TAP Review of the Readiness Package submitted by Uruguay

Independent TAP Expert Review on the Self-assessment Process of Uruguay's R-Package

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Abbreviations and acronyms

COP Conference of the Parties

ENREDD+ Estrategia Nacional de REDD+; National REDD+ Strategy
ESMF Environmental and Social Management Framework

FCPF Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FREL Forest Reference Emissions Level

GHG Greenhouse Gas

INIA Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria

National Agricultural Research Institute

IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

MA Ministerio de Ambiente

Ministry of Environment

MARC Mecanismo de Atención de Reclamos y Conflictos

Grievance and Conflict Resolution Mechanism

MGAP Ministerio de Ganadería Agricultura y Pesca

Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries

MGAS Marco de Gestión Ambiental y Social; Environmental and Social Management Framework

MVOTMA Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente

Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment

NGO Non-Governmental Organization PC Participants Committee of FCPF

REDD+ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, the role of conservation,

sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks

R-Package REDD+ Readiness Package
R-PIN Readiness Plan Idea

R-PP Readiness Preparation Plan

SESA Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

SIS Safeguards Information System

SNMF Sistema Nacional de Monitoreo Forestal

National Forest Monitoring System

SNRCC Sistema Nacional de Respuesta al Cambio Climático

National Climate Change Response System

TAP Technical Advisor Panel

UN United Nations

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Objectives

The Participants Committee (PC) of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) should receive an independent review report from the Technical Advisor Panel (TAP).

The key task for the TAP review is to perform a desk-review of Uruguay's REDD+ R-Package. This report has two main objectives:

- To provide an independent technical review of the REDD+ R-Package elaborated by the Republic of Uruguay (hereafter: Uruguay) and of the Self-Assessment Process that Uruguay conducted to develop its R-package.
- To inform the FCPF PC regarding endorsement of the R- Package.

2. Methodological approach

This chapter presents the scope of the work performed for the TAP review, as per the Terms of Reference provided by the World Bank - FCPF:

- Perform a review of Uruguay's progress and the self-assessment report, based on guidelines in the R-Package Assessment Framework
- Review Uruguay's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process that was used for the self-assessment and the reported outcome.
- Review key outputs and documents that underpin, and are referenced in, the R-Package, including documents pertaining to the national REDD strategy and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), reference levels and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures.
- Provide constructive and targeted feedback, as required to align the processes used for selfassessment and reported outcome, comparing with the R-Package Assessment Framework guidance.

The TAP assessment reviewed the R-Package provided in Spanish in 2022, which includes the following elements:

- i. A summary of the REDD+ readiness preparation process
- ii. A report of the national multi-stakeholder self-assessment process
- iii. The results of the national multi-stakeholder assessment; and
- iv. References to documentation pertinent to the nine subcomponents, prepared during the readiness preparation process

The purpose of the TAP's review was not to second-guess Uruguay's self-assessment, but rather to focus on whether a due process and approach was followed to perform the self-assessment and give constructive feedback.

The TAP assessment is presented in three parts:

- Review of Uruguay's self-assessment process and documentation, as contained in Uruguay's R-Package (Chapter 3.a)
- Review of Uruguay's progress on REDD+ readiness, based on the R-Package submitted as well
 as the supporting documentation referenced in the R-Package, for each of the REDD+
 Readiness sub-components (Chapter 3.b)
- Summary Assessment and Recommendations (Chapter 4).

3. TAP Review

Uruguay submitted the Spanish version of the REDD+ R-Package report to the FCPF in October 2022, which was the basis for the present review. It was prepared according to FCPF's 2013 Readiness Assessment Framework under the leadership of Ministry of Environment (MA, based on acronym in Spanish) https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP, based on acronym in Spanish) https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ganaderia-agricultura-pesca. A version translated by FCPF into English was available Oct 31st. The main body of the R-Package provides a summary of the self-evaluation of the REDD+ Readiness preparation process and the country's participatory processes and mechanisms to achieve further progress with the four readiness components, as well as activities to consolidate the REDD+ process.

Review of Self-assessment process and documentation

Background

This section reviews the process that Uruguay followed to conduct its multi-stakeholder self-assessment. The TAP review is based on the description of the self-assessment process contained in the R-Package report, and on supporting documents referenced there. The review considers the documentation prepared for the assessment, the process for selecting and involving stakeholders, and for reflecting their opinions in the R-Package report.

Prior to reporting the results of the TAP review, it is important to recognize that Uruguay is a small country (176,220 km²) with a population of approx. 3.5 million and with temperate climate. Natural grasslands were used during centuries for cattle-raising, and the country has little native forest cover. Uruguay has experienced an increased forest cover the last decades, mostly converting grasslands to forest plantations of exotic species, with a net gain of tree cover year 2000-2020 of 542 kha or +54% according to www.globalforestwatch.org. These factors together make it different from most of the REDD+ countries.

