjoys with the World Bank’s FCPF, leading to the development of common Programme documents and coordination at the country level to reduce overlap. Efforts to streamline complementarities are ongoing, leading to agreements in countries where the two Programmes operate. There are also examples where the FCPF uses (or plans to use) UNDP to deliver its activities (e.g., Cambodia, DRC, Honduras, PNG, and Suriname).

229. Coordination mechanisms between UN-REDD and other REDD+ support programmes are stronger at the regional and country levels than at the global level. The Programme’s efforts to coordinate with others at the national level are sometimes perceived as being dominant, especially for organisations that have a longer history of engagement with the country. For instance, both in Ecuador and Paraguay, which had important field-based REDD+ pilot projects before UN-REDD started, the promoters of these initiatives mentioned: “Since UN-REDD is here, they seem to run the REDD+ show in this country, and we are not considered anymore by the government.” However, even these actors generally regarded UN-REDD as having a good convening power and being effective in promoting joint planning sessions, sharing information to avoid the duplication of efforts, and identifying areas where it has a clear comparative advantage (e.g., MRV, anti-corruption measures, and good governance). The convening power, legitimacy, and credibility of the three UN agencies are seen as key Programme strengths by survey respondents.

230. There are various examples of successful collaboration at the regional and national levels between UN-REDD and other bilateral agencies or international NGOs/CSOs that are working on REDD+ issues. For example, UN-REDD, WOCAN, and LEAF (USAID) have partnered to carry out a scoping study on practical entry points for gender mainstreaming in REDD+ in the Asian region; in South America, UN-REDD and a USAID-funded regional programme (Andean Amazon Conservation Initiative) jointly organised a meeting on safeguards; and in DRC, UN-REDD collaborated with a number of well-established NGOs, such as WWF and OFAC (Observatoire des

Forêts d’Afrique Centrale) to deliver various components of its Programme or provide technical assistance. Many of these partnerships are occurring through informal channels, as opposed to formal arrangements. They are limited to organising joint activities and sharing results, and the sharing of resources, staff, and funding is not frequently seen. However, steps are being taken to share information with bilateral agencies (e.g., Norway, USAID) to strengthen complementarities and help avoid the duplication of efforts.

231. In most cases, UN-REDD managers coordinate formally or informally with other development partners to work out the scope of the Programme, both in terms of geographical areas of intervention and institutional levels of engagement. For instance, UN-REDD usually works at the national level, and other development partners such as Finland, USAID, and international NGOs work at the sub-national level. This being said, several country interviewees commented that overlap and duplication of efforts are not uncommon, and that the Programme needs to engage more with existing government and donor-supported projects and initiatives through existing formal coordination mechanisms. Such formal coordination mechanisms are present in most countries.

232. Finally, it bears mentioning that the Programming also supports internal collaboration with units or departments from the participating UN agencies (e.g., UNEP’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the UNDP-GEF, with whom the UNDP REDD+ team maintains a strong working relationship, engaging in knowledge sharing and joint coordination at the country level). As the Programme shifts its attention from readiness to implementation, leveraging the lessons learned, knowledge and expertise of these units will become critical. To this end, the evaluators note that FAO’s core competency in agriculture has yet to be fully incorporated in the design and implementation of programming interventions, at the global and national levels.

6.7.3 Programme Management and Coordination

F32: Management and coordination functions have improved over time, but the ability of the different administrative bodies to meaningfully contribute to the objectives of the Programme is affected by overlapping roles and responsibilities, insufficient autonomy, and attention to inter-agency equity.

233. Three administrative bodies govern the UN-REDD management structure. The MG is primarily responsible for making decisions relative to programmatic and operational issues, ensure global, regional, and national coordination, and support the work of the Secretariat. The SG is tasked with providing guidance and oversight to the MG and the Secretariat. The Secretariat serves a coordination, support, and liaison function for the three partner agencies and PB. It is also responsible for organising the bi-annual PB meetings, developing consolidated work plans and budgets for the SNA-GP, monitoring and reporting, and knowledge management. Specific roles and responsibilities are captured in the set of Terms of Reference that have been revised at least once since the Programme was created.

234. According to both internal and external observers, the degree of inter-organisational and administrative harmonisation has improved over the years. A strong sense of collegiality and desire to cooperate predominates in interactions within the MG. Programme staff feel that the Secretariat’s ability to support their work and information needs has improved over the last few years, though less attention has been given until now to gathering lessons learned and supporting knowledge exchanges among partner countries. Together, these elements set a positive precedent for the way forward, but consistency between rules-in-form and rules-in-use remains problematic. In effect, *de jure* distinctions between the different administrative bodies tend to lose their relevance in operational situations.

“The secretariat has improved a lot and while [during] the first few years the agencies had to take a lot of the responsibilities, now the secretariat seems to be up to speed.”

“[One of the Programme’s main challenges is] overlapping mandates, priorities and competing interests of government agencies (competing interests among participating UN agencies are also noteworthy and could be detrimental over the long term).”

- **Survey Comments on Management**

“The design has critical voids regarding the definition of roles, responsibilities, and the administration of responsibilities and mechanisms, which lead to confusing roles amongst the various actors involved.”

- **Panama – Mid-term Evaluation Report, Draft, p. 43**

235. The SG was created during a difficult period of the Programme’s history, when, according to several interviewed participants, the MG was less cohesive and unified in its decisions. Composed of the senior-most officers of the departments within which the Programme is anchored, the SG was established to overcome barriers to “inter-agency collaboration” and to “position the UN-REDD Programme as a pre-eminent example of a joint programme under the One UN approach.” The need to defer management and operational decisions to the SG has considerably diminished in the intervening years, a point that was made clear in the survey results, which show that only 37% of respondents believe the SG’s role and responsibilities are clear. The ToR of the SG include mostly oversight functions and few decision-making functions, and they contain tasks that MG members already oversee as head of their division (e.g., participate in resource mobilisation, provide oversight to MG, and endorse management responses).

“What is elevated to Strategic group versus Management group is unclear.”

- **Survey Respondent**

236. Hence, it may now be questioned whether such a decision-making entity is needed to ensure what the agencies are committed to doing by principle. Demand for an SG function has considerably waned over the last few years, and members confirm that they meet only sporadically. Currently, SG activities are limited to generally reviewing the state of affairs within the Programme, providing guidance if required, and assessing the performance of the Head of the Secretariat, who falls under their responsibility. Apart from these relatively minor tasks and co-chairmanship of Policy Board meetings (all SG members are PB members), the role and contributions of the SG are unclear to most stakeholders, both inside and outside of the Programme. The evaluation concludes that the SG’s mandate currently is not crucial, and its role and function could be served directly by the respective head of each agency department, should the need to defer to higher authorities for internal management issues periodically arise.

237. For its part, the MG brings together the key management heads of the UN-REDD Programme from the three partner agencies and Secretariat. The MG constitutes the primary decision-making body of the Programme. Their tasks include setting strategic directions, result expectations, and annual budgets for the Policy Board’s consideration, and ensuring the effective engagement and operational coordination of UN-REDD Programme staff across all levels of interaction. With two representatives and alternates from each partner and

the Secretariat, the MG is a relatively large body of decision-makers that engages in weekly conference calls and quarterly meetings to address emerging issues, keep track of the Programme’s overall performance, and propose an agenda for Policy Board follow-up.

238. The chief priority of the MG is inter-agency coordination, determining who does what, when, and how (which in turn directly undermines the value of the SG). This allocative process, within the context of the One-UN system, is hampered by a number of challenges that ultimately affect the Programme’s performance. Evidence from stakeholder interviews suggests that members of the MG hold divergent views over the actual nature of their relationship (i.e., between agency partners), the role of the Secretariat, and ultimately, the purpose of the Programme itself. For instance, individually interviewed MG members all gave different definitions of “readiness,” interpretations of the application of safeguards, the way in which the Programme is responding to changes in the global context, and the specific role of each agency in the Programme. For the most part, perspectives are informed by the perceived competencies and contributions of their respective agencies, and whether or not the work areas that support their interests are adequately recognised and valued by others. In this sense, individual members may be motivated by the desire to improve the Programme, but loyalties remain grounded in the mandate of each agency. Hence, the mere consideration of the facts suggests that the Programme’s contents and priorities are less defined by strategy or the directives of the Policy Board than by the extent to which partnering agencies are able to secure an equitable share of resources and corresponding levels of responsibility for the delivery of the Programme. This is evidenced by the division of the overall budget among the three agencies (2011-2015: USD 30.5M for UNEP, USD 31.8M for FAO, and USD 34.9M for UNDP) and the recognition by MG members themselves that this division was largely to avoid conflicts among the agencies.

