

Independent technical review: Nigeria National Programme Document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Reviewer: John J. Mason

Date: 22032011



General comments to National Programme Document of Nigeria (maximum 200 words)

Nigeria has done extremely well to have prepared this document within the available timeframe. In fact the country should be recognized for the phenomenal uptake and progress it has made over the past 18 months with the national REDD program. No other country has made such dramatic progress in such a short period of time. If one considers that in September 2009 Nigeria did not have either forestry or REDD in its UNFCCC negotiating position, it is extraordinary what has been achieved in this short period of 18 months. One has to ask: "How many countries in the world could have made this level of progress on such a complicated issue as REDD within such a short period of time and have achieved such a high degree of consensus?"

The other very interesting circumstance in Nigeria's case is that a sub-national jurisdiction (Cross River State - CRS) has been the initiator and early leader of the REDD program within the country. This reviewer knows of no other jurisdiction in Africa that compares and suggests the only comparable scenario is that of Amazonas State in Brazil. CRS kicked off the REDD process in Nigeria but realized immediately that they needed to bring the federal level along with them. CRS catalyzed and facilitated the process which culminated in the Federal government formally engaging with approved international REDD preparatory pathway – UN REDD. This unique story needs to be well documented in UN-REDD literature as an example of courageous sub-national leadership spurring on effective national action.

Assessing the National Programme Document against review criteria (please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Ownership of the Program (maximum 200 words):

There is strong and unequivocal ownership of and support for Nigeria's REDD Program across the full spectrum. Nigeria must be recognized for the phenomenal uptake and progress the country has made over the past 18 months with the national REDD agenda. No other African country has made such dramatic progress in such a short period of time. This has only been possible as a result of extraordinary national, sub-national, civil society and forest dependent people support for this program of action.

The political support for the program has been at the Federal level and also at the State level with particular note of the leadership and support from CRS. In addition support has been strong from a broad range of civil society actors including NGOs, traditional rulers, communities and academics. The strong public statements published following the stakeholder validation events at CRS and Abuja levels are very clear and positive. It is very important to note that representatives of forest dependent communities were involved in both these meetings and in drafting the statements. In addition the proactive formation of a National Stakeholders Forum, including forest dependent peoples, at the conclusion of the federal stakeholder validation event in Abuja was a sign of engagement and commitment from civil society to the process going forward.

This reviewer has not witnessed such a high level of ownership and support for a national REDD process in any other of the 8 national Readiness processes he has served as independent reviewer during the past 2 years. Nigeria can be commended for this high degree of domestic ownership.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement (maximum 200 words):

Nigeria's process for preparation of a National Plan was very rapid. As such the level of stakeholder engagement was not all that it should have been and much remains to be done to achieve a reasonable degree of stakeholder understanding of REDD and the implications of this plan of action.

That being said Nigeria's stakeholder identification and engagement process has been impressive when one considers the time within the process occurred. It is necessary to take awareness raising, consensus-building and buy-in extremely seriously in this process and Nigeria has clearly done so but have to do more in the coming months before actual implementation commences. This reviewer is aware of early commitment from UNDP to provide approximately USD300,000.00 to support further awareness and education efforts in the coming months.

This reviewer attended the National Stakeholder Validation meeting in Abuja on Feb 21, 2011. The numbers in attendance, diversity of participants, interest from the floor, type of questions, and willingness of participants to continue far into the evening was extremely encouraging for the success of REDD and demonstrated the 1st step in awareness has largely been achieved. But certain questions from the floor during this event demonstrated significant gaps in basic information and understanding about REDD by stakeholders. In particular questions about the role of women, community benefits, forest dependent peoples' rights, leakage, permanence, and forest definition were areas that deserve particular attention in on-going efforts.

Another factor that demonstrated positive progress in this regard is a growing number of requests emerging from rural locations petitioning for their lands to be considered for REDD pilots. The strength of this bottom-up demand demonstrates early success in levels of REDD awareness and is encouraging for the overall REDD process in Nigeria but may also indicate inaccurate or misleading information reaching communities and their leadership.

This reviewer has had personal experience in CRS which has suggested a much higher level of understanding from high politicians, technocrats, academics, NGOs and community members in the sub-national jurisdiction than at the national level. This reality was reflected in the national validation workshop. This suggests that further REDD education efforts must be tailored differently in CRS than for other locations in the Federation.

