

Independent technical review: Nigeria National Programme Document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Date: 23032011



Section A. General comments to National Programme Document of Nigeria

The document demonstrates a clear commitment by Nigeria to take the opportunity offered under UN-REDD to pilot REDD+ in Cross River State, which has the highest forest cover of Nigeria's states, supported by national level engagement, debates and parallel policy processes at the federal or national level.

The document also expresses a major expectation that the successes or experiences gained in the Cross River State on REDD+ will encourage other states to join REDD+. This expectation is really crucial, especially if one wants to guard against 'leakage' in neighbouring or adjoining states, which could be reasonably expected once improved SFM and enhancement of carbon stocks in CRS begin to be realized.

There is sufficient information on the broad institutional arrangements for REDD+ coordination. However, there is much more information on proposed institutional arrangements at the national/federal than at the level of the pilot state.

Despite the clarity of purpose expressed in the document and its highly readable style, its technical proposals on core aspects such as MRV and Reference Scenarios are presented in very broad generic terms with less detail that is specific to Nigerian conditions. This is further explained by a series of sub-points listed and explained below:

- a. There is insufficient detail on the needed institutional arrangements at the state level, as would be expected since it has chosen one known state, CRS to pilot REDD+.
- b. The description of drivers are still tentative, particularly with respect to the pilot state and at the moment there is no strategy or set of strategies proposed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation that have been identified. It seems that all the strategy development will be done during the readiness process.
- c. There is no attempt to provide strong justification for implementing REDD+ in Nigeria. From reading the document, possible justification could be:
 - i. high rate of deforestation and hence significant levels of preventable carbon emissions
 - ii. saving the last remaining forest cover in Nigeria to safeguard other benefits (ecological, economic, cultural, biodiversity)
 - iii. significant opportunity for increasing carbon stocks in degraded forests, woodlands and grasslands
 - iv. existing technical capacity to implement REDD+
 - v. Nigeria's place as an influential voice on the international dialogue on forests and climate change
- d. There is no additional forest resource information besides broad estimates of forest cover and forest cover losses. No data on past inventories; timber or biomass is presented. If some data exist, there should be comments on their quality and what useful experiences can be used to improve upon future or planned data collection.
- e. Current capacities for inventory and GIS-RS are not explicitly stated.
- f. In the CRS, which is the pilot state one would also expect more detailed information and data on variables such as deforestation, forest cover, biomass data, timber

volumes and other phenomena such as demographic trends and key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. However, this is also missing.

- g. Compared to other country proposals submitted to UN-REDD, the information provided in the document is relatively scanty but the writing style is quite clear on what Nigeria would like to do. The absence of data on biomass or timber volumes and past estimates of green house gas emissions warrants some amount of explanation.

Section B. Assessing the National Programme Document against review criteria

1. Ownership of the Program

At the level of the Cross River State, there is certainly sufficient political will on the part of the State Governorship, which sees REDD+ as an opportunity to increase the value of forests and in the process achieve SFM within an economic development framework. In addition, REDD+ seems to have revived the Cross River Forestry Commission to a higher state of relevance and activity. Because the in REDD+ is partially inspired by the forest endowment of Cross River State, the interest to secure REDD+ finance to manage forest cover is evident.

One other demonstration of ownership of the document is that a political decision has been made to choose a pilot state, which is often a difficult decision in a federal system where individual states compete for funding. In this regard, using a 'front-runner state' which is relatively well forested as a pilot is strategic since successes achieved there could help galvanize national interest in REDD+ The proposal by Nigeria, to nominate one pilot state is therefore remarkable and demonstrate a subtle sense of political sponsorship.

Interest in REDD+ is also quite consistent with Nigeria's recent commitment to take a Low carbon Development Pathway. In this regard, the widespread presence of degraded and fragmented forests and woodlands in the country should be seen as an opportunity for the country to enhance and increase carbon stocks on its forested and farmed landscapes.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement

The document has also demonstrated a reasonable amount of consultations, even though it seemed to have predominantly involved the political leadership and state government departments (i.e. the policy makers) of the Cross River States, and the table in Annex 2, on stakeholder mapping clearly shows this. It in fact seems that consultation of local communities was limited by time, despite the fact that some community members in CRS who were consulted and were able to sign off on the REDD+ document. In general the consultations appear to have culminated into a broad agreement that Nigeria , supports its participation in REDD+ and will use experiences in CRS to pilot REDD+ implementation. The realization that there is need to initiate national level policy processes seems to imply that there is also an appreciation of wider national consultation that will be needed to review and possibly reform some policies and legislation to support REDD+

Despite the evidence of consultation both at national and at the level of CRS, a few observations are noteworthy. These are:

- It is not clear even at the CRS level that stakeholders have been characterized or grouped according to interests, power/influence, vulnerability and potential roles in implementing REDD+. Stakeholder profiles would have helped to clarify potential mechanisms for participation. While accepting that such will be done once funding is attained it is the kind of analysis that many countries interested in REDD+ have done and should equally apply to this proposal.
- Consultations should also have revealed clear opportunities for early action and also potentially or currently contentious issues, upon which further national dialogue will be necessary. This is not quite clear in the document.

3. Program effectiveness and cost efficiency

At the moment the assessment under this criterion is based on the stated outputs 1 to 4 and their sub-components. At the current stage of the document it is difficult to make an authoritative decision on effectiveness and efficiency since such assessment, are often based on historical (after-the- fact) data.