239. On paper, the role and function of the Secretariat are relatively clear, but their practical application is problematic. Without a clear authority to act and make independent decisions on behalf of the Programme, the Secretariat’s limited autonomy appears to create higher than warranted transaction costs for the Programme. For instance, the tasks of monitoring and reporting on the use of resources and achievement of results require continuous explicit support of the partner agencies. The same holds for knowledge management. This implies slow and cumbersome processes for relatively simple and clear tasks. Also, the lack of a clear mandate limits the Secretariat’s ability to directly engage with country and regional representatives, without first gaining approval from partner agencies. This implies that all formal communication has to be copied to (and many times approved by) many different persons in various agencies, physically seated at different locations, causing long processes, risk of misunderstanding, and an overall low convening power. During the execution of this evaluation, the Team evidenced first-hand the difficulty and generally over-complicated procedures to achieve relatively simple objectives, such as agreement on a country visit. Finally, no programmatic or operational decisions can be made by the Secretariat without again consulting the three UN agency partners. This leads not only to slow processes, but also to the duplication of efforts and the absence of a clear centre of authority to make decisions when there is disagreement on the way forward. This has led to situations such as the mission to analyse the problems with NP implementation in Panama: it was agreed on by high-level representatives from all agencies (except FAO, who did not judge it necessary) and the Secretariat, but none of these had previously consulted with the Panama government, nor was there a clear and common understanding of the goal of the visit.

“[The] secretariat’s role is very unclear.”
“[We have] too little knowledge of the actual operating of the Secretariat.”
- Survey Responses

240. Given the MG’s role as the principle coordinating and managing body of the Programme, the Secretariat’s actual role, function, and contributions are more difficult to distinguish. Whether formally or informally, the Secretariat’s autonomy to act cannot be disassociated from what partner agencies concede to or willingly

endorse through the MG. While stakeholders inside and outside of the Programme view the creation of a more executive Secretariat with a certain degree of apprehension, the question that needs to be asked is whether the current system represents an efficient use of time and resources. In the Team’s view, current arrangements are anything but cost-effective: a large Policy Board that meets twice a year at high costs and unclear contributions to the Programme’s strategic focus; an SG that no longer has a clear niche or function; a large MG that meets frequently to make most decisions as a consensus among three agencies; and a Secretariat that has an unclear role and mandate.¹⁸⁶ The current situation leads to high transaction costs, overlapping functions, the duplication of efforts (e.g., revision of documents), and slow decision-making processes.

241. Arguments in favour of a Secretariat with greater responsibility and authority certainly suggest that the delegation of authority would generate efficiency gains, help clarify its role and contributions to the overall Programme, and ultimately increase its accountability to the MG and Policy Board. Though some believe that granting more autonomy to a central coordinating body might lead to mission creep, the fact remains that agencies are the primary budget holders of the Programme, not the Secretariat. Therefore, the fear that the Secretariat could assume more autonomy and authority than what the MG and Policy Board might concede to appears unfounded to the extent that enforceable decision rules can always be established, and that downward accountability can be used to monitor performance.

6.7.4 Financial and Human Resource Management

F33: Human and financial resource allocations are broadly consistent with programmatic objectives and priorities, but the absence of a joint accountability and reporting mechanism by the three partner agencies and general oversight capacity by the Policy Board make it difficult to track the relative efficiency, effectiveness, and soundness of Programme investments.

242. Overall, the allocation of financial resources within the Programme appears reasonable. Resources for National Programmes are allocated on the basis of core agency competencies, and a National Programme working group is used to determine work areas, promote complementarities, and prevent the duplication of efforts. The Global Programme budget is linked to a detailed annual work plan that is screened and approved by the Policy Board. With regards to the overall budget, it is managed through a transparent trust fund that can be accessed by anyone.¹⁸⁷ Yet, in spite of all these measures, the extent to which human and financial resources are efficiently leveraged to achieve the Programme’s objectives is difficult to determine (as explained in the Efficiency section of this report).

243. As part of the Programme’s joint delivery framework, each partner agency oversees the use and management of its share of the overall budget. Funds are filtered through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, and technically speaking, countries have the final say in terms of how resources are allocated. However, the approach used by the three partner agencies leads to a relatively low share to National Programmes and the larger share to the SNA-GP. Drawing on the input of various country needs assessments, the distribution of available resources is annually determined by the MG. A portion (roughly 40% of the total budget) is allocated to countries participating in National Programmes, and the remainder (nearly 60%) is channelled through the Global Programme (SNA-GP). In turn, each agency is allocated about a third of the overall budget.

¹⁸⁶ This view lies in contrast with 63% of survey respondents, who believe that the mandate of the Secretariat is clear. In comparison, 49% felt the same about the Management Group.

¹⁸⁷ Just over half of the survey respondents consider the Programme’s financial management to be transparent.

244. The Evaluation Team’s discussions with Programme staff, country representatives and even external stakeholders, regarding the overall distribution and use of resources, raised more questions than answers. While there is little doubt that budgetary allocations are rigorously managed and monitored by the three partners, the challenge for most stakeholders is that the process used is not openly accessible, nor is it clear from a strategic point of view. Allocations for the SNA-GP budget are decided by the MG, based on variously referenced country needs, but the broad division of resources (one third for each agency) does not appear to be linked to a clear strategy and/or specific set of achievable results. The fact is, as one senior official admitted, “agencies are ultimately judged by how much money they bring in.”

245. Along the same lines, many country informants confirmed that the activities supported by the SNA-GP are frequently suggested and developed by UN staff without prior consultation with government staff. Between themselves, partner agencies do not share their work plans and annual budgets; there is no assigned chief financial officer for the overall Programme; there is no dedicated mechanism or process to jointly assess costs and performances; and agencies do not use a harmonised approach for budgeting purposes or to streamline disbursements at the country level. In sum, allocative decisions are made by partner agencies on the basis of internal procedures and protocols, but whether or not these constitute the most cost-

Interview and Survey Comments on Resource Management

“The program does not pay much attention in requesting IA to present clear financial reports to national partners or for the national coordinator to have access to it. This does not apply to all agencies.”

“In Tanzania the national REDD+ task force was fairly closed and no stakeholders, including UN-REDD, had access to the processes and thus stakeholders had little influence over the deliberations and strategy setting.”

“Agencies have an all or nothing approach – no consultations, no input – [they] do not set the standards that they expect others to abide by.”

“[A key challenge facing the Programme is the] lack of a mechanism to allow country teams to request orientations about complaints they have regarding irregularities originated in the management and by agencies.”

effective investments for the Programme is impossible to determine on the basis of available information.¹⁸⁸

246. One of the key issues yet to be addressed by the Programme is the fiduciary responsibility of the Policy Board, and its role in terms of setting the vision, strategy, and priorities for UN-REDD. As the PB review suggested, most observers concur that too much of the Board’s time is spent addressing operational concerns, as opposed to high-level issues, such as the Programme’s theory of change, its strategy, and the extent to which progress towards results is being achieved. As one interview respondent put it, “the Programme has managed to develop a powerful UN-REDD label, but the Policy Board has so far failed to build on this and define what it specifically seeks to achieve and how available funds should be used to leverage such change.” Admittedly, donors wish to finance transformational change and demonstrated results. Responding to such a challenge requires vision, an action plan, and access to funds. What appear to be missing are clear rules and procedures for making allocative decisions within the Policy Board, and the will to enforce and keep track of the Programme’s performance relative to the use of such funds.

¹⁸⁸ At the time of writing this report, the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations initiated a special audit of UNDP’s participation in the UN-REDD Programme, as part of OAI’s overall work plan that routinely reviews risks to UNDP through participation in Multi-Partner Trust Funds. A similar audit was initiated at FAO.

6.7.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

F34: Until now, monitoring and reporting functions have centred on outputs. A results-based framework, linked to the Programme’s management cycle, is currently being developed, but the purpose and intended results of the Programme will need to be clarified before the benefits of a results-based approach are realised.

247. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting functions are not well adapted to the needs of the Programme and the dynamic and changing contexts wherein it operates. In its current state, monitoring is done through periodic progress reports and continuous formal and informal communication (website, newsletters, meetings). While relatively effective in terms of monitoring the production of key outputs, linkages to outcome-level results are less clear. With respect to NPs, progress is measured in terms of achievements made relative to the objectives identified in their readiness plans, while for the SNA-GP, a results-oriented framework is used. In either case, progress tends to be measured in terms of outputs, and linkages between NP and SNA-GP components are not systematically established. Together, these elements make it difficult to evaluate the Programme’s overall progress and performance with a reasonable degree of confidence. How this information is then used to inform decisions and plan future interventions is uncertain.

“Monitoring and Evaluation of national programmes must be carried out regularly from within and outside the country to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.”