Process and methodology

According to the R-Package report, and as far as the reviewer can be able to assess, the multistakeholder self-assessment process followed the recommendations of the Guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, concerning the selection of participants, preparation of the events, facilitation of the assessment process, synthesis and dissemination of results, and validation.

As the main result of the stakeholder participation process, the R-Package Report validates the rating of each subcomponent and criterion according to the traffic light indicators (red, orange, yellow, green) provided in the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework. The TAP Reviewer has included not only information from the R-Package tables "Self-Assessment Result", but also additional relevant information from the text.

Table 1. Total participation of stakeholder groups in the REDD+ consultation process in Uruguay.

| Stakeholders | Number of participants ¹ | Men (%) | Women (%) |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Organization self-identified as indigenous | 15 | 53.3 | 46.7 |
| Academia | 4 | 0 | 100 |
| Institutional | 56 | 62.5 | 37.5 |
| NGO | 46 | 65.2 | 34.8 |
| Women's organization | 3 | 0 | 100 |
| Private Sector | 1 | 100 | 0 |
| Family producers | 21 | 47.6 | 52.4 |
| Total | 145 | 57.2 | 42.8 |

¹Numbers according to R-Package: Note that the figures give a sum of 146.

Results

Uruguay has made much progress since the Mid-term Progress Report in August 2018, which at that moment registered slow progress due to limited baseline information on the country's scarce native forests and initial administrative challenges. At mid-term only sub component 1b (Consultation, participation and outreach) and 3 (Emission reference levels/Reference levels) were progressing well. The Mid-term Report however also mentioned a strong legal, political and institutional framework.

The self-assessment process finalized in 2022 gave as the result that out of 34 criteria in the FCPF's Readiness Assessment Framework 4 now have a significant progress (**GREEN**); 27 are progressing well but require further development (**YELLOW**); while 3 other criteria have more weaknesses and require further development (**ORANGE**). Two criteria in the implementation framework were considered as not applicable. Finally, it is positive that no criteria are scored as demonstrating no progress (**RED**).

The self-assessment did not estimate an overall rating for each of the nine sub components, but based on the ratings and information provided, the TAP reviewer found that all sub components have progressed well but still require further development (YELLOW). This is further explained in the text.

Table 2. Consolidated Results of the Participatory Self-Assessment

| 1- Readiness Organization and Consultation | Assessment Preparation Package |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements | |
| Progress Indicator 1: Accountability and transparency | |
| Progress Indicator 2: Operating mandate and budget | |
| Progress Indicator 3: Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector | |
| collaboration | |
| Progress Indicator 4: Technical supervision capacity | |
| Progress Indicator 5: Fund management capacity | |
| Progress Indicator 6: Feedback and grievance redress mechanism | |
| 1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach | |
| Progress Indicator 7: Participation and engagement of key stakeholders | |
| Progress Indicator 8: Consultation process | |
| Progress Indicator 9: Information sharing and accessibility of information | |
| Progress Indicator 10: Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes | |
| 2- Preparation of the REDD+ Strategy | Assessment Preparation Package |
| 2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governal | nce |
| Progress Indicator 11: Assessment and analysis | 12-4-2 |
| Progress Indicator 12: Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/ barriers to forest | |
| carbon stock enhancement | |
| Progress Indicator 13: Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities | |
| Progress Indicator 14: Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, | |
| governance | |
| Progress marker 15: Implications for forest law and policy | |
| 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options | |
| Progress Indicator 16: Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options | |
| Progress Indicator 17: Feasibility assessment | |
| Progress Indicator 18: Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies | |
| 2c. Implementation Framework | |
| Progress Indicator 19: Adoption and implementation of legislation/ regulations | N/A |
| Progress Indicator 20: Guidelines for implementation | N/A |
| Progress Indicator 21: Benefit sharing mechanism | |
| Progress indicator 22: National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ | |
| activities | |
| 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts | |
| Progress Indicator 23: Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues | |
| Progress Indicator 24: REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts | |
| Progress Indicator 25: Environmental and Social Management Framework | |
| 3- Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Levels | Assessment Preparation Package |
| Progress Indicator 26: Demonstration of methodology | |
| Progress Indicator 27: Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances | |
| Progress Indicator 28: Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and | |
| consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines | |
| 4- Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards | Assessment Preparation Package |
| 4a. National Forest Monitoring System | |
| Progress Indicator 29: Documentation of monitoring approach | |
| Progress Indicator 30: Demonstration of early system implementation | |
| Progress Indicator 31: Institutional arrangements and capacities | |
| 4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards | |
| Progress Indicator 32: Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and | 7 |
| environmental issues | |
| Progress Indicator 33: Monitoring, reporting and information sharing | |
| Progress Indicator 33: Monitoring, reporting and information snaring | |

4

TAP assessment. The participatory Self-assessment process in Uruguay followed the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The R-Package Report includes information on the Self-assessment process as well as its results. The Self-Assessment process was going on to certain extent already since 2013, but most of the consultation process seems to have been from 2017. A total of 145 persons have participated, including 62 women (42.8%) and 83 men (57.2%). Additionally, 615 persons participated in 21 exchanges and trainings on REDD+ from 2017 to 2020, where approx. 41% were women, however one of these events did not register gender of the participants.

