



Executive Summary of the UN-REDD National Programme in Argentina

UN-REDD PROGRAMME TWELFTH
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Background

The first National Native Forest Inventory, completed in 2005, estimated a total of more than 31 million hectares of native forests in Argentina. Between 1996 and 2011, more than 4 million ha of forests were lost. This loss is increasing, and in the past decade deforestation rate amounted to 1.22%. The main deforestation hot spots are found in the north of the country, in the Parque Chaqueño and Selva Misionera ecosystems; whilst the clearest degradation process can be witnessed in the Yungas and the Patagonian Andean forests.

This said, the National Government has decided to take action for reducing deforestation. The National Congress approved: (1) Act 26331 on Minimal Standards for Native Forest Environmental Protection at the end of 2007; (2) rules of procedure under National Decree 91; and (3) the establishment of a pilot programme, i.e. the Experimental Programme on Native Forest Management and Conservation, in 2009. Thirty environmental and social civil organizations participated in the enactment of Act 26331, supported by 1.5 million signatures from citizens all over the country.

Progress and Challenges

The Forests Act establishes the Native Forest Land-use Management (OTBN) system and promotes the investment of financial resources in forest protection and management, which is now compulsory for all provinces. The Act includes the participation of stakeholders in land-use management; explicitly acknowledges the rights of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent small producers; and establishes a National Fund. This Fund aims to strengthen technical and control capacities among provincial governments, and compensate owners for preserving their forests and the environmental services they provide to society.

In 2009, the Government of Argentina invested approximately US\$27 million in direct incentives for forest conservation and management projects as part of the above-mentioned pilot programme. Between 2010 and 2014, the investment in this Programme reached US\$300 million, financing 2,475 sustainable management and native forest preservation plans (implemented by owners, indigenous peoples or European descendants, among others).

In spite of the progress made through the enforcement of the Forest Act, there are ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. It is necessary to continue strengthening the institutional capacity of provincial governments. Key aspects of this, both at a national and province level, are control systems coordinated through state-of-the-art technologies that allow implementing programmes and improve land use sustainability in the vast national territory. Furthermore, significant technical and financial support is necessary for maintaining current efforts and maximizing results achieved in some provinces through the SACVEFOR (Pilot Forest Management, Control and Verification System) project. This needs to be carried out in parallel with the creation of a REDD+ implementation framework.

On the other hand, efforts should be made to continue improving dispute resolution mechanisms and address –as much as possible – the enormous challenge of land tenure systems. Likewise, it is necessary to strengthen benefit distribution systems and count on a national accountability system including information on social and environmental benefits.

There are various social realities in the vast Argentinian territory and its different types of forests, which are specific to each region. Deforestation or degradation drivers, types and rates are also different in each one of the eco-regions. This makes it necessary to develop intervention schemes to be included in the REDD+ strategy taking into account the specific conditions of each one of these regions.

In order to move forward with intervention schemes and strategies tailored to each eco-region, we need to have more specific data on deforestation dynamics, and these have to be monitored periodically. It would also be important to have a specific economic analysis that allows improving the performance of incentive programs and creating other complementary initiatives as needed and in accordance with specific eco-regional circumstances. Such a vast territory makes it necessary to rely on a cross-sectoral articulation among several government stakeholder levels, as well as the civil society, so that conservation and sustainable management policies and programmes reach the whole national territory supported by comprehensive and cross-sectoral public policies.

Argentina, through its Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS), monitors native forest cover with the purpose of monitoring the observance of Sections 8 and 9 of Act. 26331 on baseline assumptions for native forests environmental protection. Nevertheless, the country intends to improve its satellite system and – in compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – move on to the creation of a transparent and robust National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) that includes pillars such as high quality national forest and GHG inventories; it is also intended to carry out consistent monitoring of degradation and of the increase of carbon reservoirs around the country. In 2014, Argentina is working on its third national communication and on the biennial update report to the UNFCCC. The need to install a robust mechanism and develop capacities within SAyDS to carry out regular inventories and draft reports has been identified. As part of this strengthening, it is important to ensure national technical capacity so that the country counts on measurable, reportable and verifiable data.

National Programme readiness and consultation process

The current UN-REDD National Programme (NP) proposal is based on the analysis and guidelines established in Argentina's R-PP and those emerging from discussions with various stakeholders during the UN agencies' missions in the country. When drafting the R-PP and the current NP, several consultation activities within and outside the Government took place, starting in 2008. These included various regions in the country with the purpose of prioritizing the above-mentioned needs. Among the consultations carried out, a series of workshops on safeguards and REDD+ risks and benefits were held with the support of UN-REDD. In total, more than 40 participatory meetings and workshops have taken place in all regions in the country. Progress was made in creating a REDD+ Advisory Commission (CAR) and establishing the rules of procedure for the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Also, two joint UN-REDD Programme readiness missions, as well as other specific dialogues and joint activities with stakeholders took place. This allowed to identify the country's needs concerning REDD+ and, afterwards, prioritize UN-REDD Programme's axes of support.

Management and implementation arrangements and institutional context of REDD+ in Argentina

The Argentinian institutional framework on environmental and climate change issues has grown significantly stronger since the designation of SAyDS as the UNFCCC focal point in 2002. In 2006, SAyDS was institutionally included in the Nation's Chief of Cabinet under the Chief of Minister's direct management. Considering that one of the relevant functions of the Chief of Cabinet is to coordinate policies among the

national ministries, and among national and provincial policies, the participation of SAYDS in cross-sectoral policies related to the Government's environmental agenda – including those necessary for REDD+ – increases significantly. One of the results of this process was the creation of a Governmental Committee on Climate Change (CGCC). This Committee is a cross-sectoral group responsible for discussing and elaborating a climate change policy for the country. It has already elaborated a national strategy for mitigation and adaptation to be integrated in national policies under a structured, ongoing interaction process with the relevant ministries.

