

Pre-Validation and Validation Workshops – Democratic Republic of Congo

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

17-19 March 2010





National REDD Coordination – Democratic Republic of Congo

R-PP Pre-Validation and Validation Workshops 18-19 February 2010

PRE-VALIDATION WORKSHOP: THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY

The Pre-Validation Workshop started with an introductory speech delivered by Philémon Mukendi, moderator, who presented the workshop's agenda. Mr. Kasulu, MECNT Director for Sustainable Development, thanked the attendees for their presence and reminded them of the goals of the workshop and the submission process of the R-PP to FCPF and UN-REDD. He claimed that the R-PP could come into force by May or June if the Document were accepted.

Presentation 1: The REDD+ Process in the DRC: Goals and Future Prospects (Director Vincent Kasulu)

Presentation in Annex 1

In the introduction, Director Vincent Kasulu explained the process of going from REDD to REDD+, as well as the discussions to enter REDD++ (geared to take into account terrestrial carbon). Afterwards, he named the several components of the R-PP

It is important to emphasize the following points in this presentation:

- REDD preparedness is improving
- The R-PP will represent a true joint national action plan that includes all the activities necessary for REDD preparedness in the DRC for the next three years
- By 2013, the DRC must have established the structures that will allow attracting massive investment for effectively reducing emissions and poverty.

Presentation 2: Governance Structures for REDD at a National and Province Level (Coordinator Léon Kanu Mbizi)

Presentation in Annex 2

The Coordinator started by explaining that the activities to put into practice all the components contained in the R-PP – as well as the application of REDD – must rely on institutional structures. Afterwards he briefly presented the components and roles of several structures provided by Decree dated 16 November 2009. He also mentioned the main challenges to be faced, such as ensuring the permanence of the structures created and guaranteeing the application of the National Committee's

decisions. At a province level, the procedure consists of progressively establishing the provincial structures as provided by the Decree. Eleven focal points will be appointed within the government by 2012.

The following points must be outlined:

- By 2013, the DRC must have activated national and sub-national structures that will allow managing the development of the REDD process.
- It is an important challenge that must be jointly addressed by all stakeholders.

The debate was then started by Philemon Mukendi, moderator. The following issues were addressed during the discussions:

(i) Field of application for the REDD Mechanism

On this matter, the attendees demanded that the DRC support REDD+ (including deforestation, forest degradation, sustainable forest management, and the preservation and increase of carbon stocks). REDD++ could be harmful to the DRC because the fact of including terrestrial carbon could weaken the efforts and reduce carbon prices, and also few countries have the technical capacity to monitor terrestrial carbon, which could become a hindrance for the REDD process. The REDD++ approach is supported by COMESA. The countries of the Congo Basin are currently dealing with COMESA so that the issue of terrestrial carbon be addressed at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification instead of the UNFCCC.

(ii) Components of the Inter-Ministerial Committee

The questions revolved around the reasons for not including certain key ministries in the Inter-Ministerial Committee, e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The attendees claimed that it was not possible to have such a large number of ministries included in the Committee for the sake of its own right functioning. However, it is possible to look for those ministries that have a crucial role in the REDD process – as provided by the Prime Minister's Decree. In fact, the R-PP states that the members of the first Inter-Ministerial Meeting will analyze the relevance of other key ministries.

(iii) Role of Provinces during the Process

Provincial ministers attending the meeting expressed their disappointment for not having been included in the preparation process of the R-PP, as well as their concerns regarding their future involvement. The attendees reassured them by explaining that the IEC+ Plan (Information, Education, Communication and Consultation) – planned for the next three years – would be province-based and would allow provincial stakeholders to become totally involved in the process. Nevertheless, it would have been difficult to carry out systematic consultation for the R-PP at a province level due to budget limits and timings. Yet three provincial consultation workshops took place in 2009 in Kisangani, Matadi and Bukavu, and two additional workshops are to be held before mid-2010. In addition, the MECNT is creating a secretariat that will be in charge of organizing the participation at COP and other UNFCCC meetings, as well as organizing exchanges between provincial ministries and ministries from abroad.

The absence of provincial representatives to the National REDD Committee was considered a problem, as the Forestry Consulting Committee itself is formed by 11 provincial representatives. The idea of a rotating system was proposed, i.e. two different provincial representatives at each meeting – with the purpose of maintaining the size restrictions of the Committee for its correct functioning. However, one of the ministers stated that such a system would not be adequate, as the flow of information among the provinces is not optimal. The National REDD Coordination is expected to address this issue as soon as possible.