During all stages of the REDD+ Readiness process, the country sought to involve stakeholders from different sectors of society, some of them connected to the forest ecosystems, including groups that self-identify as indigenous, as well as other parts of civil society, rural production societies, and educational institutions (see also sub-component 1b). Representatives of the MA (former MVOTMA¹) and MGAP also participated.

As a result of the process, Uruguay achieved progress in all four components of the readiness framework



Fig. 1. Stages of the Uruguay readiness process.

¹ Ministry of Environment (Ministerio de Ambiente, MA) was established July 9, 2020 by art. 291 of law 19889 <u>Ley N° 19.889</u>, focusing only on environment. Previously, REDD+ had been under the former Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment (Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, MVOTMA)

b. Review of Progress on REDD+ Readiness

This section assesses the progress on REDD+ Readiness for each of the four Readiness components:

(i) Readiness organization and consultation; (ii) Preparation of the National REDD+ Strategy; (iii) Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Level; and (iv) Monitoring systems and Safeguards; as well as the nine sub- components. The assessment is based on the criteria that Uruguay used for its self-assessment, which follow the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework guidelines. The TAP assessment discusses both the strengths and weaknesses of each Readiness component and sub-component.

The current TAP review is based on the REDD+ R-Package document prepared for FCPF by Uruguay and on the supporting documents referenced in the R-Package, which are available from the website https://forestcarbonpartnership.org/country/uruguay.

Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

Sub-Component 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements (Criteria 1-6)

Table 3. Assessment of sub-component 1a.

| 1a. National | 1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements | | |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| 1. Accounta | pility and transparency | | |
| 2. Operating | mandate and budget | | |
| 3. Multi-sec | or coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration | | |
| 4. Technical | supervision capacity | | |
| 5. Fund mar | agement capacity | | |
| 6. Feedback | and grievance redress mechanism | | |

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on national REDD+ management arrangements and their effectiveness in fulfilling core functions. The sub-component has on average satisfactory level of progress but with further development still required (YELLOW), and the most significant progress was on accountability and transparency (GREEN).

<u>Self-assessment</u>. The activities mentioned in the REDD+ R-Package were co-implemented by the Ministry of Environment (MA) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) in the framework of their respective responsibilities established by law. MGAP, through its General Forest Directorate is the national authority on forestry matters and leads the execution of the National Forest Policy. For the purpose of implementing the REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), a specific Ministerial Agreement was signed in May 2015 by MVOTMA (now MA) as the national environmental authority and UNFCCC Focal Point, and MGAP as national authority on forestry matters. Additionally, a REDD+ Technical Committee was then formed.

The institutional framework policy allowed a coordinated advancement of readiness activities, with a clearly defined structure and mandate, with necessary institutional support at the policy level, technical and institutional levels (*Indicators 1 and 2*). This framework is expected to guarantee the sustainability of the REDD+ Program in Uruguay. The integration and mainstreaming of the REDD+ activities and actions in the framework of the environmental and productive policies of the country were facilitated by the fact that the MGAP led the implementation of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (*Indicators 3 and 4*). The country has developed a National REDD+ Strategy (ENREDD+) with an action plan.

This is considered by the Government as a strength for the implementation of the REDD+ Uruguay Readiness Project. It is expected that these institutional agreements are maintained and strengthened for the implementation stage. Appendix II of the R-Package presents a proposed action plan to strengthen and redefine the necessary institutional agreements for implementing the ENREDD+ action lines in the future. A REDD+ Roundtable was held in Dec 2018 in the framework of the National Climate Change

Response System (SNRCC), as a space for exchange and participation of the public and private sectors, civil society and academia. The self-assessment highlights that Uruguay did not receive additional financing from any other source during implementation of the REDD+ Readiness Preparation, which guaranteed a transparent, effective and efficient management of the donation funds (indicator 5).

As part of the transparency and access to information processes, a mechanism based upon the agreements and existing institutional channels was developed, to permit its adequate implementation (Indicator 6). The goal of the procedure is to effectively manage, in accordance with national standards, and addressing the corresponding international principles, potential complaints and conflicts that could arise from the future implementation of the REDD+ National Strategy. The specific goals of the procedure are to: (i) identify and resolve implementation problems in a timely manner and cost-effective way; (ii) identify systemic problems; (iii) contribute to the achievement of REDD+ goals and improve the results; (iv) promote REDD+ accountability; and (v) contribute to promoting the participation and empowerment of relevant stakeholder.

