

UN-REDD PROGRAMME



Independent Technical Review: Colombia R-PP document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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General comments to R-PP Document of Colombia (maximum 200 words):

Colombia should be commended for assembling a high quality, comprehensive and ambitious Programme. It demonstrates thorough consideration of how REDD could be implemented in such a diverse set of social, environmental and economic circumstances found in the country.

The Programme is the result of more than three years preparation, over which the proposed programme has improved significantly and consultation and information processes have been impressive.

After such a long preparatory time, and given the expectations that REDD has already raised in the country, with some misleading initiatives already underway, it is critical that the programme is implemented as soon as possible.

With extreme detail there is also some complexity. It is recommended that the programme be implemented with some flexibility to accommodate potential changes during implementation.

Assessing the draft R-PP against review criteria

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Ownership of the Programme (maximum 150 words):

The Programme is compatible with national strategies, clearly framed within Colombia's 2010-2014 National Development plan and the climate change policy coordination strategy (CONPES 3700). In addition, the it is adequately articulated with the development of other plans also currently underway, including the strategy on ecosystem based adaptation and the national mitigation strategy.

The Programme is also compatible with the sustainable development elements of the 2008-2012 UN Country Program (extended until 2013), particularly with regards to the support for sustainable land planning, preparations to address climate change and work to restore and conserve strategic ecosystems.

The Government of Colombia has dedicated significant resources to the development and refinement of this Programme. It is also committing additional resources for Programme implementation.

The proposed *National Climate Change System (SISCLIMA)* will facilitate policy coordination and ensure coherence, in the meantime, the intersectoral dialogues are a positive action.

In addition, the dedicated donor coordination platform for REDD+ as part of the proposal should assist with containing transaction costs, coordinate actions and address potential emerging gaps.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement (maximum 150 words):

Colombia has undertaken an impressive effort to engage relevant stakeholders at various stages during Programme preparation, which provided valuable feedback. Evidence of the extensive work on information early dialogue activities at the national and subnational level is provided in the Annex.

Further consultations are planned, including the convening of regional workshops to define the consultation protocols and free prior informed consent. The regional approach taken by the proposal should enable appropriate consideration of regional differences in the country. The proposed *Mesas de Trabajo REDD+* include relevant governmental and non-governmental actors from multiple sectors and regions, providing a platform to align visions, policies and actions, as well as enhancing ownership.

In addition, it is expected that communities will also be involved in monitoring activities integrated into the national systems.

Overall, the Plan makes proper consideration of UN-REDD Operational Guidance related to engagement of indigenous people and other forest dependent communities.

3. Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency (maximum 100 words):

Not all elements to undertake a full effectiveness and cost efficiency assessment of the Programme are provided. Uncertainties such as additional guidance from the UNFCCC or the outcomes of regional consultations are difficult to take into account. However, Programme is likely to be effective and be cost-effective. The broad use of existing institutional structures and mainstreaming efforts are likely to reduce costs and enhance effectiveness. One area to ensure that extra efforts are taken to reduce transaction costs is the coordination of multiple sources of funding.

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 150 words):

There are several risk associated with the overall programme. Some of them include, among others:

- a. Emergence of opposition or lack of social support for the programme in key regions.
- b. Loss of momentum in the national processes leading to diminished interest by stakeholders
- c. Misalignment between national implementation of critical institutional arrangements for REDD+

The fact that Colombia has already started engagement with multiple stakeholders in the country mitigates part of the risks. The fact that the program has been under development for almost 3 years make it increasingly pressing that full implementation starts as soon as possible, finally, while there are many positive signs of the government's commitment to the program, it would be critical for some of the institutions to be operational to effectively support REDD strategy design and implementation.

Overall, the risk is perceived as manageable and mitigated through programme design. Programme has a good likelihood of success.

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy (maximum 150 words):

The Programme is found to be consistent with the UN-REDD Programme strategy.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance (maximum 150 words):

The Programme is compliant with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance.

Assessing the draft R-PP by component

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Component 1: Organize and consult (maximum 300 words):

The socio-economic and biological diversity across Colombia motivated a complex but rational institutional arrangement to develop the REDD+ Strategy and its implementation. It is fully articulated with existing structures to address climate change, which should ensure consistency with broader national climate policy. A strong leadership, convening power and operational capacity will be needed for the *Mesa Nacional REDD+* to be effective. Similarly, given Colombia plans to implement REDD+ in phases across regions, the management of expectations in regions with no REDD+ activity could also require additional consideration during implementation. It was not entirely clear from the text how the selection of indigenous, *campesino* or afroamerican representatives will be made.

The consultation process presented in the RPP is quite impressive and comprehensive, presenting a very ambitious process to promote social inclusion and participation. Colombia should be congratulated for these efforts that started almost three years ago. The reference to capacity building activities for stakeholders to facilitate their informed and meaningful engagement is a valuable component, however, no mention is made of such needs inside government itself. The intensification of the proposed activities will undoubtedly stretch the capacities of the government agencies in charge of them. The availability of human and technical resources inside government to coordinate these activities will be essential. Unless there are sufficient resources to implement, it would be useful to include some resources for it in the budget, including capacity building activities.