The placement of focal points at governors' level in provinces is necessary for considering the cross-sectoral nature of REDD. At a national level, there is also a tendency to eventually seek support from the Prime Minister's Office during the implementation phase in order to facilitate coordination among sectors.

The main concerns were that the process might mostly have a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up approach, and that provincial structures will not be elaborated yet – at least not at the same level as national structures – but only as of 2012. Attendees explained that the National Coordination intends to immediately appoint provincial focal points for REDD so as to have a group of spokesmen on the ground. It would be possible to directly develop provincial structures but it could lead to difficulties in the implementation and thus to possible delays. Therefore, the placement of provincial focal points will be the first step and their responsibilities will be to design such provincial structures. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand the difference between “structure” and “process”. The priority is not to create structures, but to start real processes that allow building provincial strategies that support the national strategy.

(iv) Selection and Functioning of Geographical Pilot Projects

The project-selection criteria have been defined. The implementation of projects will be carried out in direct cooperation with the provinces, and the CBFF – through the National REDD Coordination – should be able to finance such projects. A pilot-project coordinator will have to be recruited to work with such issues at the National REDD Coordination level and he should work directly with all local stakeholders. One of the biggest concerns is the sustainability of projects after 2012.

(v) REDD Implementation Framework

The problem of climate change is a global problem. Therefore, a global financial mechanism will need to be developed. Each country identifies the efforts it carries out; it implements the MRV system, measures its performance and hands in its “bill” to the global community. An independent validation organ will come and validate that “bill”. Financing will only be granted according to the achieved performance. In order to earn the international community's trust, funding will be managed by an independent organization. Provided that part of the efforts will be carried out at a province level, funding will be allocated according to their performance. When responsibilities are transferred to a province level, then it is possible to imagine provincial funding – but for that it is necessary to earn trust at an international level first. The Terms of Reference on this matter are stated on the R-PP.

(vi) Carbon Stocks Estimates at a National Level

There are no proper allometric equations on the Congo Basin. Until now, the DIAF states that default equations are being used. A joint project will be launched together with the OIBT to strengthen the capacity of national frameworks for assessing above-ground biomass. The OIBT project plans to train 80 technicians from now until May, although several activities have already started in the Equator Province. Ten experts will be submitted to a new training program on carbon-stock assessment at the beginning of March, organized by the WCS in Ituri-Mambasa.

Presentation 3: Development of the REDD Strategy (Fabien Monteils)

Presentation in Annex 3

Mr. Monteils started by presenting the impacts of climate change and the current international processes for mitigating those impacts. Afterwards, he listed several questions on the elaboration of the national strategy. The R-PP does not give an answer to such questions yet and the country has three years to do it. Then he explained the process that should allow the completion of the national

strategy: assessment, monitoring, pilot projects, strategic social and environmental assessments, reference levels, etc.

The moderator opened the debate. Discussions revolved around the following issues:

(i) Quantification of the Impact of Activities Addressing Greenhouse Emissions

Carbon accounting is an important challenge especially when used to identify the impact that specific programs or activities have on emissions, and it also allows ensuring that funds are allocated there where reductions are likely to be achieved. However, the issue of allocating funds based on results achieved at a sub-national level is yet to be discussed. The current options are either a result-based payment structure (managed at a national level for provinces), or a program-oriented structure (financing management plans, etc.). Financing coming from abroad should be monitored and allocated where it can have a real impact. A system aiming to ensure a correct fund management is being elaborated and it is expected to be introduced at a national and province level, as well as in projects and communities. The distribution will happen at a political level. Therefore, in order to continue receiving international support, it is crucial to ensure that funds are correctly managed and distributed to achieve the required performance. At the moment, the country is demanding \$ 22 million without previously measuring performance. The goal is to create the means of working according to international rules (but without guaranteeing emission reductions). This will also allow defining national-local rules.

Several attendees questioned the relevance of remunerating those efforts which impact can not be measured. Certainly, carbon accounting can be random, but there are international compatibility rules (IPCC) which function as a worldwide-agreed reference. Once defined, the participation rules can come into force. For instance, Brazilians saw that it was a complicated process, so they established a default value at 100 tC/ha (rather conservative). They know that it is imprecise and they are planning to improve their techniques in the future – but at least they have given the first step. Thus, in spite of the fact that the DRC might not be perfectly equipped for precisely measuring emission reductions or absorption increases, it is possible to find mechanisms to become involved in the process.