TAP assessment. The national REDD+ management arrangements are positive. There was already a functioning institutional framework before the process started, where the REDD+ readiness project was inserted. This facilitate the two main ministries' (MA and MGAP) ability to supervise the readiness activities. It should be highlighted the strong value of having the main public sector stakeholders working together in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner, that also seems to be open, accountable and transparent. This is promoting institutional sustainability, but not necessarily "guarantee the sustainability of the REDD+ Program", since this also depends on other factors, such as the financial situation and policy in the future. The R-package mentions that the readiness process has not counted on other sources of financing than the REDD+ Readiness Preparation, however it would give higher expectation of sustainability if the process already know would broaden the sources of funding and investments, including the private sector. It is clear that the REDD+ framework has a crosssectoral approach, considering land-use planning, agriculture and livestock. It is further highly positive that Uruguay counts on a national REDD+ strategy with related action plan. There has not been received any complaints to the grievance redress mechanism, but this should not necessarily be taken as a sign that all is perfect, because more information about the existence of the mechanism might be necessary towards local stakeholders. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Sub-component 1b: Consultation, participation and outreach (criteria 7-10)

Table 4. Assessment of sub-component 1b.

| 1b. Consultation, Participation and Outreach | | |
|---|--|--|
| 7. Participation and engagement of key stakeholders | | |
| 8. Consultation process | | |
| 9. Information sharing and accessibility of information | | |
| 10. Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes | | |

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework reviews how consultations with key stakeholders were performed to ensure participation of and social dissemination among different social groups, as well as completeness and transparency of the consultation process.

This sub component is progressing well, but further development is required (YELLOW) since all criteria were rated YELLOW.

<u>Self-assessment</u>. Coordination and dialogues (indicators 7-9) have taken place during the REDD+ readiness process, including: (i) Technical Committee and Policy Committee meetings; (ii) Consultation workshops about drivers of deforestation, degradation and forest benefits; (iii) dialogue with groups self-identified as indigenous; (iv) REDD+ Roundtable; (v) Coordination group for the SNRCC; (vi) Interinstitutional dialogues; (vii) Working group on characteristics of the phases of REDD+; and (viii) Interinstitutional working group on design of the National Forest Monitoring System.

The Technical Committee and Policy Committee accompanied the whole readiness process. Monitoring meetings by both Committees allowed for continuous information exchange about the REDD+ goals, assuring that the activity management was integrated with the general frameworks of existing national and sectoral policies and those in development. 35 meetings of the Technical Committee and 13 meetings of the Policy Committee took place from 2006 to 2021 (Indicator 7).

Five consultations about the benefits, drivers of degradation and deforestation of native forest were carried out at territorial level during the preparation and dissemination before the ENREDD+ consultation. This also identified needs for training and strengthening of key stakeholders for the REDD+ Strategy. Two consultation meetings were focused on the coastal forest. In 2018, three meetings on causes and benefits looked for a territorial balance that would consider distinct zones and forest types (Indicator 8).

In all these meetings convened more than 140 stakeholders participated, from public and private sectors, and civil society including environmental organizations, organizations self-identified as indigenous, rural development societies, agrarian cooperatives, forestry businesses, universities, etc., see table 1 (Indicator 7).

The workshops presented the definition of REDD+, its international context, goals and expected results of the implementation phase, and a timetable of the preparation phase and the process for developing the Strategy for Uruguay. Benefits of native forests were explained, as well as concepts of degradation and deforestation (*Indicator 9*). The multiple benefits of forests, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation were consulted by the participants (*Indicator 8*). This resulted in prioritized lists of the benefits of the native forest and drivers of deforestation and degradation of the native forest (*Indicators 7-9*).

Table 5. Causes of deforestation and forest degradation, according to the self-assessment

| | Causes of degradation and deforestation | | Prioritization | | | Total |
|----------|--|----------|----------------|------------|------------|-------|
| | Causes or degradation and deforestation | Paysandů | Rocha | East Coast | West Coast | Total |
| | Afforestation progress | 14 | 33 | | | 47 |
| | Invasive exotic species | 12 | 23 | 8 | 2 | 45 |
| | Use of agrochemicals | 15 | 28 | 1 | | 44 |
| | Livestock overload | 13 | 30 | | | 43 |
| | Advancement of agriculture | 24 | 18 | | | 42 |
| | Urban sprawl | 10 | 17 | 10 | 3 | 40 |
| Direct | Tourism | 12 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 31 |
| | Logging for firewood (or weeding) | 1 | 17 | 5 | 4 | 27 |
| | Fires | | 11 | 3 | 2 | 16 |
| | Land-use change | | 8 | | 100 | 8 |
| | Hunt. | | 8 | | | 8 |
| | Pollution (solid waste) | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| | Aggregate extraction | | | | 1 | 1 |
| | Lack of awareness about the native forest | 19 | 17 | | | 36 |
| | Productive model with extractive objectives/ Change in the productive matrix | 7 | 21 | | | 28 |
| | Lack of control | 20 | 3 | | | 23 |
| | Lack of education | 7 | 10 | | | 17 |
| | Lack of coordination between levels of government | 9 | 4 | | | 13 |
| | Risk Law | 11 | | | | 11 |
| Indirect | Lack of extension | 10 | | | | 10 |
| manrect | Selfishness / Selflessness / Laziness | 10 | | | | 10 |
| | Bad policy for the native forest | 9 | | | | 9 |
| | Lack of research on native forest | 7 | | | | 7 |
| | Lack of interference and state recognition for indigenous organizations | 3 | | | | 3 |
| | Lack of financing for forest management | 2 | | | | 2 |
| | Lack of communication between institutions | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | Fallure to pay for ecosystem services | 1 | | | | 1 |