- Survey Respondent

248. Steps are being taken to improve the results-based nature of the Programme’s monitoring framework, as well as better communicate what it is trying to achieve. However, this is only one segment of an integrated planning and reporting process. As currently defined, the phased approach to REDD+ makes it hard to define how success ought to be measured and therefore, the results that the UN-REDD Programme aims to achieve. Developing a results-based approach in the absence of a clear set of achievable results (i.e., changes at the outcome level) will make it difficult to develop reliable performance indicators and effectively monitor the Programme’s performance. Likewise, keeping track of such indicators and translating data into usable knowledge and lessons for decision-making purposes require dedicated and skilled resources. The Programme currently does not have such resources, and reliance on existing staff to address these needs would not be advisable, as the Secretariat is already burdened with too many tasks and responsibilities. As such, monitoring in the context of the UN-REDD Programme is rendered difficult by the tripartite arrangement of the three lead agencies and the Secretariat’s limited administrative mandate, which prevents it from holding each of the partners accountable for measuring and reporting progress.

249. Finally, the need to pay close attention to the rapidly changing social, political, and economic landscapes wherein the Programme operates, including the evolving threats to sustainability and the drivers of land use/land cover change, cannot be over-emphasised. These aspects are not addressed in the ongoing revision of the Programme. Acknowledging that one is constantly in a formative state (of learning) has significant implications for the way one conceives the role and function of monitoring and reporting, and the adaptive implications that this creates.

7. Conclusions

250. The UN-REDD Programme was created and launched in a fervent period of the UNFCCC negotiations. Grounded in the robust science of the IPCC, the Programme was initiated to test the REDD+ hypothesis, which posits that carefully planned payment structures and capacity support can create the incentives necessary to reduce human pressure on tropical forests, thereby achieving measurable and permanent emission reductions.

251. On the basis of early experimentation (2009-2010), a five-year strategy for 2011-2015 was created. With one year of implementation remaining, an evaluation of the Programme's performance to date (2008-2013) was requested from the Policy Board, to draw lessons and inform the development of a new strategy for 2016-2020. Structured around the key issues considered in the present report, the following section outlines the main conclusions of this evaluation.

252. **The global urgency to reduce emissions from deforestation is undisputed, and the UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to the requirements of the REDD+ mechanism.** Despite early assumptions, the REDD+ mechanism is a complex solution to an even more complex problem, and to realise the intended impact of avoided tropical deforestation, participating countries will need substantial support. To this end, the UN-REDD Programme is aligned with the requirements of the UNFCCC and supports the full breadth of issues that are part and parcel of the REDD+ agenda.

253. **The Programme is relevant to the requirements of the REDD+ agenda and what countries need to achieve in order to be compliant with the phased approach to REDD+ implementation. What countries actually need, in order to reduce emissions from deforestation, is only partially addressed.** The Programme has been created to support countries that seek entry into REDD+ financing mechanisms. Therefore, the focus of the Programme is on the technical requirements of the REDD+ agenda, and not the search for tangible solutions to the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Though some Programme components would prove useful for achieving sustainable resource use under any scenario (e.g., stakeholder engagement, good governance, green economy transformation), the Programme is not specifically set up to address the challenges that partner countries face. Such interventions are expected to emerge in a conditional future, after countries become REDD+ compliant (i.e., achieve REDD+ readiness).

254. **The global context has changed considerably since REDD+ was first introduced. The implicit theory and assumptions that guided the creation and development of the UN-REDD Programme no longer appear to hold.** In spite of increasingly diverse interpretations of REDD+ and the integration of a broader sustainable agenda, the overarching narrative of the Programme remains tied to the proposition that market-based or conditionality-driven incentives can help create change in systems that have been historically resistant to reform. Yet, achieving such ends is turning out to be more complex and challenging than what early proponents had predicted. While the UN-REDD Programme generates a wide range of residual benefits (e.g., capacities, tools, standards, and safeguards), the achievement of emission reductions remains heavily tied to the outcome of future UNFCCC discussions and the continued availability of REDD+ financing options. In a dynamic and unpredictable world, this places limitations on the Programme's resilience vis-à-vis unforeseen shocks or disturbances, particularly as they apply to the availability of mid- (i.e., 2015-2020) to long-term funding (i.e., 2020 and beyond).

255. **The Programme is effective in achieving output-level results in most, if not all, of the areas wherein it operates. However, achieving system-wide change is a long-term process.** Though some work areas are more developed than others, the Programme has made notable contributions in every aspect of its scope. Yet, the changes sought by the Programme are extensive and few, if any, countries in the world today (regardless of their stage of development) could comply with the exacting requirements of the Programme within a three- to five-year cycle. Movement towards sustainability and greater equity is challenging under the best of conditions. Achieving such levels of change in a developing country context can be a major struggle. While this suggests that

more time and effort will be needed before existing investments yield their desired effects, the findings of this report also make it clear that doing more of the same will not solve the challenges that UN-REDD and country partners face.

256. Pursuit of the REDD+ agenda and UN involvement in the delivery of such a mechanism have helped to bring global attention to the fundamental importance of forests for the achievement of a sustainable future.

Through their actions and indeed engagement in the global REDD+ agenda, UN partner agencies send a powerful signal that forests are critical for the future of life on Earth. While success is harder to achieve than expected, the absence of UN involvement in the delivery of such an ideal would likely have hampered the political appeal and legitimacy of the proposed framework. In addition, halting the Programme now would indubitably spell the end (or nearly so) of REDD+. Through its strong normative role in setting the standards by which future conservation efforts ought to be measured (e.g., IPO and CSO involvement, social and environmental safeguards) and the basic building blocks of any ulterior mechanism (e.g., green economy transformation, multiple benefits), UN-REDD is helping to define the contours of any future global agreement or actions on forest conservation.

257. UN partner agencies are making progress in terms of “Planning as One” and ensuring joint programming through the SNA-GP, but “Delivery as One” remains a challenge at the country level.

UN partner agencies do not share common accounting and management procedures, internal reporting mechanisms, or decision-making processes. This helps explain – in part, if not in whole – the Evaluation Team’s observations regarding efficiency gaps, such as the absence of harmonised planning, budgeting and delivery mechanisms, complex and overlapping decision-making structures, high transaction costs, and the relatively weak and powerless Secretariat. If solving problems begins by recognising their root cause, agencies can at least begin to plan for a phasing-in approach to strengthening inter-agency coordination and harmonisation.

258. In the current context of economic austerity and subdued interest in supporting global public goods, efforts to increase (let alone sustain) results will remain a challenge. Unless the Programme develops alternative pathways that can limit the dependency of participating countries on continuous REDD+ financing and external technical assistance, the ability of any country to sustain results achieved will be limited. Further, the absence of key players (e.g., agriculture, trade, business, resource industries, commerce) from the relevant discussion fora (whether at the PB or national level) points to a hard road ahead.

259. Viewed as a whole, these conclusions paint a mixed, but optimistic picture. While the REDD+ agenda may be complete, from the standpoint of the UNFCCC, the process clearly remains in a formative stage of development. UN-REDD did not create REDD+: it simply tried to test the principles that underpin the mechanism, and determine how such an approach could be operationalised and scaled up. This evaluation points to numerous issues and lessons that will need to be carefully considered, as the Programme moves towards a new programming cycle for 2016-2020. The findings of this report may appear to be uncompromising, but failure to mitigate the effects of climate change and save the world’s remaining tropical forests is not an option. Only by viewing the overall complexity of the tasks that lie ahead can we begin to imagine solutions to the challenges we face. The following Exhibit (7.1) presents overall ratings for each of the sections identified in the ToR.

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Exhibit 7.1 Overall Ratings

Criterion	Rating	Summary Assessment
Strategic Relevance of the UN-REDD Programme	S	Relevant, but the context is changing, and with this, the future outlook of the current strategy. Moreover, evidence suggests that the underlying driver of deforestation is globalisation – not national policies. Yet, no effort is placed on this side of the equation.
Results and Contributions to Stated Objectives	MU	Progress towards outcomes and achievement of programmatic objectives is slow to develop.
Delivery of Outputs	MS	Relatively effective in delivering outputs.
Effectiveness	MU	Outputs are being achieved, but progress towards REDD+ readiness remains a challenge.
Likelihood of Impact	MU	Though the Programme is helping to develop stronger institutional environments, greater awareness, improved monitoring capacity, stakeholder engagement, and more robust legal instruments (for REDD+), potential impact in terms of reduced emissions is limited at this point.
Sustainability	U	Unless external support is maintained, the likelihood of sustainability is limited.
Up-Scaling	MU	Lessons from projects and implementation efforts are not being adequately captured or scaled up.
Efficiency	U	Harmonisation of budget and decision-making processes are insufficient/unclear.
Cross-Cutting Issues:		
Gender	MS	Contributions are occurring, but more will be needed in the future.
Participation of Local Stakeholders	S	Highly effective in terms of stakeholder engagement and improving opportunities for informed participation. However, participation in local decision-making arenas remains weak, and some stakeholder groups remain underrepresented (e.g., private sector, non-IP populations).
Capacity Development	MS	Efforts are leading to improvements, but capacity substitution, staff turnover and/or leakage remain challenges.
Normative Products	S	Development of a broad set of tools, guidelines, and processes, but implementation remains a challenge.
Factors Affecting Performance:		
Programme Design and Structure	MU	Lack of ToC and the uncertain future of REDD+ financing render the Programme fragile.
Programme Organisation and Management	MU	Improving, but overlaps and the lack of clear roles and responsibilities remain critical.
Human and Financial Resources Administration	U	Unclear management, distribution, allocation, and use of resources.
Cooperation and Partnerships	S	Cooperation with other initiatives is steadily improving – more could be done to leverage joint outcomes.
Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation	MU	Focused on outputs, though efforts to improve this area are ongoing.