In the UNFCCC negotiation framework, the remuneration for reducing emissions/increasing absorption is being discussed, i.e. it is about remunerating carbon flows and not carbon stocks. Therefore, not only is it necessary to monitor the evolution of the forest cover, but also to focus on carbon flows, and – above all – to be able to obtain actual levels of emissions reduction.

(ii) Risk of Disputes in Pilot Project Areas

REDD deals with potentially conflictive issues – especially when it comes to lands. Pilot projects will be implemented in areas where other initiatives are currently taking place at a community level, which will noticeably reduce the risk of disputes. However, problems are likely to emerge and mitigation instruments are yet to be developed (e.g. complaint management mechanisms, mechanisms to disseminate information at a national level, among others).

(iii) Role of Local Communities in REDD

One of the attendees stressed the fact that local communities represent a minimal and limited percentage of emissions (except for firewood extraction) compared to cities, industrial sectors, etc. Besides, such minor emissions derive from their essential survival activities. Thus, it will be necessary to provide communities with the means to restructure their way of living. Attendees stated that a deep, participative analysis of the causes of deforestation needed to be carried out from now until

the end of the year, enabling stakeholders to reach consensus. In the specific case of the DRC, it is important to mention that 85% of emissions are caused by deforestation and forest degradation – which is not the case of global figures, as deforestation and forest degradation represent less than 20% of emissions). The three years to follow will allow having a more precise idea of how to create incentive, supervision and monitoring systems geared to involve communities in the REDD mechanism.

Presentation 4: Measuring Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (André Kondjo)

Presentation in Annex 4

Mr. Kondjo introduced the components of the MRV system:

- A remote sensing component for monitoring the evolution and changes of land use;
- A forest inventory component for estimating carbon stocks in different land use types;
- An information management system that gathers together all data;
- The elaboration of a greenhouse gas inventory

This system will particularly involve DIAF and DDD.

Presentation 5: Reference Emission Level and Emission Level (Bruno Guay)

Presentation in Annex 5

Bruno Guay presented the political implications related to the elaboration of reference levels and reminded of the main elements of such elements, e.g. emissions over time and assessment of national situations (including socioeconomic data, future development needs and reference scenarios based on modeling tools).

The main points of the presentation were the following:

- Reference levels are useful to make the decision of granting credits as long as they meet certain criteria;
- The REDD reference levels and strategy are directly linked.

Presentation 6: IEC+ Plan (Philemon Mukendi)

Presentation in Annex 6

Mr. Mukendi introduced the components of the Information, Education, Communication and Consultation Plan. He insisted that the implementation of the R-PP could not be carried out without an intensive information and consultation process.

The debate revolved around the following topics:

(i) Carbon Measurement Techniques

The measurement of emissions from deforestation in the DRC will combine both data obtained through remote sensing and field data resulting from carbon inventories (3000 permanent experimental plots). Remote sensing is necessary because it would be impossible to measure the whole forest cover otherwise. Nevertheless, it can also show technical limitations – especially in cloudy days. Therefore, it is complemented with field data. The forest inventory consists of three stages: stratification, pre-inventory and inventory. A certain number of physical parameters will be measured (diameter and height of trees for calculating above-ground biomass). Such measurements make use of allometric equations and provide an overview of biomass, which is then converted to carbon measurement units.

(ii) Integration of Social, Economic and other Aspects into the MRV System

Not only should the monitoring system be limited to the impacts of carbon, but it also should include legal, governance and development aspects, among others. The MRV system and other REDD impacts are included in the R-PP. This system consists of four components: governance, economic issues, social and cultural issues, and environmental issues. It will be operated independently from the DIAF inventory process.

The participation in REDD must be carried out based on free, prior and informed consent. With this purpose, the IEC Plan includes a high level of information. Collaboration with the civil society is crucial for maintaining trust along the process.

(iii) R-PP Validation Process

The R-PP consultation process was carried out through consultation workshops, work groups, etc. Eventhough it is not possible to consult the whole population on this document, it is estimated that a satisfying sample was consulted. The only regret concerns the participation of provinces which – as stated above – is to be improved within the IEC+ framework.

The R-PP is a procedural document that establishes how the country can achieve REDD preparedness and it does not include the way REDD will function at a national level. The implementation of the R-PP will take place in a transparent and participative way.