An analysis was done based on a consultation with the people who self-identify as indigenous, and their relationship to the native forest, including prioritized material and immaterial relevance and main uses of this forest. For this purpose, six small workshops were held in strategic places (*Indicators 7-9*).

8

The National REDD+ Roundtable was established in the framework of SNRCC (*Indicator 7*). A meeting of the Roundtable Dec 2018 with the participation of MA, MGAP, the REDD+ Program team and 14 other stakeholders, discussed the possibility of linking REDD+ to new demands that face the export sectors, and proposed broadening the meeting to other private stakeholders, emission generators and funding mechanism facilitators (*Indicator 9*). A second Roundtable meeting in Nov 2020 was virtual due to COVID-19. It is expected to hold at least two annual REDD+ Roundtable meetings.

The ENREDD+ draft was a presented May 2019 in the SNRCC Coordination Group, where the group made contributions to the document and suggestions about the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment SESA (*Indicator 7*).

As part of a continuous exchange process with civil society and experts on native forest management, two workshops were carried out in 2019 with civil society and tertiary level students, centered on ecosystem services, regulations, management of the native forest, and participatory ecological restoration. Another workshop for experts from different institutions had the goal to strengthen the technical-institutional trainings and actions, and improving management and conservation of the natural ecosystems in the properties of the National Colonization Institute. A Meeting on Native Forests by the Network of NGOs contributed inputs for the implementation of ENREDD+. An interinstitutional working group on the characteristics of the REDD+ phases was created in 2022, to strengthen the national expert trainings and foster a place for exchange and discussion. There is also an Inter-institutional Working Group for the Design of the National Forest Monitoring System (Indicators 9-10).

In 2019 Uruguay carried of five regional and one national workshop to develop the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the Environmental and Social Management Framework (MGAS) and the Grievance and Conflict Resolution Mechanism (MARC). In this framework, possible risks and impacts from implementation of ENREDD+ were identified (*Indicator 8*)².

A plan with guidelines for the communication of the REDD+ readiness phase was made in May 2020, in coordination with the ministries in charge of REDD+. The plan has the goal to support the construction of a REDD+ National Strategy in its different stages, raise awareness among citizens about the importance of the native forest, its benefits and role in climate change mitigation, promote the citizen participation in the REDD+ strategy, and integrating the vision, opinions and proposals of the stakeholders consulted (*Indicators 9-10*). Short videos were also prepared and shared on the MGAP YouTube© channel.

Box I. Videos available on the MGAP YouTube channel

Native Forest and Water Resources

Traditional Uses of the Native Forest

Rural Production and the Native Forest

Cities and the Native Forest

Cities and the Native Forest – second version

TAP assessment. Uruguay has made significant progress in consultation, participation and outreach. The continuous participation of the two main ministries and other key stakeholders has been demonstrated through a long list of events during the readiness preparation process. The REDD Readiness process has not had the same high number of participants as in some other FCPF countries, but is should be considered that Uruguay is a small country. As presented in table 1, the process involved a wide range of stakeholders and 42.8% of the participants were women. It also encouraged the participation of people that self-identify as indigenous³. A significant work has been done regarding the importance of the native forests for carbon sequestration, other environmental services, and livelihoods

³ Small numbers of indigenous peoples have survived since the arrival of the Europeans to South America, including some 1,000 Guaraní Mbyá. The Indigenous Association of Uruguay was created as the result of the arrival of Guaraní Mbyá families from Argentina and Brazil in the 1980s, and in 1992 a regional meeting of indigenous peoples (Guarani, Mapuche, Aymara and Quechua) was held in Uruguay under the auspices of the national association (RefWorld 2022).