Criterion	Rating	Summary Assessment
Overall Programme Performance	MS	<p>The UN-REDD Programme has helped draw global and national attention to the importance of forests. It has given previously marginalised populations a strong voice in relevant decision-making arenas; it is leading countries to engage in policy reforms, increase transparency, and reduce the risk of corruption; it has triggered the search for viable solutions to the problems associated with deforestation; it is supporting the valuation of forests and the services they provide; and it has allowed a broad range of stakeholders to gain experience with an innovative construct that now makes it possible to better articulate the conditionalities of sustainability and how such an agenda should be pursued. Yet, it also faces numerous challenges. In essence, none of the countries involved are achieving REDD+ readiness as planned; national ownership is relatively weak; uncertainty over the prospects of future financing places the sustainability of current investments and the likelihood of impact at risk; the absence of a clear theory of change makes it difficult to assess the underlying logic of the Programme; and the management structure, including decision-making processes, are not clear from the outside. Considering that none of the REDD+ initiatives currently underway are succeeding as planned and all are struggling with unforeseen challenges, this evaluation rates the overall Programme performance as moderately successful, with the assurance that the challenges highlighted herein will be addressed, and the hope that continued investments will yield substantive long-term change.</p>

8. Lessons Learned

260. Following UNEG and OECD-DAC standards and principles, lessons learned represent contributions to general knowledge that can be applied beyond the immediate object of an evaluation and thus bear relevance to a broader range of situations. With respect to the UN-REDD Programme, six key lessons may be drawn from the findings and conclusions presented herein.

261. **Developing and implementing a comprehensive programme for system-wide change is a formidable undertaking. Attempting to achieve such transformations in a relatively short timeframe, and in countries that are struggling with important social, political, and economic challenges is unrealistic.** The technical and procedural requirements of the REDD+ agenda and the UN-REDD Programme in particular are extremely challenging. The fact that no participating country has yet achieved its readiness targets within the allotted timeframe and budget is not simply an indication of the Programme's ambitious nature. It suggests that the mechanism itself may be overly complex and more importantly, that social transformation is not something that can be purchased. Refining the contours of the current strategy and adding resources to the task is unlikely to lead to better results. In this sense, renewing UN-REDD's core mandate to develop and test alternative formulae for achieving emission reductions and improved socio-economic outcomes appears more crucial than ever.

262. **The development of an explicit and clear theory of change, which should be adaptable over time, is a critical requirement for continuous improvement, sound programme management, and effective stakeholder engagement.** A ToC provides a means of testing assumptions and validating causal linkages between activities, outputs, and outcomes, thus yielding an adaptive framework for measuring and achieving change. The absence of such a framework in UN-REDD was a critical limiting factor in developing a shared understanding of the design, purpose, results, and decisions of the Programme.

263. **Achieving sustainability is a long-term process, and no single policy instrument can solve the myriad problems associated with enduring resource dilemmas.** Though the solutions-base of the Programme is still at an early stage of development (e.g., green economy transformation, policy reforms), the underlying assumption remains that financial incentives will drive change. Yet, complex adaptive systems require complex adaptive solutions, and in like fashion, social-ecological diversity can only be met with institutional diversity.

264. **Quick wins are critical for demonstrating that positive change is possible.** In the absence of forthcoming solutions and/or collective actions to identify and trial testable hypotheses, the motivation to engage in prolonged preparatory efforts (e.g., REDD+ readiness) can be expected to dissipate. A mixed implementation

scheme that engages stakeholders early on in the search for viable solutions, while continuing to strengthen capacities for full deployment, is more likely to sustain the commitment of key stakeholders than a process that is heavily front-loaded. The phased approach to REDD+ implementation has so far shown to be a weak attractor for political and economic engagement.

265. Early and sustained stakeholder engagement is critical for developing mutual trust, commitment, and the willingness to engage in collective actions. The UN-REDD Programme is recognised for its critical role in advancing the rights of minorities and historically disenfranchised populations in REDD+ processes. However, solving persistent dilemmas also requires sustained opportunities to bridge social divides. Collective action crucially depends upon building trust and commitment across social, political, and economic boundaries. Involving all stakeholder groups, including policy-makers and the private sector, in the search for solutions is fundamental.

266. Enabling principles for sustainable resource governance and institutional change are fairly well documented. Building on the experience and lessons of both past and present efforts to achieve sustainable outcomes can only increase the Programme's value proposition¹⁸⁹. The repertoire of actions that can be used to improve social-ecological outcomes is considerable. While understandably focused on REDD+ readiness, the lessons of both previous and current initiatives and relevant sources of scholarship (e.g., sustainable forest management and governance, conservation, poverty alleviation, integrated agriculture, rural development, structural reforms, or risk management, to name but a few) have yet to be fully incorporated in the Programme's set of tools for improving emission reductions, increasing socio-economic outcomes, and strengthening the resilience of UN-REDD to changes in the local or global environments.

¹⁸⁹ This is the unique value the Programme can offer to its stakeholders compared to other initiatives – it combines the Programme's value added and comparative advantage.

9. Recommendations

267. The following recommendations emerge from the findings and conclusions presented in the previous sections. They were developed on the basis of input provided by survey and interview respondents, feedback from external reviewers, and lessons drawn from relevant sources of scholarship. To strengthen rigour and relevance, supporting sources of evidence (i.e., findings) are referenced and priorities for action are identified as appropriate.

9.1 Review the Purpose and Theory of UN-REDD

Recommendation 1: **The Policy Board should re-examine the overall purpose and strategic objectives of the UN-REDD Programme, to address both the significant challenges that REDD+ faces and the dynamic context within which it operates.**

268. This recommendation relates to Findings: 1, 5, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 28, 29, and 30.

269. The context within which UN-REDD operates has changed considerably since the Programme was launched. Reliable financing opportunities have yet to materialise; the REDD+ agenda is proving more difficult to achieve; and the meaning of REDD+ readiness and the objectives of the Programme in particular are unclear to many. While the Warsaw Framework provides the final elements of the negotiated REDD+ process, it does not explain how best to achieve emission reductions. As such, UN-REDD now finds itself at a crossroads, and decision-makers need to determine how measurable and verifiable emission reductions can be realistically and permanently achieved in a dynamic and uncertain world. The need to produce a revised strategy for the 2016-2020 period provides an opportunity to engage in such reflection.

270. Drawing on the findings of this report, the development of a more robust and resilient Programme should:

1. Support country-driven solutions that incorporate a mix of performance and non-performance-based approaches (i.e., solutions that are not reliant on compensatory incentives or rewards);
2. Tackle the underlying factors that condition land use and land cover change at local and global levels (e.g., agrarian and rural development policies, tenure, economic policies, global supply chains, trade agreements, legal and illegal market demands, etc.).

Recommendation 2: **In consultation with country partners and other stakeholders, the UN-REDD Management Group should develop a robust Theory of Change that explains what the Programme aims to accomplish and how it will achieve such ends (i.e., link theory to action).**

271. This recommendation relates to Findings: 6, 14, 24, and 30.

272. In alignment with the suggested re-examination of the Programme's purpose and objectives, the MG – in consultation with other stakeholders – should develop a ToC that explains what the Programme aims to achieve and how. In the end, the Programme theory should aim to strengthen results-based programming and implementation by identifying (i) the Programme's objectives, result expectations, and performance indicators, as well as (ii) the drivers and assumptions that underlie the overall logic of results.

273. In support of this process, the MG (with PB guidance) should seek to:

1. **Clarify the purpose and rationale of existing programming components** (i.e., SNA-GP and NP) with the aim of strengthening complementarities;
2. **Revise the scope of the Programme** (focus and reach) and implementation modalities (e.g., hiring more national/regional staff and technical experts);

3. **Validate assumptions and intended results** with key development partners and possibly an external panel of experts that could contribute objective advice and perspectives on how best to achieve development results and impact.

Recommendation 3: **UN partner agencies should further their collaboration with the WB's FCPF with a view to fully harmonise standards and approaches, eliminate the duplication of effort, and strengthen joint delivery on the basis of core agency competencies.**

274. This recommendation relates to Findings: 4, 6, and 31.

275. As the two main multilateral organisations for REDD+ implementation, UN-REDD and FCPF should strengthen programming coherence and complementarities, with a view to act as one programme in the mid-term future. At the global level, the two initiatives should develop joint strategies around areas of core competencies. At the country level, this would imply improved coordination and implementation through established national government structures, where possible.

