

Independent technical review: COUNTRY National Programme Document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Reviewer: G. Ken Creighton, Ph.D.

Date: 18 March 2011



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

Overall the draft project document/proposal has two particular strengths:

1. It begins with a sub-national approach, focusing on the region of Nigeria with the highest conservation value forests and the largest relative amount of remaining natural forest carbon stocks and works within a defined set of administrative-political boundaries under a unified civil authority (e.g. Cross River State Government). There appears to be local (state level) engagement (or at least awareness) by a broad range of stakeholder constituencies. This provides the potential for a cohesive, effective and locally based implementation structure.
2. It has clear endorsement at national level and delegation of authority from the national Ministries of Environment and (presumably) Forestry. This provides the potential for national dissemination of experience and lessons learned and to assure that the methods developed and employed will fit within an (eventual) national level system for REDD+ implementation and the necessary national level monitoring/measurement, reporting and verification arrangements to comply with anticipated agreements under the on-going UNFCCC negotiations.

Authors of the draft project document requested feedback from reviewers on two issues:

· If the text is too long (and would then be better to be synthesize it and create more annexes for details) or if it is fine as it is now in terms of length.

Reply: The text would benefit from a reading by a skilled copy editor. However, this reviewer found the length to be “about right” overall with the inclusions suggested below. A total document length, including annexes of between 100-150 pages is about “normal” in my experience for this type of proposal.

· If outcomes and outputs are well balanced, or more emphasis (activities, budget) should be placed in some of them.

Reply: This reviewer would put less emphasis on establishing pilot “projects” with the limited funding available through UNREDD at this stage. I would advise to concentrate on creating the necessary enabling environment (implementation of “policies and measures” in UNFCCC parlance) to encourage private sector activity in qualifying REDD+ activities. Once that is established, the investment capital will be there from both the public and private sectors. To quote the mantra of the popular American film of the 1990s, ***Field of Dreams***: “If you build it, they will come.”

Reference is made in the project document to: A Preliminary Assessment of the Context for REDD in Nigeria (Nigeria/UN, 2010; hereafter referred to as the “Preliminary Assessment”; available at: <http://www.un-redd.org>).

It may be worthwhile including this document (or a summary of its key points) as an annex to the proposal for ease of access by readers.

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

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

The programme ownership by both Cross River State and Federal government authorities is well documented and demonstrated by the involvement of the CRS governor and the chair of the CRS Forest Commission and officials of the Federal Ministry of the Environment in the various planning meetings and workshops, stakeholder consultations and technical missions that are summarized in Annex 1. The CRS Forestry Commission provides an initial “platform” for ensuring a balanced participation of various public and private interests in programme design, implementation, review and evaluation. The project document appears to build on a series of activities aimed at identifying and addressing the problems of deforestation and forest degradation in CRS extending back to 2008 and recognition of these issues by the federal authorities from 2009. There also appears to be significant “buy-in” to the programme by national (cf. NCF) and international (cf. WCS) NGOs active in the region. The ***Communiqué of the National Validation Workshop*** and the ***Statement of Cross River Stakeholders on Nigeria’s REDD+ Readiness Programme*** provided in the preamble to the project document would seem to indicate, at a minimum, extensive awareness of the programme and its objectives among civil authorities and civil society, including “grassroots” stakeholders.

However, the programme design documents would benefit from more explicit recognition of the participation of representatives of non-governmental entities in the drafting team and also more detailed description of how various non-governmental entities such as NGOs and CBOs as well as other “grassroots” stakeholders and other constituencies – such as forest industry and trade associations and potential investors in forest restoration aspects of REDD - will be engaged throughout implementation of the REDD Readiness planning process.

The mention of various advisory and consultative bodies in Box 4 (page 58) and Section 5.3 Programme Management and Oversight (pages 59-60) to some extent addresses how the various government, non-governmental and grassroots stakeholders will be involved. The project document would benefit from an Annex that provides an indicative timetable for the approval of TORs for the various entities described in these sections and their formal establishment.

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

The proponents provided the following documentation: (1) Statement from Cross River State Stakeholders; (2) Communiqué of the National Validation Workshop. The list of participants in the drafting team from Cross River State is incomplete and should be updated to reflect the participation of stakeholder constituencies there.

The CRS Stakeholder Forum Appraisal Workshop held at the Public Library in Calabar, CRS on 18 February produced a statement signed by 101 participants that represent Federal and State officials and sectoral ministries, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society - as reflected by participation of National (e.g. NCF) and International (WCS) NGOs and Community-based organizations.

Annex 1 of the project document outlines a sequence of activities, missions and meetings stretching in a continuum from June 2008 for CRS and 2009 for the Federal Government until the present that have been organized to address the issues of deforestation and forest degradation in CRS, indicating a relatively high level of awareness among, at least, some key constituencies: academia, civil authorities, NGOs and CBOs. Annex 2 provides a useful “map” of the various stakeholder constituencies. References to public consultation, engagement and participation are found on pages 23 (Box 1), 30, and 63 of the project document.

Despite the above, the project document fails to elucidate a clear implementation plan and “schedule” for ensuring that civil society is not just “consulted” but that there are clear pathways

and mechanisms for civil society to have substantive input on an on-going basis into project design, development implementation and verification. Perhaps a short Annex that describes how civil society beyond “just” the national and international NGOs will be included in project design, implementation, review and evaluation, along with a general calendar indicating milestones for such participation and input would be informative. There should also be some clear indication of the budgetary arrangements to ensure such participation. It is the opinion of this reviewer that the intention of having significant public consultation and input is there but that the “mechanisms” of how that will be achieved in concrete and “verifiable” terms need to be more clearly described.