² Corresponds also to indicators 23-25.

of indigenous peoples. Since almost all the population speaks Spanish, the format and access to the information have been facilitated, through websites, printed documentation, audiovisuals and direct communication. Regarding the R-package's use of the word "prioritized" benefits of the native forest, these are considered by the reviewer as not possible to prioritize, because the great advantage is rather that the multiple benefits are present at the same time. The outcomes of the consultations have been gradually integrated in the national REDD+ strategy and other strategies and work plans. The process was inclusive and transparent, but it would have been an advantage to finalize the R-Package earlier to assure support for the implementation stage. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

Sub-component 2a: Assessment of land use, Land-use change drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance (criteria 11-15)

Table 6. Assessment of sub-component 2a.

| 2a. Assessment of Land Use, land Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance | |
|--|--|
| 11. Assessment and analysis | |
| 12. Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/ barriers to forest carbon | |
| stock enhancement | |
| 13. Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities | |
| 14. Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance | |
| 15. Implications for forest law and policy | |

This sub component is on average progressing well, but further development is required on most of the criteria (YELLOW). One area, Assessment and analysis (criteria 11), has the most significant progress (GREEN).

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on how the REDD+ strategy preparation process integrated the causal relationships between the economic, legal and policy context of Uruguay on the one hand, and the associated patterns of land-use change, deforestation and forest degradation on the other.

<u>Self-assessment.</u> The self-assessment considers degradation as the main problem, and that the opportunity lies in increase of carbon stocks, restoration, and sustainable management of forests. Several studies have contributed to the understanding of the causes of deforestation and degradation, such as the barriers to the increase of carbon stocks. The report on drivers relied on an analysis of recent historic trends of land use (*Indicator 11*).

The analyses of the main direct causes of deforestation and/or degradation also consider the barriers to increase of carbon stocks. Uruguay continues to evaluate the causes, and in particular interrelations between the main causes of deforestation and degradation, as well as long-term implications for forest laws and policies (*Indicator 12*).

Table 7. Main direct causes of deforestation, degradation, or barriers to the increase of carbon stocks (source: R-Package)

| Driver | Deforestation (%) | Degradation (%) |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|
| Use and Commercialization of wood products originating from the BN | 45 | |
| Productive activities of the country Agriculture, livestock and forestry | 50 | 30 |
| Aggregate extractions | | |
| Infrastructure projects | | |
| Urban expansion and pressure on the areas surrounding the BN | | 4 |
| Tourist use of the forest | | · |
| Degradation by Invasive Alien Species (EEI) | 5 | 65 |
| Fire | | |
| Application of agrochemicals | | 1 |

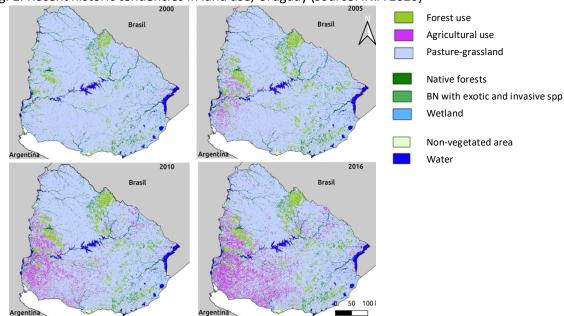


Fig. 2. Recent historic tendencies in land use, Uruguay (source: INIA 2020)

The need to better evaluate the barriers to increase of carbon reserves was identified in the context of the following forestry goals in the Uruguay NDC for 2025: (i) Increase the area of native forest from the year 2012 (892,458 ha) by 5%; and Increase the area of forest plantations with shade and shelter from the year 2012, including silvo-pastoral (97,338 ha) by 25%. It will also consider the long-term implications for forest laws and policies, see Box II (Indicator 13).

Box II Main forest laws and policies in Uruguay

General Law of Protection of the Environment
Goals of Sustainable Development
National Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2020
National Native Forest Strategy
National Climate Change Policy
National Plan for the Environment and Sustainable Development
International Conventions adopted by Uruguay

ENREDD+ is also aligned with: (i) The Strategic Plan for the National System of Protected Areas; (ii) The National Water Policy and (iii) The National Adaptation Plan to Climate Variability and Change for the Agricultural Sector. Studies have been developed for a better understanding of the aspects associated with forest laws, policies and governance questions, tenure and rights, etc. (Indicators 11 to 15).

There is a perfectly delimited and current land registry. The self-assessment mentions that there are no major ownership conflicts beyond individual situations. However, the country does not have a definition for "carbon ownership / rights to carbon" (Indicator 14).

TAP assessment. The self-assessment presents a solid analysis of historical land-use trends. It defines the main direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and degradation, barriers to the increase in carbon stock, and links between key drivers and barriers. The national plans consider relevant measures to address the issues, including tenure and titling of land and natural resources, and the relation with long-term policy issues. The updated and complete national land registry is a great advantage, but the country should review how to deal with the challenge of defining and registering carbon rights. The reviewer concurs with the overall sub-component rating, but considers that criterium 12 has sufficient development to even be rated as GREEN.