276. In the short term, the Programme should consider ways to strengthen its strategic alignment with FCPF, including the development of collaborative work plans that highlight areas of complementarity and operational integration.

277. In the medium to long term, UN partner agencies should work with the FCPF to strengthen coordination across the broad range of REDD+ initiatives to increase efficiency gains and leverage joint results. This could include joint planning and implementation at the country level, stronger overlaps between governance structures, and the sharing of resources for country delivery, as per existing UNDP-FCPF modalities.

9.2 Create Enabling Environments

Recommendation 4: **UN partner agencies should work with partner countries to strengthen country ownership over all aspects of national REDD+ efforts, including the development of a more bottom-up approach.**

278. This recommendation relates to Findings: 2, 21, and 29.

279. Strong national ownership over REDD+ implementation is critical for the development and enforcement of legal and normative instruments, including changes in policies that directly or indirectly affect the maintenance of forest resource systems. Within the current design, nearly 60% of the budget is delivered by the core operations of the UN partner agencies via the SNA-GP. Although many of these resources are used for country-specific support, the rationale for such a distribution is unclear.

280. Decentralising control (financial and technical) would help strengthen national leadership and ownership over the REDD+ agenda, ultimately improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme delivery through local and regional decision-making fora and greater reliance on field-based expertise.

281. To this end, the Programme should consider the following actions:

1. **Give full priority to national and regional experts wherever feasible;**
2. **Use existing structures or coordination mechanisms** to implement and scale up REDD+ across levels of government;
3. **Strengthen country capacity to coordinate REDD+ investments**, using national financial management and accountability mechanisms, where feasible (e.g., UNDP's NEX approach);
4. **Solicit national contributions**, whether in-kind or through dedicated budget lines, in alignment with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness;

5. **Apply strict subsidiarity principles**, by delegating decision-making authority and operational management to the level closest to the field, while applying basic principles for robust resource governance such as downward accountability and the decentralisation of collective decision-making processes.

Recommendation 5: **As part of the revision to the Programme’s Strategy, UN partner agencies and participating countries should place greater emphasis on integrated cross-sectoral approaches to REDD+ and should advocate for higher-level political support and capacity building across national government entities.**

282. This recommendation relates to Findings: 21 and 29.

283. Given the importance of creating enabling environments for REDD+ implementation, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening institutional coherence and capacity across levels of government (vertically). Until now, UN-REDD efforts have largely centred on the national level (e.g., awareness-raising among national ministries, strengthening national coordination processes, multi-stakeholder engagement, and so on), while outreach to lower levels of government has so far been subdued, when not absent. Yet, the ability of central governments to monitor, enforce, and adjudicate rules for the protection and/or maintenance of forest ecosystems are notoriously weak in many developing countries.¹⁹⁰ Without comparable efforts to harmonise institutional capacities across levels government – from community councils to district- and provincial-level authorities –, successful implementation of REDD+ efforts will likely remain a challenge.¹⁹¹

284. Pursuant to Recommendation 4 (point 5, more specifically), UN partner agencies, in collaboration with partner countries, should develop implementation strategies that explicitly recognise and aim to strengthen institutional capacities across levels of government, giving priority to the provinces or districts selected for pilot initiatives or investments through other REDD+ initiatives (e.g., FIP, FCPF). Shifting the emphasis from national-level programming to cross-scale and jurisdictional-level efforts¹⁹² (using South-South cooperation and national/regional experts, where possible) is also more likely to create avenues for credible policy alternatives, while allowing crucial bottom-up experimentation and demonstration.

Recommendation 6: **UN partner agencies and country partners should initiate joint actions to address the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, by tackling issues and engaging relevant stakeholders (especially the private sector) early in the REDD+ readiness phase.**

285. This recommendation relates to Findings: 6, 7, 17, and 30.

286. The findings of this report suggest that a more proactive stance to addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation needs to be pursued from the onset of national programming efforts, including engagement with actors, sectors, and decision-makers that directly or indirectly affect land use decisions. “Liberating REDD+ from the confines of the forestry sector – and from a definition limited to payments for verified emission reductions [i.e., conditionality-based incentives] – is also a pre-condition for addressing the many extra-sectoral drivers of deforestation.”¹⁹³ As suggested in Recommendation 1 above, concerted efforts should be made to explicitly involve agribusiness, extractive industries, and logging operators in the REDD+ process, including sector representatives at the ministry level. Change is unlikely to happen without leveraging the support of key veto players in public and private sectors.

287. Building transformational coalitions that include political, economic, and civil-society leaders is crucial to moving the REDD+ agenda forward, particularly at the national level.¹⁹⁴ In this sense, creating a well-informed

¹⁹⁰ Larson et al. (2010); Ostrom (1990, 2010a, 2010b); Repetto and Gillis (1988); Ribot et al. (2006); Ribot and Larson (2012)

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Seymour and Angelsen (2012, p. 331)

¹⁹³ Seymour and Angelsen (2012, p. 327)

¹⁹⁴ Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2014

and active constituency for reform should be explored in more detail, as part of the revision of the Programme's Strategy. Prioritising this pathway and situating REDD+ more firmly within the broader sustainable development agenda are critical if REDD+ is to achieve its intended impact.

Recommendation 7: The PB should make tenure a priority area for Programme interventions, building on existing initiatives and expertise at the national, regional, and global levels. To this end, the Programme should support country efforts to clarify the land and resource rights of forest-dependent populations, including carbon rights and the related distribution of benefits.

288. This recommendation relates to Findings: 2, 7, 18, 21, 23, and 26.

289. Research shows that securing the resource rights of forest-dependent communities can have a dramatic effect on the long-term maintenance of forest resource systems and the socio-economic wellbeing of forest user groups.¹⁹⁵ Clarifying and enforcing land tenure is critical for the achievement of sustainable outcomes,¹⁹⁶ and failure to do so will invariably weaken the potential impact of REDD+ altogether.¹⁹⁷ Building on the experience of country partners, the capacities of UN partner agencies, and the contributions of the Independent Advisory Group on Forests, Rights and Climate Change (IAG), UN-REDD should therefore make resource rights a priority area for programmatic interventions.

290. To this end, the Programme should support country efforts to: (i) strengthen land and resource rights pertaining to the use, management, and exclusivity of benefit flows for resource-dependent communities; (ii) clarify the legal and operational meaning of carbon rights at national and sub-national levels; and (iii) define the ownership and distribution of eventual REDD+ benefits.

9.3 Address Cross-Cutting Issues

Recommendation 8: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should continue efforts to streamline social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, especially with regards to benefit sharing mechanisms, and support country efforts to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

291. This recommendation relates to Findings: 3, 7, 23, 25, 26, and 32.

292. Pursuant to Decision 12/COP 19 regarding the need to provide information on how all of the safeguards referred to in decision 1/COP 16, appendix I, paragraph 2, have been addressed and respected before participating countries can receive results-based payments, responsible units within the UN partner agencies should:

1. Continue efforts to streamline SES;
2. Clarify how social and environmental safeguards ought to be used to support the sharing of REDD+ benefits;
3. Support country efforts to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

Recommendation 9: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should intensify efforts to mainstream gender equity across the Programme, providing sufficient resources and relevant training to ensure a more comprehensive and systematic approach.

293. This recommendation relates to Finding: 22.

¹⁹⁵ Ostrom (1990, 1999a, 1999b); Ostrom et al. (2002); Poteete et al. (2010)

¹⁹⁶ Agrawal et al. (2011); Bray (2013); Duchelle et al. (2014); Larson et al. (2010); Larson et al. (2013); William D. Sunderlin et al. (2014); White (2011)

¹⁹⁷ Boer (2013); Duchelle et al. (2014); Naughton-Treves and Wendland (2014); William D. Sunderlin et al. (2014); Visseren-Hamakers et al. (2012)

294. The implementation of gender mainstreaming activities at the country level is not taking place in a cohesive and systematic way. Attention to integrating gender concerns, especially at the local level, will be important if the Programme is to better address the drivers of deforestation. To support gender mainstreaming, the Programme can:

1. **Appoint and adequately resource a gender focal point in each of the regions;**
2. **Adopt equity and rights-based approaches to programming;**
3. **Provide training opportunities for Programme staff and stakeholders;**
4. **Build on existing contributions from the UN and development partners.**

Recommendation 10: Country partners and UN partner agencies should strive to ensure the fair and verifiable representation of CSOs, IPs, and other forest-dependent populations in NP decision-making processes.

295. This recommendation relates to Findings: 2, 3, 7, and 23.

296. The UN-REDD Programme is credited with advancing a rights-based approach to REDD+ implementation, resulting in the unprecedented participation of IPs and CSO representatives in the global decision-making arena. Though similar developments are occurring at the country level, participation remains heavily slanted towards consultation, as opposed to active involvement in deliberation and decision-making processes. To this end, country partners and UN partner agencies should aim to strengthen the involvement of civil society in NP processes, as well as clarify the respective constituencies of CSOs and IPOs in a bid to further mutual trust and commitment within the relevant decision-making arenas.