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

In terms of programme effectiveness the “two-tiered” (national and state levels) approach seems to be highly cost efficient in that it targets an area of high biological and cultural value and significance while providing for linkage with national level processes and the potential for national level “benefits” through dissemination of knowledge, experience and “lessons learned”.

Providing funding for piloting activities at State level in CRS which, as noted in the documentation contains the lions share of Nigeria’s remaining high carbon stock tropical forests that also represent high conservation values in terms of their biological, cultural and socioeconomic “values”, (and thus potentially high “co-benefits”) would seem to be a good demonstration of programme effectiveness to deliver climate benefits while also maximizing environmental social and cultural co-benefits and demonstrating effective cross linkage with the objectives of other international instruments to which Nigeria is a party, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The general budget presented by “Outputs” in Table 2 seems well balanced and the allocation of funding among lead implementation agencies in Table 6 is well aligned with their respective lead responsibilities, which are consistent with the Programme Framework.

Note: In the absence of a detailed budget breakdown and workplan this section could not be completed with full confidence.

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

A key risk is delay in commitment and then payment of matching funds by the various agencies and entities involved or the diversion of funds received from UNREDD to unjustified activities that do not contribute directly to programme objectives and priorities.

On the cover page the Government needs to indicate the amount of co-financing it will commit and also indicate how much of this is in cash and how much “in kind”. If there are various government agencies or entities contributing to this “match”, then there needs to be a table indicating how much (in cash and in kind) each of them is committed to and on what disbursement schedule.

Also, eventually (but not at this stage), there needs to be evidence of signed agreements for these contributions from the appropriately authorized officials of the various contributing agencies and entities.

There is also a risk of delays in delivery of the technical support that is anticipated from the UN Agencies due to budgetary constraints or limited availability of qualified technical advisors.

The assumption in the proposal that the UN Agencies will be able to mobilize additional funding to provide supplemental technical support for capacity building in a timely manner constitutes an additional risk of delay in implementation or reduced impact, particularly at the national scale.

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

The proposed programme is consistent with the UNREDD Framework in that the roles of UNDP (Governance) FAO (Technical support to MRV and related Capacity Building and UNEP (social, environmental and civil society engagement) seem to take advantage of the relative comparative advantages of these agencies in these domains. The analysis of drivers presented in the proposal (Page 21. Table 3) matches well the regional assessment presented in the Framework. The proposed programme puts a strong emphasis on participatory processes and transparency through the creation of a number of advisory bodies at both state (CRS) and national levels. The TORs of some of these bodies need further refinement and adequate budget resources need to be clearly identified to ensure their regular meetings and operations. A “launch schedule” for these bodies should be developed as part of the work-plan that is (apparently) still in preparation.

The prescribed processes for public consultation, awareness and validations appear to have been carried out in good faith and in line with the recommended procedures and reasonably well documented. The appropriate endorsement by national focal points, operational authorities and the UN Rep have been obtained, and the proposal is endorsed by the Governor and the Chair of the Forest Commission in Cross River State where the bulk of field activities and capacity building actions will be carried out.

The proposal is aligned with UNREDD policies on data and knowledge management, national capacity building and alignment of subnational actions with national strategic goals. I have some concern, however about the stated assumptions that the UN Agencies will mobilize additional resources for some technical support and capacity building, over and above what is being proposed from this UNREDD Grant. An assessment of the impact on performance should such “assumed” additional resources fail to materialize and a risk assessment and “mitigation strategy” should be prepared to address the risk that supplemental resources are not available in a timely fashion. A “Plan B” is needed to address this risk. At a broad scale the budgetary allocations among lines of action appear to be well aligned with the recommendations of the UNREDD Framework.

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

Based on the documentation and information provided to this reviewer, this proposal appears to be in compliance with the Operational Guidance outlined in pages 7-9 of the above referenced document that deal with national joint implementation, validation, submission, etc. The process as outlined in the Rules and Procedures.... appears to have been well documented and the appropriate endorsements from national authorities obtained.

As for gender issues and indigenous peoples, the project design appears to be consistent with UNREDD guidance documentation. However, this is one of those areas where “the proof is in the pudding” so

participation, consultation and prior informed consent with regard to programme actions affecting these stakeholders needs to be monitored and documented on a regular basis during project implementation and should receive priority attention for verification by qualified specialists participating in programme review and “implementation assistance” missions.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the National Programme Document of COUNTRY

(maximum 400 words)

My principal recommendations for improvement are:

1. Strike a balance between enabling activities and pilots. Engage the private and public finance sectors in financing pilots to the extent possible. The funding allocated to pilots (\$255,000) seems about right.
2. Recruit and engage the investment (banking) sector in the advisory bodies to the extent possible. Standard Bank of Nigeria, for instance, has been a leader in providing capital for offset projects in other sectors through market leader project developers such as Ecosecurities and is closely monitoring developments in REDD+. Much could be gained by having early up front input from the professional investment community.
3. Pay careful attention to implementation of the safeguards for social and environmental (biodiversity) and indigenous peoples issues. Good performance may, in the future generate “premium” credits that could increase the revenues over that achieved by “commodity carbon” projects.

End GKC 18 March 2011