Sub-component 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options (criteria 16-18)

Table 8. Assessment of sub-component 2b.

| 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options | |
|--|--|
| 16. Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options | |
| 17. Feasibility assessment | |
| 18. Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies | |

Two of the elements of this sub component are progressing well but still require further development (YELLOW) and one criterium (feasibility assessment) was rated as ORANGE.

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on the adequacy of selected REDD+ strategy options vis-à-vis identified drivers, and their opportunity for implementation.

<u>Self-assessment</u>. ENREDD+ seeks to create the conditions for native forest management at landscape scale, to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increase carbon stocks. This strategy also has the objective of maximizing environmental and social benefits. The aim is to prioritize recuperation, conservation or increase of the forests that favor the maintenance of multiple benefits prioritized by the society, such as water quality and biodiversity. ENREDD+ is organized into four strategic lines with defined actions and expected results:

- 1) Native forest management, other forested formations, native trees outside of forests and urban woodlands
- 2) Incentives for the maintenance and increase of the native forest area and associated ecosystem services
- 3) Investigation
- 4) Environmental citizenship and native forest: knowledge, participation and dialogue.

Training on forest management and conservation is established at community level, rural producer groups, cooperatives and nursery growers. Strengthening of public decision makers, stakeholders and managers will contribute to a social, productive and environmental development with greater equity, resiliency and low-carbon. Public and private companies are also eligible for training, to minimize their carbon footprint in line with the NDC. Some of the measures presented in ENREDD+ are broad, to design in detail during the implementation of the strategy.

TAP assessment. The ENREDD+ strategy is an important tool for effective implementation of REDD+ in Uruguay. It has incorporated analysis of strategic options to achieve the emission reduction potential and results of transparent stakeholder dialogues, to prioritize actions with the most environmental and social benefits. The operationalization of ENREDD+ through lines of action, each with priority activities, is considered a good way to reach positive impact in the future, however more feasibility assessments are needed. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Sub-component 2c. Implementation framework (criteria 19-22)

Table 9. Assessment of sub-component 2c.

| 2c. Implementation Framework | |
|--|-----|
| 19. Adoption and implementation of legislation/ regulations | N/A |
| 20. Guidelines for implementation | N/A |
| 21. Benefit sharing mechanisms | |
| 22. National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities | |

The self-assessment rated the criterium 'National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities' as YELLOW, and 'Benefits sharing mechanisms' as ORANGE. As explained below, the TAP reviewer however assessed the overall sub-component rating as YELLOW.

This part of the assessment framework focuses on the structural legal, policy and institutional measures taken to facilitate implementation of the REDD+ strategy.

<u>Self-assessment.</u> An inter-institutional agreement was signed between the National Agricultural Research Institute (INIA) and other research institutes, while MGAP and MA were also involved. This agreement had six large products:

- 1) To create the FRL emissions /removals for deforestation and degradation, and the increase in carbon reserves in the native forest.
- 2) To recommend measures to permit integrating the native forest in the productive management of the properties.
- 3) To improve the understanding of spread and control mechanisms for Invasive alien species (IAS).
- 4) To characterize the multiple benefits of native forests.
- 5) To develop an evaluation framework for the state of forest conservation and different interests.
- 6) To increase knowledge about the different forest ecosystem dynamics

COVID-19 delayed the activities, analysis and validation of the results, so these has so far not had much impact on strategies, regulations or activities (*Indicator 19*). The "Benefit Distribution Mechanism" is lacking (*indicator 21*), and the country also needs a "National Registry" for georeferenced information on REDD+ with public access (*Indicator 22*).

TAP assessment. Even though the six mentioned research activities were delayed due to COVID-19, it is clear that they are going in the right direction, and could have an influence on laws, regulations and strategies. It is not clear if the R-Package stated N/A on criteria 19 and 20 due to the delay of research activities or because Uruguay already had a legislation and regulations relevant for REDD+ before the process started. In any case, since the results of the research would only lead to adjustment of an existing legal-political framework, the reviewer considers that criteria 19 and 20 should have been rated YELLOW. Since the "Benefits Distribution Mechanism" still is lacking, the reviewer agrees on the rating ORANGE of criterium 21. The system for registry and monitoring of REDD+ activities has come further in its development, and the reviewer agrees with the rating YELLOW for criterium 22.

Sub-component 2d. Social and environmental impacts (criteria 23-25: GREEN)

Table 10. Assessment of sub-component 2d.

| 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts | |
|---|--|
| 23. Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues | |
| 24. REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts | |
| 25. Environmental and social management framework | |

Two criteria of sub component 2d are progressing well, with further development required (YELLOW) and 'Environmental and social management framework' has an ORANGE rating, meaning that even more development is required for this criterium.