9.4 Clarify Programme Governance and Management

Recommendation 11: The Policy Board and UN partner agencies should revise and simplify the UN-REDD governance structure to reduce overlap, strengthen the strategic and substantive functions of the PB, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the MG and Secretariat.

297. This recommendation relates to Findings: 15, 32, and 33.

298. The lack of clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of the MG, SG, and Secretariat has been identified as a serious drawback to the achievement of transparent, efficient, and effective management of the Programme. Likewise, the role and contributions of the Policy Board are unclear to most external observers and questioned by Programme staff and country members alike. Further, among the critical issues mentioned in this evaluation, questions were raised regarding the meaning and implications of a “country-driven” or “country-led” Programme; the limited contributions of the SG; the dominant role of the MG relative to countries in PB processes; and ambiguities relating to the Secretariat’s functions and contributions. To simplify decision-making processes, reduce transaction costs, and increase management efficiencies, the Policy Board and UN partner agencies should aim to:

1. **Clarify the boundaries of country-driven modalities** so as to limit confusion on the respective roles and responsibilities of UN partner agencies and those of country partners, in terms of setting programming priorities and making decisions relative to the use of Programme funds;
2. **Disaggregate the PB’s knowledge-sharing function from the Board’s mandate to provide fiduciary oversight and strategic guidance to the Programme;**
3. **Revise the Terms of Reference of the different UN-REDD management structures** to eliminate overlap, clarify roles and responsibilities, assign decision-making authority to the different bodies (including the Secretariat), and ultimately strengthen the Programme’s capacity to “Deliver as One”;

4. **Assign NP management oversight to country partners, where feasible.** Pursuant to Recommendation 2 and existing standards for risk assessment, NP management should be assigned to country partners, where possible. To this end, UN partner agencies, REDD+ implementation partners (e.g., FCPF), and participating countries should consider developing a single-form reporting requirement for all relevant stakeholder groups.

Recommendation 12: **The UN-REDD Secretariat should continue efforts to develop and implement results-based planning, monitoring, and reporting tools across the breadth of the Programme, to support adaptive management needs, report achievements to both internal and external audiences, and draw lessons from implementation.**

299. This recommendation relates to Findings: 5, 13, 19, and 34.

300. The Programme’s narrow donor base and the challenges it faces in terms of reporting on its accomplishments and demonstrating value-for-money point to the need for more effective monitoring and reporting functions. Complementary to the development of a thorough performance management system, UN-REDD should consider appointing a dedicated monitoring officer and/or independent monitor to assess the delivery and implementation of the Programme against planned outputs, as well as assess the adequacy of its internal monitoring system. To this end, monitoring should be used to: (i) provide feedback on whether outputs are being achieved as planned; (ii) assess the validity of the assumptions that underpin the Programme’s theory of change; (iii) inform senior managers and Policy Board members on whether the Programme is on track, relative to stated objectives; (iv) identify foreseeable challenges or difficulties; and (v) provide a strong baseline for future evaluations.

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Appendix III Informants

	Informant Name	Title	Organisation
1	Altrel, Dan O.	Forestry Officer	UN-REDD, FAO
2	Alverson, Keith	Chief, CC Adaptation and Terrestrial Ecosystems	UNEP (Kenya)
3	Aquino, Lucy		WWF (Paraguay)
4	Arévalo, Marcelo		Fundación Guyra (Paraguay)
5	Atallah, Mirey	Senior Officer – National Programmes	UN-REDD Programme Secretariat
6	Atanda Botikale, Gilbert	Chargé de Programme UN-REDD/FAO	FAO (DRC)
7	Attafuah, Elsie	Technical Advisor	UN-REDD, UNDP (Zambia)
8	Augustin, Mpoly	Société civile congolaise	DRC
9	Balbuena, Cesar		WWF (Paraguay)
10	Benoist, Etienne	Conseiller	World Bank (DRC)
11	Bietta, Frederica		PNG
12	Bobia, Joseph	Coordonnateur national	Réseau ressource naturelle (DRC)
13	Bocucci, Mario	Head of the Secretariat	UN-REDD Programme Secretariat (Switzerland)
14	Bodart, Catherine	International Consultant	UN-REDD, FAO (Italy)
15	Bodegom, Arend-Jan van	Senior Advisor, Governance of ecosystems	Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University (The Netherlands)
16	Boketsu Bofili, Jean-Paul	Economiste national	UNDP (DRC)
17	Botomba, Floribert	Chef de projet, point focal REDD+	WWF (DRC)
18	Boyle, Tim	Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, REDD+	UNDP, Bangkok (Thailand)
19	Bucki, Michael	Policy Officer	European Commission
20	Bradley, Amanda	Former Community Advisor	Oddar Meanchey Project, PACT (Cambodia)
21	Brewster, Julian	REDD+ M&E Advisor	PACT (Cambodia)
22	Carino, Joji	Director	Forest Peoples Programme
23	Casco, Gustavo	Environmental Information Systems REDD	SEAM (Paraguay)
24	Chiú, Marco		Andes-Amazon Conservation Initiative, IRG-USAID (Ecuador), <u>Now</u> : UNDP (Panamá)
25	Christophersen, Tim	Senior Programme Officer	Forests and Climate Change – UNEP (Kenya)
26	Clairs, Tim	Principle Policy and Technical Advisor	UN-REDD, UNDP (Switzerland)
27	Clements, Tom	Former Country Director	WCS (Cambodia)
28	Conrad, Kevin	Ambassador	PNG
29	Cordero, Doris	Forest and Climate Change Officer	IUCN South America (Ecuador)
30	Cordovéz, Belen	Sub-Coordinator, Result Area 2 (Participation and Coordination)	UN-REDD Joint National Programme (Ecuador)
31	Crete, Philippe	Forestry Officer	UN-REDD, FAO (Italy)
32	Cueva, Kelvin	Sub-Coordinator, Result Area 1 (MRV)	UN-REDD Joint National Programme (Ecuador)

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	Informant Name	Title	Organisation
33	Dahiru, Salisu	Director, National REDD+ Coordinator	Federal Ministry of Environment (Nigeria)
34	de Koning, Free	Technical Director	Conservation International (Ecuador), <u>Now:</u> WRI, Washington, USA
35	del Carmen García, María	REDD+ Specialist	Ministry of Environment (Ecuador)
36	Dijk, Kees van	Senior Scientist	Tropenbos International (Netherlands)
37	Diment, Alex	Technical Advisor	Seima Biodiversity Conservation Project, WCS, (Cambodia)
38	Dinu, Adriana	Deputy Exec. Director	UNDP-GEF
39	Durbin, Joanna	Director	Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance
40	Eloma Ikoleki, Henri-Paul	National Project Manager	FAO (DRC)
41	Englert, Fabian	Climate Change Officer	GIZ (Ecuador)
42	Enters, Thomas	Regional Coordinator	UN-REDD, UNEP, Bangkok (Thailand)
43	Eriksson, Helena	Natural Resources Officer	UN-REDD Programme Secretariat (Switzerland)
44	Espinosa, Consuelo	National Coordinator	UN-REDD Joint National Programme (Ecuador)
45	Everaert, Koen	Attaché, Natural Resources Management and Climate Change	EU Delegation (Cambodia)
46	Fach, Estelle	Programme Analyst	UN-REDD, UNDP (Switzerland)
47	Fehse, Jan	Director	Value for Nature Consulting (UK)
48	Formo, Rannveig K.	High Executive Officer	Norwegian Ministry of the Environment (Norway)
49	Fortuna, Serena	Forestry Officer	UN-REDD, FAO (Italy, <u>Now:</u> Panamá)
50	Fox, Julian	MRV Advisor	FAO (Zambia)
51	Fuentenebro, Pablo	Associate Programme Officer	UNEP (Kenya)
52	Ganapin, Delfin	Global Manager	GEF Small Grants Programme
53	Gari, Josep	UN-REDD Africa Region	UNDP
54	Glemarec, Yannick	Executive Coordinator	MPTF (UNDP)
55	Glinski, Wojtek	Team Lead, Review, Methods and Training	UNFCCC
56	Gauto, Diana	REDD+ Focal Point, Member of UN-REDD Technical Committee	SEAM (Paraguay)
57	Gerard, Veronique	Environment Expert	UNDP (Paraguay)
58	Gerrand, Adam	Natural Resources Officer	Climate Change Coordinator & REDD+ – FAO (Italy)
59	Gerrard, Christopher D.	Lead Evaluation Officer	IEG World Bank
60	Gichu, Alfred	National REDD+ Coordinator	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (Kenya)
61	Gray, Ian	Senior Environment Specialist	GEF
62	Greenwalt, Julie	Multiple Benefits/Safeguards	UNEP (Kenya)
63	Guedez, Pierre Yves	Regional REDD+ Coordinator	UNDP (Panama)
64	Gunnar Marklund, Lars	Meso American Forest Coordinator	FAO (Panama)
65	Hachileka, Excellent	Climate Change Policy Specialist	UNDP (Zambia)
66	Henry, Matieu	Forestry Officer	UN-REDD Programme – FAO (Italy)
67	Ikwo, Onyemowo	Programme Analyst	UN-REDD Programme Secretariat (Switzerland)