The next stages are the following:

- Distributing the Second Version on Friday 19 February
- Analyzing the last remarks (to be submitted by 24 February)
- Sending the final version of the R-PP on Friday 26 February
- Approval by UN-REDD and FCPF (UN-REDD Policy Board Meeting from 17-19 March and FCPF Committee Meeting from 22-25 March)
- If the document is approved by the above-mentioned agencies, funds should be available in May or June

VALIDATION WORKSHOP, FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY

After an introduction and singing the national anthem, the opening ceremony – chaired by H.E. Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism – started with an introductory speech delivered by the UNDP Representative (see Annex 7).

Afterwards, H.E. Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism delivered his opening (see Annex 8) speech and inaugurated the activities.

The workshop started with the presentation of the National REDD Coordinator Kanu Mbizi, who introduced the main items contained in the R-PP. Afterwards, Mr. Kasulu gave a presentation on the upcoming R-PP validation process and on pilot projects (selection criteria and already selected projects). Both presentations can be found in Annex 9 and 10.

The debate – opened by Philémon Mukendi (moderator) – revolved around the following issues:

(i) Pilot Projects

There are two types of pilot projects that will enhance the elaboration of the National REDD Strategy: geographical and sectoral. The former will be put into practice and supervised by the National REDD Coordination; the latter are existing projects addressing one of the branches from the preliminary REDD strategy. At the moment, only geographical projects will be launched. Concerning sectoral

projects, they are inventoried and the purpose is to make such projects reach the national level. The relation between sectoral projects and national processes are yet to be defined but the exchange will be bilateral (e.g. project developers could be in charge of monitoring certain indicators, whereas the National Coordination could support them to obtain funds, among others).

Concerns arose on the participative nature of geographical projects. On this topic, the attendees claimed that the selection criteria for these projects were defined during the three consultation workshops in which project developers and civil society members participated. Many of the identified pilot projects are being managed by the civil society (e.g. in Isangi and Mambasa). On the other hand, any other project that has not been developed by the civil society requires its involvement. Finally, these projects are based on existing local participative processes.

Eight regional projects will be developed. The goal of these projects is to cover all of the forest ecosystems in the country – and not necessarily all of the 11 provinces.

With regard to funding, it will need to be obtained through the CBFF. As funding is uncertain, it is necessary to start seeking now. Yet, it is known that projects are more likely to be accepted once they have entered a national REDD strategy (as in this case).

(ii) Results from Research on the Causes of Deforestation and on the REDD+ Potential in the DRC

Results from research on the causes of deforestation and forest degradation are not yet available. Currently, the UCL is carrying out an analysis on the factors needed to localize deforestation. Field work is also being carried out by UNEP within the framework of a post-conflict environmental assessment. Results will be subject to validation during workshops at a province and national level and they will be available by the end of the year.

For analyzing REDD+ potential, the work has allowed to find out the amount of GHG produced, to target its evolution and to identify preliminary alleviation measures and their costs. This research also originated 14 programs.

(iii) REDD Funding Distribution between Public and Private Sectors

Once emission reductions are achieved, a monitoring system is functioning and an external auditor has certified reductions, the international fund will provide the national fund with financing. Such a national fund will be independent and there will be specific shares for the public treasury, for the provinces, etc. Research on benefit sharing should allow deciding which system will be used in the DRC. As an example, in Madagascar, it is expected that 25% of benefits be designated to the State, 25% to project managers and 50% to the base levels.

(iv) R-PP Budget

The \$ 22 million requested represent the amount available for preparedness. For the implementation phase itself, the budget will be granted in accordance with the situation and with the efforts made to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. It is necessary to establish a connection with the phase approach established in Copenhagen: currently, we are in Phase 1 (where the country is defining its REDD strategy).

(v) Community Involvement

The process is not spread out in the country yet. However, the efforts made until now provide a sample to forge ahead. At present, budget is insufficient for carrying out consultation in all provinces

and territories. However, once it is financially feasible (after the validation of the R-PP), a widespread involvement and consultation process will take place in all provinces.

(vi) *Carbon Monitoring*

Only terrestrial carbon is relevant to the REDD framework. In order to estimate carbon, default factors are currently being used. Some activities are taking place within the DIAF for accounting above-ground biomass and there have been some research visits to Brazil, the USA, among other countries. This “delay” is being made up for and this should allow having an operating system by the end of 2012.

Director Vincent Kasulu proceeded to end the workshop. The R-PP was adopted by the attendees. The importance of the civil society’s support to this document was acknowledged. If the document is approved by the end of March, activities could start in May.