So far, the stated outputs in Table 2, 5 and others and the allocated budgets seem sufficient to effectively achieve the stated outputs. However a few outputs and sub-outputs seem to be under-budgeted, particularly at the national level. Outputs such as 2.1; which include the estimation of national reference levels and reference emission levels and 3.4 on MRV appear to be under-estimates, given the size and heterogeneity of Nigeria's land cover. A national inventory and a more detailed one at the level of the state will be considerably more expensive than the allocated, unless reference emissions will be confined to the CRS level only, or if there are already base maps on forest cover which will be used for activities such as stratification and the .

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 200 words):

The risks presented in Table 5 are essentially relevant and have concentrated on general government commitment, inter-sector cooperation on REDD+, financial management issues , capacity for implementation and perceptions and interests from both local an international partners.

However some additional elements of risk associated with managing such a complex issue such as REDD+ should be considered and if possible analyzed. A few of those are:

- Threat of 'leakage' if REDD+ policies are applied only in one state as will be the case with concentrating in CRS. In doing so, the debate on leakage and tentative mitigating solutions are relevant and urgent and need to flow into the national policy dialogue and decision making systems of the federal government.
- Policies of other states may negate those in CRS unless there is a mechanism to initiate policy changes also in adjoining states
- The difficulties associated with making policy changes in a federal system – which is probably the justification why a pilot state has been chosen as a test case, is in itself a risk which should be discussed.

- The weak status of the state and federal forest services also has risks which in fairness, Output 4.3 attempts to address but not sufficiently.

The above additional risks are worth discussing in the design of strategy option to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Framework Document and Strategy (maximum 200 words):

By reading the document, it is evident that it has largely followed the principles of the UN Development Group, which refers to human rights, gender, environmental sustainability results based management and capacity development. In addition, it has also complied with requirements such as Strong Country Ownership and has requested international support on issues which are relevant to the REDD+ Programme.

Despite largely complying with the above, what is missing, as explained under section 7 on key recommendations, are details that the country should provide under sections on , Reference Scenarios, MRV and REDD+ Strategies which form the crux of the Technical or Methodological Aspects that are supposed to be supported through an appropriate institutional framework.

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

There is ample evidence in the document that it has complied with the key tenets of UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedures. The scope of the National Joint Programme, the proposed structure for country proposals and other procedures such as country validation and others, appear to have been followed and in addition guidance by relevant in-county UN agencies, during the formulation of the document is also evident. The document cannot therefore be reasonably found wanting on this account.

Section C. Suggestions for improving the technical design of the National Programme Document of Nigeria

The comments are mostly based on sections 2 and 3, and to a lesser extent on section 4 of the document.

Key Observations

Under consultations, no *stakeholder profiles* have been presented on *traditional authorities, community groups and other local bodies*. On the other hand, profiles of formal government stakeholder institutions are clearly presented.

The MRV system proposed in section 2.8 remains generic and has *no specific references or examples unique or descriptive of the Nigerian situation*. In addition, *no additional data and information* that is relevant to MRV (except broad cover change) has been provided. The statements in Annex 4 are also quite general and make little reference to Nigeria's situation. For example, no 'forest definitions' and 'carbon pools' relevant to Nigeria have been proposed

No attempts have been made to define the *most obvious carbon and non-carbon variables*, other than above ground carbon that would be monitored under an MRV System

The strategy section makes no mention of *potential mitigation actions against the key drivers* of deforestation, which could be attempted at the level of the nominated state

No key potentially *contentious issues or opportunities* that require urgent policy and legislative reform have been clearly stated in the document. Linked to this is also inadequate clarity on what would constitute an *implementation framework for REDD+* even at the pilot state level.

Key Recommendations

- i. More information on CRS; the pilot state should be provided. Such information should be on its major land use options, its demographics, forest resources of CRS, maps and the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- ii. Based on the description of drivers, it would be useful if some initial strategy options are proposed, for CRS, even if they would still be subjected to further analysis to reveal their relative impacts and use them to also derive reference levels
- iii. The development of a reference scenarios or reference levels should provide more insight into how the data may be gathered and what factors are going to be considered. In this regard, the document has given quite generic but correct steps needed to derive reference scenarios and reference land even reference emission levels. The document should at least demonstrate a technical appreciation of the subject matter by mentioning the ease or difficulty with which relevant data will be collected, the likely variables or factors that will be used to model future emission scenarios, and which institutions that could be involved in this
- iv. The MRV section should clearly provide current forest definitions, proposed carbon pools, forest cover stratification and suggest a possible national or state-wide sampling scheme (e.g. a systematic grid). In addition, a list of carbon and non-carbon variables to be monitored should be proposed at this stage.
- v. Improve on the analysis of risks as already discussed under section B paragraph 4.
- vi. More specific statements on the capacity needs of CRS would also provide a good basis for systematic training programme that would be linked to national capacity development. At the moment, this has remained general, when one would expect more from the one chosen pilot state.
- vii. A useful addition should be a proposed implementation framework for CRS. This could include the needed legal and policy framework, key boards, institutions with clear mandates, mechanisms for inter-sector coordination, carbon registry, conflict resolution procedures etc. This could provide useful 'lessons learnt' for the entire country.