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	Informant Name	Title	Organisation
68	IP Representatives	Three Community Facilitators	Seima Biodiversity Project (Cambodia)
69	Iversen, Peter	Technical Advisor	UN-REDD, UNDP (Cambodia)
70	Jaen, Eustorgio	ANAM	UN-REDD National Programme (Panama)
71	Jara, Luis Fernando	Director	PROFAFOR (Ecuador)
72	Jaramillo, Gabriel	Programme Specialist	UNDP (Ecuador)
73	Jintiach, Juan Carlos	Coordinator of International Cooperation, Focal Point for REDD	Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), (Ecuador)
74	Johnson, Gordon	Regional Team Leader, Environment and Energy	UNDP, Bangkok (Thailand)
75	Jonckheere, Inge	Forestry Officer	UN-REDD, FAO (Italy)
76	Jorgensen, Ivar, T.	Policy Director, Forests	NORAD
77	Kabamba, Félicien	Coordonnateur national	GTCR (DRC)
78	Kabengele, Victor	Coordonnateur national	CN-REDD (DRC)
79	Kaimowitz, David	Director, SD	Ford Foundation (Mexico)
80	Kamal, Uy	Deputy Director	Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environment (Cambodia)
81	Kasaro, Deuteronomy	National REDD+ Coordinator	Department of Forestry (Zambia)
82	Kasulu, Vincent	General Secretary of the Environment and Nature Conservation	Ministry of Environment (DRC)
83	Katán, Tuntiak	Indigenous Peoples Delegate to National REDD Roundtable	Confederation of Amazon Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (CONFENIAE; Ecuador)
84	Kaywale, Ilitongo	Energy Officer, Biomass Utilisation	Department of Energy (Zambia)
85	Keagan, Dearbhla	Community-based REDD	UNDP (USA)
86	Kelly, Lauren	Senior Evaluation Officer	IEG World Bank (USA)
87	Khare, Arvind	Executive Director	RRI
88	Kjorven, Olav	Special Advisor	UNDP (USA)
89	Kumar, Pushpam	Chief, Ecosystem Services Economics	UNEP (Kenya)
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Appendix IV The Evolution of REDD – An Overview

The details of a mechanism for REDD+ continue to be the subject of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).⁽¹⁾ A final international mechanism for REDD+ is yet to be in place and operating at scale, and the comprehensive financial arrangements for full-scale implementation have not yet been met. Despite this, in recognition of the need for urgent action if reducing deforestation is going to have a meaningful effect in reducing emissions and mitigating climate change, REDD+ initiatives have already been instigated outside the auspices of the UNFCCC, both independently and in anticipation of a formal REDD+ mechanism (voluntary market)⁽²⁾. In particular, a number of international initiatives have resulted from UNFCCC negotiations, calling for REDD+ demonstration activities, including pilot projects and strategic development on REDD.⁽³⁾

The story of REDD so far, however, will specifically focus on the details of negotiations regarding REDD+ within the UNFCCC.

The Kyoto Protocol

Although REDD was formalised as an idea at the thirteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali, 2007, and in its current form, is considered a success of COP-16 in Cancun (2010), its roots extend back to the adoption of the [Kyoto Protocol](#) in 1997. Within the context of emissions limitation and reduction commitments in Article 2, the Kyoto Protocol refers to the protection and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, sustainable forest management practices and afforestation and reforestation activities.⁽⁴⁾ The inclusion of the above practices was restricted, as it was only afforestation and reforestation activities that were considered eligible for generating credits under the Clean Development Mechanism.

Despite the inclusion of deforestation as an important land use issue, confusion existed over the role of [Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry](#) (LULUCF) activities in countries' commitments under Kyoto, and there was a significant lack of information and technology to guide the measurement, reporting, and verification of such activities.⁽⁴⁾

COP-7, Marrakesh, 2001

At COP-7 in 2001, it was decided, as part of the Marrakesh Accords, that only afforestation and reforestation qualified as LULUCF activities capable of generating carbon credits under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol (Decision 17/CP.17).⁽⁵⁾ Reducing deforestation or forest degradation was excluded from the decision due to concerns of leakage.⁽⁴⁾ Leakage is the idea that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is unlikely to achieve a net reduction in emissions, due to the fact that whilst reduced in one area, the same pressures may present themselves elsewhere, as the emissions producing activity is merely relocated.⁽⁴⁾ Other concerns originally raised over REDD included issues to do with: permanence, the idea that carbon is only ever temporarily stored and at some point is always re-released into the atmosphere; additionality, the notion that identifying any improvements in emissions reductions is complicated by complexities of predicting what eventualities would have occurred in the absence of the REDD project; and measurement, difficulties in accurately ascertaining the levels of carbon stored in soils and trees.⁽⁶⁾

COP-11, Montreal, 2005

The notion of avoided deforestation as an important climate change mitigation mechanism then did not re-enter negotiations until COP-11 in Montreal, 2005. Throughout 2005, there had been increasing attention paid to the individual roles of countries at different developmental stages, in efforts to combat climate change. The European Commission laid the foundations for a climate change strategy with measures targeting both industrialised and developing countries. Given the respective contributions of countries to global greenhouse gas emissions, the decreasing share attributable to developed countries within the EU, along with the growing role of developing countries in emissions generation, in February 2005, the European Commission adopted a communication entitled “[Winning the battle against global climate change](#)” (SEC(2005)180) (COM/2005/0035), recognising the need to broaden country participation in order to achieve the global action required. Despite their growing share of emissions, developing countries expressed concerns that imposing reduction targets could hamper their economic development. Meanwhile, some developed countries, such as the U.S., argued that exclusion of developing countries from commitments not only undermined the environmental effectiveness of an agreement but also jeopardised their own industry’s competitiveness. From either viewpoint, the benefits of positive incentives that would permit developing countries to participate in emissions reduction efforts whilst maintaining progress towards their wider development goals were clear. As well as appreciating the varying capacities of countries on the basis of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities,” the communication highlighted the importance of including more policy areas, in particular emphasising the need for a fresh approach to halting deforestation.⁽⁷⁾

That year also saw the formation of the [Coalition for Rainforest Nations](#). Led by Papua New Guinea, the Coalition came together as a collaboration aiming to reconcile forest stewardship with economic development⁽⁴⁾ and highlight and remedy the exclusion of reducing emissions from deforestation from carbon markets under the Kyoto Protocol. COP-11 saw the Coalition act through the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in requesting that “reducing emissions from deforestation [RED] in developing countries and approaches to stimulate action” be included in the agenda. It was proposed that, in generating credits from RED activities, developing countries could gain access to carbon markets that would incentivise the protection of forests by making their worth greater in their carbon value than from industries requiring their destruction.⁽⁸⁾ The issue received extensive support, and Parties generally agreed on the issue’s importance in the context of climate change mitigation.⁽⁹⁾ Governments subsequently agreed to a two-year work programme⁽¹⁰⁾ and agreed to initiate consideration of the issue at the twenty-fourth SBSTA ([Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice](#)) session in Bonn, May 2006. This would involve both consideration of the Parties’ views and recommendations on RED-related issues with a specific focus on scientific, technical, and methodological issues.⁽¹¹⁾

COP-13, Bali, 2007

In 2007, given that forest degradation plays a more threatening role than deforestation in central Africa, a group of countries within the [Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale](#) (COMIFAC) proposed that emissions reduction from forest degradation be included also.⁽¹²⁾ Previously, RED had omitted inclusion of degradation due to a number of technological challenges associated with the accurate measuring and reporting of emissions reductions from reduced degradation.⁽¹³⁾

A key milestone was subsequently achieved at COP-13. The two previous years, following COP-11 in Montreal, had seen extensive discussion and deliberation by the SBSTA on policy, scientific, technical, and methodological issues, culminating in a decision at COP-13 in Bali, 2007. The Bali Action Plan, under Decision 1/CP.13, outlined a commitment of the Parties to address enhanced action on climate change mitigation, including the consideration of “policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role

of conservation, sustainable management of forests and forest carbon stocks in developing countries.”⁽¹⁴⁾ The Bali Action Plan also established a subsidiary body to conduct the process, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA). The AWG-LCA was to conduct a comprehensive process to enable full, effective, and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action,⁽¹⁵⁾ with the aim of completing its work in 2009 and presenting its outcomes at COP-15.⁽¹⁴⁾

A further decision (Decision 2/CP.13): “Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action” was adopted.⁽¹⁴⁾ Whilst the Decision itself in referring explicitly to deforestation maintains the limited scope of RED, it importantly acknowledges that “forest degradation also leads to emissions, and needs to be addressed when reducing emissions from deforestation” and affirms “the urgent need to take meaningful action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries” (REDD).⁽¹⁴⁾

This decision provided a mandate for several elements and actions by Parties relating to RED, including: (i) strengthening and support of current efforts; (ii) capacity building, technical assistance, and technological transfer to support methodological and technical needs of developing countries; (iii) identifying and undertaking activities to address the drivers of deforestation, enhance forest carbon stocks via the sustainable management of forests; and (iv) mobilising resources to support the above.⁽¹⁶⁾ This decision paved the way for several current programmes to support the preparation of countries for REDD+ (REDD-readiness), including the UN-REDD Programme.