3. Program effectiveness and cost efficiency (maximum 150 words):

Nigeria's National REDD+ Program is generally clear and well-designed while also certainly ambitious. The program recognizes that it cannot realistically be implemented with the proposed funding of USD4 million and notes the need for co-financing. Such co-financing from national, state and international sources will be critical to overall program success. If the required co-financing fails to materialize then the program will fall far short of achieving its goals. The program document would benefit significantly from a clear articulation of the resource package required in co-financing and the target sources of such funds. A one page outline of this aspect would make the document much stronger. Of particular note in this regard is the absence of a plan to engage the private sector and NGOs in this process which, based on discussions to date within the country, may yield some early results.

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

The leading management risk for each African country in the REDD Readiness process to date has been the national level institutional arrangements. In most jurisdictions which have proceeded Nigeria in the REDD Readiness process, we have witnessed a scramble for power between various ministries and agencies for control of the REDD space. The perception is that significant resources will become available and thus key political high offices are keen to control the process and by extension future resources. With this in mind, the national level institutional structures proposed by Nigeria are moving in the correct direction with establishment of the NCCC. It seems Nigeria has reviewed other countries struggles and resolved to address this issue head on. If the NCCC can be effectively established and operated then Nigeria may avoid some pit falls encountered by most

African countries on REDD readiness to date. The organogram of the institutional structures needs to be very clear and should appear in the main body of the document and not in the annexes.

The 2nd major challenge of REDD in Nigeria is that of land tenure (especially the 1978 land act). This issue must be addressed very early as it could undo all other aspects of progress if it is left status quo.

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

The program appears to be fully in line with the UN-REDD Strategy in all respects. While all critical aspects have been addressed, there are many ways in which the document can be improved or strengthened. Rather than repeat, this reviewer has outlined all his comments in bullet format in the “Suggestions” section below.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance and (maximum 200 words)

This section is not the strength of this reviewer but from his reading of the UN-REDD documents it appears that Nigeria’s process to date and National Plan document are entirely in line with the Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the National Programme Document of COUNTRY (maximum 400 words)

This reviewer has the following comments and recommendations for Nigeria’s Plan:

- De-reservation should be changed to read de-gazettement in the document;
- Insert clear organogram of the structure for REDD institutions in Nigeria at Federal and State levels;
- Definition of forest in Nigeria should be tackled in this document. This is urgently required to clarify what lands will be “REDDable” and what lands will not. All aspects of the document are dependent on this definition. Nigeria, due to its ecological diversity, may wish to explore whether it can utilize a range within its forest definition.
- Proposed focus on CRS makes logical sense but could create 2 major dilemmas for the national program: lack of support and even undermining by other 35 states that feel left out; and significant challenge for leakage to neighbouring states as result actions in CRS only.
- National vs sub-national carbon accounting and establishment of national and possibly sub-national registry will be critical to success. Nigeria is a super free market country and it is important that registry be operational before the private sector starts moving on sub-national pilot projects. This is already happening in Kenya and Nigeria needs to get on top of this early.
- Page 31 MRV system is weak and poorly outlined. Need more thought and detail into this critical issue.
- MRV system does not appear to have capacity to monitor leakage across sub-national/ state boundaries and yet if the program will focus on CRS primarily then monitoring for leakage will be important. MRV should link into the national carbon map approach taken by Ghana. If Nigeria can do similar then this will be big step forward in wall to wall MRV potential.
- Outcome 1 – note Ghana is far advanced on REDD and Nigeria should team up with Ghana with regards the sub-regional advocacy on REDD.
- M&E section is very weak and indicators sparse and no milestones. Suggest significant strengthening of this aspect.

- Situation of state level forestry laws is important. CRS has made great progress in this regard but it is the exception with provision for carbon concessions.
- No mention of data ownership, repository, management in the plan. This is very important and should not be held in a single authority. DRC has an admirable plan for how to handle these issues.
- Analysis of drivers of deforestation. Suggest that drivers should be analyzed at the levels of ecological zones rather than at national level only.
- Emphasis is placed on national level channels to international climate finance through fast track/ quick start funding. At the state/CRS level it will be possible to pursue market based or fund based emission reduction transactions. The program is reasonably silent on this aspect.
- UNESCO AfriMAB program is seriously examining how to support REDD at select MAB sites across the continent. Nigeria should proactively engage AfriMAB to advocate for site in Nigeria to be selected for such support as co-finance.
- Most drivers of deforestation are agriculture based. Need to cross over between REDD and agricultural carbon potential. Link strategies focused on agriculture with a NAMA program focused on agricultural drivers.