Another institutional arrangement relevant to the coordination of cross-sectoral policies in the context of the Government's environmental agenda and its articulation with civil society organizations is the National Advisory Commission for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (CONADIBIO). The Commission is a discussion and political consensus platform in which various society stakeholders involved (directly or indirectly) in conservation and the use of and/or access to biodiversity participate.

Experiences gained through the work of CGCC and CONADIBIO will be the basis to foster cross-sectoral actions necessary to the development of REDD+. Likewise, a REDD+ Steering Committee will be created, which will be in charge of guiding the development of the UN-REDD Programme. Finally, the implementation of the UN-REDD NP will involve the CAR, whose constitution and terms of reference are currently being drafted.

The UN-REDD Programme will be implemented in coordination with several initiatives related to the Forest Act; with other forest management-related national activities; and with other agencies and international cooperation programmes, e.g. the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The US\$ 3,591,000 requested by Argentina to the UN-REDD Programme are a contribution to the national REDD+ readiness, considering that there are other initiatives that work for the same purpose in the country – such as the FCPF, with whom synergies will be established.

Components of the UN-REDD National Programme

Considering progress made and challenges faced in the forestry and climate change sectors in the country, the Government's and other local stakeholders' (including indigenous peoples and peasant communities) concerns and the comparative advantages of the United Nations organizations constituting the UN-REDD Programme, Programme support will focus on four components consistent with the REDD+ decisions adopted by the UNFCCC – particularly, those of Cancun and Varsovia – and also respond to what was set forward in the R-PP. These four components are described as follows:

1. Drafting of a REDD+ National Strategy (REDD+ NS)

It will focus on main issues. In the first place, work will be carried out to disseminate information by means of a communication platform between REDD+ and stakeholders, and to implement a consultation protocol (currently under development) on the REDD+ Strategy and its implementation – specifically geared towards indigenous peoples. This last item, together with a formal dialogue space with civil society, will generate inputs for the development of the Strategy. The second aspect consists of developing and analyzing dialogue spaces, specific technical inputs and operative aspects for implementing the strategy. These technical inputs will emerge as a result of activities that are specific to this component, as well as from working on thematic areas described below. The third aspect refers to the assembling of these inputs in order to elaborate a first draft of the REDD+ Strategy. The SAYDS and UNDP will guide this component in

collaboration with FAO and UNEP to develop relevant technical inputs and support their structuring. Based on its traditional collaboration with ministries of Agriculture, FAO will also support inter-agency coordination with the agricultural sector.

2. Establishment of the National Forest Reference Emissions Level

In order to measure country performance concerning its activities for reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation, the working program will focus on building a national reference level disaggregated by eco-regions. For this reason, the country has some data inputs coming from the satellite system and the national forest inventory (INF), as well as other data coming from several academic institutions.

Technical capacities in the country will be strengthened so as to obtain an adjusted and robust reference level through a step-by-step approach, building on national capacities and progress in this respect. The development of a joint methodology to define a reference level will be supported; afterwards, we will move on to the establishment of reference levels through a gradual process leveraging basic available information until a more accurate indicator for a specific eco-region is generated. FAO will guide this process together with the relevant units within SAyDS, and it will endeavor to ensure that the country has the necessary capacity to continue the process (or reproduce it) once Programme support concludes.

3. Strengthening of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)

Based on the progress made by the country so far, we intend to strengthen NFMS capacities under the following pillars: (1) satellite land monitoring system, (2) national forest inventory and (3) greenhouse gas inventory. Work will also be carried out to develop a NFMS web dissemination platform, including an application for keeping record of REDD+ activities. By the time Programme support concludes, the country should have a NFMS that can be used as a domestic tool, but also responds to REDD+ guidelines. In the context of this component, the technical strengthening of forest degradation monitoring will be looked into closely.

Also, support will be provided to revise the design of the INF through piloting and arrangement proposals responding to REDD+ features. Technical capacity strengthening will be supported, both for collecting and analyzing data, in order to develop allometric equations and volume charts. Regarding the third pillar, the Programme will also support capacity strengthening to carry out GHG inventories by backstopping the creation of an integrated system between National Communications, the national forest monitoring system and the reference level, among others. FAO will guide work on this component in collaboration with the relevant units within SAyDS. Other national institutions will become involved where necessary and relevant. Work will be carried out both at a national and eco-regional level, for instance, through SAyDS regional monitoring hubs.

4. Development of a Safeguard Information System (SIS)

The UN-REDD Programme will partially contribute to the development of an SIS through the identification and analysis of possible legal and institutional gaps existing in Argentina, in order to address REDD+ safeguards. Additionally, activities will be carried out for strengthening capacities and identifying the risks of implementing a REDD+ mechanism in the prioritized eco-regions. The three UN agencies participating in the UN-REDD Programme will support these specific activities related to SIS.

Budget estimate for the UN-REDD National Programme in Argentina

Component	Agency	USD
1. Drafting of a REDD+ National Strategy	FAO	160,000
	UNDP	808,200
	UNEP	530,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1,498,200
2. Development of a national forest reference emission level/reference level	FAO	433,000
	UNDP	
	UNEP	
	<i>Sub-total</i>	433,000
3. Development of a National Forest Monitoring System	FAO	1,165,000
	UNDP	
	UNEP	
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1,165,000
4. Development of a Safeguard Information System (SIS)	FAO	10,000
	UNDP	50,000
	UNEP	70,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	130,000
5. Costs of the Programme operations unit, and of monitoring and evaluation	Shared costs (three Agencies)	364,800
	TOTAL	3,591,000
	Indirect costs	251370
	Programme TOTAL	3,842,370