COP-14, Poznań, 2008

At COP-14 in Poznań, the SBSTA reported on the outcomes of its programme of work on methodological issues associated with REDD policy approaches and incentives.⁽¹⁶⁾ In its report, in response to pressure from some developing countries, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks countries was upgraded so as to receive equal emphasis as deforestation and forest degradation.⁽¹⁶⁾ This saw the early progression of REDD to REDD+⁽⁴⁾ and recognised that conservation, the sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks play as equally an important role in emissions reductions through protecting carbon stocks, as preventing deforestation and forest degradation.

The aim of expanding the scope of REDD to REDD+ was to prevent the development of a mechanism that would reward only historically high emitters in favour of one that could incentivise regions with low deforestation rates to keep them as such. The “+” improved the potential of REDD to achieve co-benefits such as poverty alleviation, improved governance, biodiversity conservation, and protection of ecosystem services.⁽¹⁷⁾

COP-15, Copenhagen, 2009

The Copenhagen Accord (Decision 2/CP.15) explicitly recognised the crucial role of both REDD and the emissions removals provided by forests and agreed on the need to incentivise related activities through the establishment of a REDD+ mechanism that would aid in mobilising financial resources from developed countries. It was stated that “scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding as well as improved access” would be provided to developing countries for improved mitigation, including for REDD+. To this end, developed countries committed to providing resources approaching USD 30 billion for adaptation and mitigation for 2010-2012 (of “fast-start finance”) and jointly mobilising USD 100 billion by 2020 for transparent, meaningful mitigation actions in developing countries. This funding was expected to come from public, private, bilateral, and multilateral sources.⁽¹⁸⁾

Furthermore, discussions included a decision (Decision 4/CP.15) requesting Parties to identify the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation resulting in emissions along with means to address them, activities that reduce emissions, increase removals and stabilise carbon stocks, and to use the most recent IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) guidelines to estimate and monitor forest-related greenhouse gas emissions and removals and changes in forest cover.⁽¹⁸⁾ Prior to the development of the Copenhagen Accord, negotiators, within the AWG-LCA, worked on a more detailed REDD+ agenda in the hope it would guide Parties undertaking REDD+ discussions.⁽¹⁹⁾ This decision text identified a number of safeguards as a means of preventing negative social or environmental outcomes of REDD+ activities and also highlighted the need for robust measurement, reporting, and verification of changes in emissions resulting from REDD+ activities.⁽²⁰⁾ Despite considerable progress and consensus on these issues, no formal agreement on REDD+ was reached.

COP-16, Cancun, 2010

Following the formulation of a decision on REDD+ in Copenhagen, COP-16 in Cancun saw its adoption with only minor modification. The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16) affirmed that “in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties, Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss.”⁽²¹⁾ Parties established a [technology mechanism](#) to facilitate the advancement and transfer of technology to support adaptation and mitigation actions, including the full range of REDD+ activities, in developing countries.

The Cancun Agreements (Paragraph 73 of Decision 1/CP.16) also decided on a phased approach to REDD+ implementation with the following steps: (i) the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures, and capacity building; (ii) the implementation of national policies, measures, strategies or action plans for further capacity building, technology development and transfer, and results-based demonstration activities, evolving into; (iii) results-based actions to be fully measured, reported, and verified.

The same Decision identified the systems and information needed to partake in REDD+ activities by **requesting** that developing country Parties support REDD+ activities, according to their respective capabilities, through developing: (i) a national strategy or action plan; (ii) a national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level; (iii) a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for REDD+ activities; and (iv) a system for providing information on how REDD+ safeguards (to avoid negative social and environmental outcomes) are being addressed and adhered to.⁽²¹⁾

Finally, the Agreements (Paragraph 72 of Decision 1/CP.16) highlighted the need to address related issues by requesting that Parties, when developing their national action plans or strategies for REDD+, address “the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards,” whilst ensuring effective and full participation of the relevant stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities.⁽²¹⁾

The [Green Climate Fund](#) (GCF) was established in Cancun, and it was decided that it would be designated as “an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention” (Paragraph 102 of Decision 1/CP.16). Despite significant ground gained, a major gap remained in that there was no progress relating to what mechanisms would provide the funding for REDD+ and decisions on market-based funding mechanisms were left to be decided at COP-17 in Durban, in 2011.⁽²²⁾

COP-17, Durban, 2011

Outcomes for REDD+ from COP-17 at Durban related to financing options, safeguards, and reference levels.⁽²³⁾

With regards to financing, in Decision 2/CP.17, it was agreed that results-based financing for developing country Parties may come from a variety of sources, including public, private, bilateral, and multilateral. Notably, within this decision, it was considered that market-based approaches could be developed as a means to support results-based actions.⁽²⁴⁾ The decision, however, failed to clarify a number of issues. It neglected to identify the specific meaning of market-based approaches, whether sub-national activities could be supported by markets, or whether bilateral or non-convention-developed mechanisms would be recognised by the UNFCCC. It also failed to specify whether any market-based mechanism would relate to those under the UNFCCC and future commitments under a second commitment phase of the Kyoto Protocol or a new legally binding agreement post-Kyoto.⁽²³⁾ The Decision invited Parties to submit their views on ways to finance results-based activities in order for the AWG-LCA to consider these at the next SBSTA meeting.⁽²⁴⁾

Relating to safeguards, discussions focused on the reporting of how they are being respected and addressed – that is, the kind of information to be submitted, when, and to whom.⁽²⁵⁾ Specifically, Decision 12/CP.17 gave guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected. The decision agreed that systems providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected should, respective of national circumstances, capabilities, sovereignty, and legislation, provide transparent and consistent information, be implemented at the national level, and build upon existing systems.⁽²⁴⁾ It was also agreed that developing country Parties should periodically report on how social and environmental safeguards are being addressed and respected within their National Communications.⁽²⁴⁾ Despite some progress in this area, there was little guidance on the level of detail required within reporting, and discussions concluded with the understanding that they would be further elaborated upon at COP-18.

The same decision included guidance on reference levels and/or reference emission levels. These form the benchmarks against which to measure forest-related emissions per year and are thus essential to environmental integrity when assessing future performance.^(23, 25) This provided a strong basis for a robust measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) scheme, essential for the development of REDD+.⁽²⁶⁾ It was decided that reference levels should be consistent with each country's greenhouse gas inventories, referring to anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks.⁽²⁴⁾ The decision provides guidance on a transparent, flexible approach, in which reference levels are periodically reviewed in conjunction with any advances in methodologies and in which sub-national reference levels can be elaborated as an interim measure whilst transitioning to a national level.⁽²⁴⁾

COP-18, Doha, 2012

The main areas of debate on REDD+ at COP-18 concerned the issues of measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) and REDD+ financing.⁽²⁷⁾

Technical issues regarding MRV were addressed under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). These included: (i) how to design national forest monitoring systems; (ii) how to create an appropriate MRV framework for results-based payments; (iii) how to link this with reference levels; (iv) the need for additional guidance on designing REDD+ safeguards; and (v) the drivers of deforestation. The SBSTA did not complete its work on these matters, but aimed to finish by its 39th session at the 19th COP, in December 2013.

The main stumbling block of the session turned out to be the issue of verification.⁽²⁸⁾ Some Parties pushed for verification based on the process of international consultation and analysis (ICA) used for nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), while others backed independent third-party verification by experts from both developed and developing countries. With no compromise reached, the issue was suspended and discussions set to resume at the next SBSTA meeting, in June 2013.⁽²⁹⁾

The second major issue concerning REDD+ discussed at the conference was how to raise finance for REDD+ activities. This was discussed under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA), with debate raised over: (i) the creation of a new REDD+ institution; (ii) incentives for non-carbon benefits; (iii) the creation of a fund for joint adaptation/mitigation actions; and (iv) the issue of sub-national approaches for results-based payments. However, the failure to reach consensus on the issue of verification had knock-on effects for decisions on results-based finance.⁽²⁹⁾ As a result, the COP decided to develop a work programme on results-based finance in 2013, co-chaired by representatives each from one developed and one developing country Party (Decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 25-26). It was further agreed that draft decisions on improving the effectiveness of REDD+ finance would be developed through a series of workshops on the four topics mentioned above, for adoption at COP 19 (Decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 28-29).

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