

REVIEW OF THE UN-REDD PROGRAM IN BOLIVIA

This report reviews the “United Nations Program for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Bolivia” formulated by a Joint National Program involving the Bolivian Government and the United Nations Organizations (FAO, UNDP, UNEP). This report is organized in three main sections. The first provides general comments to the program with regard to its overall consistency and strategic contents. The second, based on a set of criteria defined on the UN-REDD Rules of Procedure, assesses the Program’s process of formulation, its expected efficiency and effectiveness to achieve its outcomes, and its likelihood of success. The third section provides suggestions to improve the Bolivian Program through sharpening its strategic focus, embracing some other strategic actions, and adjusting the proposed outcomes.

General comments to the UN-REDD Program in Bolivia

The program reviewed here constitutes an important step taken by the Bolivian Government to delineate and implement a program aimed at reducing the emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) through enhancing the capacities of both national state agencies and civil society to implement REDD+ actions. This section provides general comments about the main strengths and weaknesses of this program.

The diagnostic of the forestry sector and land-use change: the document provides a quite comprehensive analysis of the situation in the forestry sector, and the drivers prompting deforestation and forest degradation, while reviewing the legal and institutional framework for land use, forest management and territorial planning. The latter leads to identify the main institutional, legal and policy barriers to overcome in order to reach a situation of readiness for REDD+. Yet, the diagnostic on which the UN-REDD Program is based is still largely descriptive and needs to identify better what are the causal relationships and critical drivers that have to be addressed in order to stimulate a process of change towards a new scenario. The document includes a preliminary analysis of the causal relationships affecting on deforestation and forest degradation in Appendix.

Identification of barriers and actions to overcome them: In the UN-REDD Program’s view, the identification of critical issues (or barriers) to overcome in order to achieve a readiness situation are mainly related to a lack of institutional capacities for enforcing the existing legal frameworks. Indeed, this dimension is critical to understand the policy failures to halt deforestation and forest degradation. Nonetheless, other factors that should be fully acknowledged are related with some structural factors such as the persistence of unclear property rights, market conditions that favor non-forest land uses, and asymmetric power relations that tend to favor unsustainable land and forest uses.

Main intervention areas and proposed outcomes: the Program proposes three clear intervention areas aimed at 1) enhancing capacities of national state agencies, 2) improving the capacities of the civil society to implement REDD+ actions, and 3) promoting REDD+ demonstration activities. The implementation of these three components will clearly lead to improve the conditions for implementing future REDD+

actions in Bolivia. However, the first component requires introducing more explicitly a multilevel perspective adjusted to the different level of autonomies adopted in Bolivia. The second component is largely focused in building capacities of local social actors and enlarging social participation, although more effective outcomes could be accomplished by adopting approaches that improve participation and consultation while addressing some of the pre-conditions that put in risk the effectiveness of REDD+ programs (i.e., clarifying land, forest and carbon rights, facilitating multi-actor landscape governance, and supporting local systems for enhancing land and forest management) in coordination with other state agencies and social organizations. The third component proposed is key since it is oriented to promote demonstration activities, however, more explicit actions are required to establish mechanisms to measure outcomes and share lessons.

Assessing the UN-REDD Program based on selected criteria

This section adopts the UN-REDD Rules of Procedure as the criteria to assess the UN-REDD Program that has been elaborated in Bolivia. These criteria embrace issues of ownership and participation of the proposal, effectiveness and efficiency, and its likelihood of success. The Bolivian program, in general, complies with most of these criteria, although it is recommended here that some aspects need further review.

Ownership of the Program: This Program has been formulated by the National Program of Climatic Change (PNCC), Viceministry of Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Water, with the support of the organizations of the United Nation. This program is consistent with the National Program of Development 2006-2011 (2006), the National Plan for Integrated Forest Management (2008), and the National Strategy for Forest and Climate Change (2009). Nonetheless, the Bolivian Government is calling to an international conference on climate change with social moments in April 2010, and it is uncertain the extent to which the outcomes of such conference will influence on shaping the mitigation strategies in Bolivia.

Level of consultation, participation and engagement: a summary of the consultation steps followed during the Program formulation are outlined in Appendix. It stresses that some consultation activities were implemented to capture the views and perspectives of the main social organizations, though they only started in September 2009. The Program also highlights that the consultation process reached the local level. However, no evidence is provided about how the consultation process was carried out (for example, number of meetings, number of leaders attending them, and the organizations represented). Furthermore, the document does not address the different actor's perspectives about REDD mechanisms, and the way in which the Program is conciliating those views.

UN-REDD Program effectiveness: the UN-REDD Program needs not only to make progress on REDD+ actions such as building the required systems for determining reference scenarios, carbon monitoring and verification, but to articulate more strongly with the decision-making and implementation processes related to land, tenure and fiscal policies (linked to output 1). In addition, the creation of social capacities around REDD+ do not only depend on training about REDD+ (linked to output 2) but primarily of

improving some of the REDD+ pre-conditions for it to work effectively such as the formalization of land rights, building the local institutions to manage them, and providing the incentives for the people to benefit from those rights. In addition more experimentation is needed when implementing REDD+ demonstration projects (linked to output 3), but mechanisms for measuring impacts and share lessons need to be put in place. Not addressing these issues may limit the effectiveness of the Program in Bolivia.