The approach taken to dispute settlement mechanisms, focusing on existing institutions and arrangements is appropriate and should contribute to greater efficiency and policy coherence.

This standard is considered met.

2. Component 2: Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy (maximum 300 words):

The RPP provides a historical analysis of deforestation and quantifies some of the direct drivers of deforestation. In addition, it provides a qualitative analysis of underlying drivers of deforestation and degradation at the national level with some insights into the dominant regional processes. In addition, the document identifies eight areas of intervention and a set of indicative actions that could be implemented for the short, medium and long term. The analysis as well as the proposed areas and activities are rational and consistent, but only a broad description of existing policies. It is recommended that a full policy assessment be undertaken during program implementation.

Gaps in existing policy assessments and evaluations should be addressed as part of the proposed analysis of drivers at the regional level and the cost benefit analysis of potential interventions. If available information is not sufficient, it is recommended that budget allocations be revised to ensure that sufficient funding is allocated, particularly at the beginning, for data gathering and survey work. For the regional analysis it would be desirable that they have a common framework to reduce costs and enable comparability.

Relevant priority elements of the implementation framework to be addressed during program implementation are identified, and while some of the details are left open, this seems appropriate given the need to define them further as a result of further consultations and analysis.

The plan also contains adequate detail on the methodology and schedule for preparing the social and environmental strategic assessment.

Overall, this standard is met.

3. Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level
(maximum 200 words):

Colombia proposes to implement REDD+ gradually using a *nested* approach and allow for the differentiated development of reference levels in different regions of the country. This process should eventually lead to a consistent and integrated national system. The methodological approach is still general but adequate and the central control of the process to develop reference levels should assist with issues around consistency.

It is proposed that simulation models will be used to estimate the reference levels. While this is acceptable, it is advisable that the results be still be easy to explain and communicate.

The proposed approach is consistent with the guidance developed by the UNFCCC.

Overall, this standard is met.

4. Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards
(maximum 300 words):

The proposal contains a detailed description and process flow of how the system would operate, with IDEAM managing the technological platform. Its design evolves from the methods and approaches used for the historic analysis of deforestation. Approaches used have already been published, providing transparency to the design process. The plans for a National Forest Inventory are a useful addition that will assist to enhance the reliability of carbon estimates given the complex landscapes found in the country.

The multiple resolutions and frequencies proposed are a useful way to contain costs, but more importantly, it could provide timely way to assess possible displacement of emissions. The specific approach to be used to assess possible displacement of emissions and ways to minimize them will be elaborated during the development of the Strategy.

It is proposed that community monitoring approaches will be used as a complement of the national carbon monitoring system. However, details of how they would work are not provided. Community monitoring appears to be much more relevant in the safeguards and co-benefit information systems.

In its design, the programme identifies existing national systems that could provide relevant information as well as the institutions responsible for their collection. This mainstreaming of the systems should ensure greater policy coherence and contain costs.

This standard is met.

5. Component 5: Schedule and Budget (maximum 300 words):

Colombia has managed to mobilize a wide range of funding sources to support the implementation of the RPP. This is very positive and should contribute to a sound readiness process. However, multiple sources also bring additional challenges in terms of coordination and transaction costs. This seems particularly relevant for some RPP components that combine up to 6 funding sources. A dedicated effort to coordinate donors and projects is recommended during implementation to facilitate the process. In terms of UN-REDD funding, it would be useful to make sure that its contribution can be deployed in the proposed areas in a way that maximizes synergies with other funding sources.

In terms of budget allocations, most of them seem very reasonable. However, two areas of concern are the limited resources for the assessment of drivers of deforestation and root causes as well as the analysis of sectoral policies. While the methodology for such assessments is not provided, unless sufficient survey or census data is available, it is likely that those components will require some form of survey, requiring additional funds and more upfront funds.

The standard is met.

6. Component 6: Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (maximum 300 words):

The logic framework in section 6.a includes a detailed framework to assess the overall readiness effort. In addition, section 6b includes a separate framework specific for UNREDD. The first one contains more than 40 different products and an even larger means of verification of the program.

This is useful to ensure that activities are carried away, however, it seems be too complex. Some flexibility in its application may be useful to adapt to both local circumstances and the outcomes the UNFCCC definitions on REDD+.

The specific framework for the UNREDD program are appropriate and manageable.

Standard is met.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the R-PP Document of [insert country name] (maximum 400 words):

The R-PP has already gone through significant refinements through its various iterations. While the current version is very thorough, it contains in some sections excessive explanations and detail.

While there could be scope for improvement in form, there is limited improvement to be made in substance. The delay in implementation of the programme is the greatest risk.

The proposed plan is ambitious and complex, as such, it is essential for its success that adequate capacity and resources be secured in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), while no specific change is recommended, it would be useful to consider if a reallocation of resources is needed.

A similar recommendation to secure sufficient resources is the assessment work of drivers of deforestation and policy options.