Cost-efficiency of the Program: About 60% of the total resources budgeted for the Program implementation (US\$ 4.4 million) are allocated to accomplish Output 1, and this proportion is 16% and 25% for Output 2 and Output 3. It seems reasonable to devote a larger portion of the resources to put in place the different systems demanded for REDD+ actions at the central government. However, additional resources will be required to accomplish outputs 2 and 3. In this regard, it is expected that the Program will benefit from the contribution of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), and GTZ-KfW for undertaking the activities included in Output 2 and Output 3. The final budget of the National Joint Program will reflect the different sources of co-financing.

Management of risks and likelihood of success: the Program mentions that the current government has issued policy documents which tend to highlight the multi-functional role of forests, and stress their importance to contribute to poverty alleviation and mitigation of climate change. However, there is an important gap between the rhetoric of the current policy and the practice regarding land and forest administration. There are also some contradicting positions in the central government, and between the central government and the regions regarding the ways to enhance the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation. This Program might contribute to fill those gaps.

Suggestions for improving the UN-REDD Program in Bolivia

Make explicit the definitions of the Program: the Program does not make explicit that ways through which REDD+ can be achieved, and the priorities that will be given to actions for avoiding deforestation and degradation vis-à-vis sustainable forest management, plantations and forest conservation. The latter is even more important since the Bolivian government has elaborated a position around climate change mitigation that reinforces the role of the state, the defense of indigenous rights, and integrated forest management, and formulated strong criticism against market-based mechanisms.

Sharpen the focus of the diagnostic: the Program assumes that main failures are related to the lack of institutional capacities which created difficulties for enforcing the land, forest and environmental laws. However, it does not question the shortcomings of those laws—reason by which they are currently under revision—as well as the extra-sectoral factors that influence on deforestation and forest degradation. A way to move forward the analysis is to assess what policy instruments favor deforestation and forest degradation, and which ones work on the other way around. Also, when assessing institutional capacities is important to relate them to the resources that the state agencies have available and their decision-making power. Linking these three dimensions would help to identify the actors that need larger support to clarify the future REDD+ actions.

Tighten REDD+ linkages to other policies: higher attention has to be placed to the institutions and policies shaping the governance of forest landscapes in a context of several autonomous levels of government (as defined by the new National Constitution), and in multi-actor landscapes. REDD+ actions have to link better with other sector policies, mainly the ones related to legitimization of land ownership, regulations for forest management, zoning and territorial planning, distribution of earnings from natural resources use, and fiscal incentives for agricultural, forest and conservation activities.

Include some other strategic actions: the diagnostic identifies a series of barriers based on which have been built the Program components, priority outputs, and activities. Nonetheless, beyond the support to state agencies with capacity building to state and civil society actors, there is scope to intervene with actions oriented towards supporting an enabling legal and institutional environment for implementing REDD+ actions. This can be achieved, for example, through clarifying forest and carbon rights, propose instruments for effective governance in multi-actor landscapes, putting in place mechanisms for conflict resolution, and facilitate negotiations among different levels of governments and actors, among others. With this regard, the Program could facilitate processes and provide guidelines and methodologies conducive to align the other sectoral policies and implementation processes to the aims of the REDD+ Program.

Adjust the components and outcomes: the components and outputs suggested in the Program would require some adjustment in order to improve the effectiveness, cost-efficiency and political relevance of the UN-REDD Program in Bolivia.

- Output 1 requires little revision since it is aimed to implement the systems which are basic for the functioning of a REDD+ mechanism in Bolivia. However, main shortcomings are that it is heavily loaded to support the central government and limits the participation (for example in monitoring) from municipal and local governments, and even rural communities, which should be key players in these systems. Therefore, this component needs to include some other levels of government, and to promote more participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of the systems.
- Output 2 is relatively narrow and disconnected from output 1. It is heavily biased to capacity building through training courses and dissemination. For example, a more effective learning could be achieved by linking training activities from indigenous and other traditional people to the implementation of a monitoring and verification system of land and forest use, and the resulting carbon emissions. Another way to promote participation would be by linking REDD+ actions to land regularization initiatives taking place in the forest landscapes, and the adoption of guidelines, rules and instruments for making effective the process of territorial planning. In this view, the program should facilitate a more applied process of capacity building.
- Output 3 should promote more flexible ways to promote lessons learning and sharing. In the way this output is framed, it seems more oriented to regulate the demonstration projects through the adoption of standard guidelines and training on methodologies

and procedures. However, the promotion of REDD+ initiatives should be undertaken as an experimental process to learn from differentiated institutional arrangements and compensation schemes but including mechanisms to evaluate impacts, systematize lessons and share them across the different levels of government and actors involved.