<u>Self-assessment.</u> Documents corresponding to SESA and MGAS were created and a Grievance and Conflict Resolution Mechanism was designed. The consultation process also considered risks. The FCPF Readiness Project in Uruguay did not activate the PO 4.10 Indigenous Communities or PO 4.20 Gender. Preparation for the SESA 2017-18 (*Indicator 23*) consisted of the dissemination of the REDD+ Strategy readiness process, including territory level consultations on co-benefits and drivers of deforestation and degradation native forests, as well as need for training and institutional strengthening. Five meetings with 180 participants were held.

To improve transparency, the reports from the consultation meetings were disseminated among the participants for their validation. The most often cited benefits of native forests were as buffer for floods in the urban areas and the maintenance of water quality and the promotion of nature tourism in rural areas. It is also considered useful for livestock farming and beekeeping. The next step consisted of a consultation process 2018 on policies, actions and measures, and the partial and complete drafts

of the ENREDD+ document, as the basis for SESA (Indicator 24).

The participatory process defined 33 socio-environmental risks for the ENREDD+ implementation, with their respective potential impacts and mitigation measures: (i) operative management capability; (ii) effects on the environment; (iii) participation, consultation and information; and (iv) social and cultural effects. A total of 34 possible benefits of the future ENREDD+ implementation were also defined. The MGAS was created to link risks, safeguards and mitigation measures (*Indicator 25*). The country has a narrative proposal for each of the safeguards that makes up the REDD+ general safeguard framework.

TAP assessment. The relevant social and environmental benefits, risks, safeguards and mitigation measures in the country context have been analyzed through consultation meetings. These have given inputs to developing the REDD+ strategy and its planned actions. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (MGAS) is established, but not fully developed. The reviewer however considers that the level of development should be enough for a rating or YELLOW for criterium 25. The overall rating for the sub component is maintained as YELLOW.

Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels (criteria 26-28)

This component does not have any sub-components, and only three criteria.

Table 11. Assessment of Component 3.

| 3. Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Level | |
|--|--|
| 26. Demonstration of methodology | |
| 27. Use of historical data, and adjustment for national circumstances | |
| 28. Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with | |
| UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines | |

This component is overall progressing well, but further development is required for the two criteria that were rated YELLOW: 'Demonstration of methodology' and 'Technical feasibility of the methodological approach and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines'. It however has a GREEN rating for use of historical data, adjusted for national circumstances.

<u>Self-assessment</u>. The UNFCCC guidelines and the most recent IPCC guidance were followed during the entire process for creation of the FRL (*Indicator 28*). All activity data were systemized and analyzed to identify the methodology and definitions, with the strengths and weaknesses for REDD+.

It was necessary to generate new national usage and land use change maps for the reference period, beginning with the creation of the native forest coverage map for 2016. There are no allometric equations for forest types or species in the native forests of Uruguay, so for now it is not possible to calculate the existing biomass of these forests directly, and the First National Forest Inventory data were used (Indicators 27 and 28).

Creation of the FRL has as an objective to establish the baseline of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions / removals of deforestation processes and increase of carbon stocks for 2000-2016, and develop a methodology for quantification of GHG emissions from degradation (*Indicator 26*). Even though Uruguay has advanced in a first version of its FRL, it is considered necessary to examine the methodology applied and generate new information to calculate GHG emissions and removals in a more precise way (*Indicators 26-28*).

TAP assessment. The preliminary REL for native forests and the methodology to prepare it was presented in the R-Package. There are also plans for evolving the process. The establishment of REL considers historical data since year 2000. It is difficult for the reviewer to tell if sufficient data were used, but the presentation in the R-Package indicates a transparent process and presentation of data that would if needed allow for the reconstruction or independent cross-checking of the REL/RL. The methodological approach is consistent with the UNFCCC and IPCC guidance and guidelines. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Component 4. Monitoring systems for forests, and Safeguards

Sub-component 4a: National Forest Monitoring System (criteria 29-31)

Table 12. Assessment of sub-component 4a.

| 4a. National Forest Monitoring System | |
|--|--|
| 29. Documentation of monitoring approach | |
| 30. Demonstration of early system implementation | |
| 31. Institutional arrangements and capacities | |

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on progress made in designing and developing operational forest monitoring systems.

The elements of this sub component are all progressing well, but with further development required (YELLOW).

<u>Self-assessment</u>: A document was created with the conceptual design for the Forest Monitoring System, including the institutional agreements, system components, hardware and software, operational requirements and resources needed for its operation. It has the goal to strengthen native forest monitoring and generate information for decision-making on forest management, but recognizes that greater analysis detail is required (*Indicator 29*).

The institutional arrangements and proposed action plan for implementation of the National Forest Monitoring System (SNMF) considers clearly defined mandates for forest monitoring, transparent data sharing, and required resources (*Indicator 31*).

National Forest Monitoring System Outputs Inputs Complaints. local knowledge and other sources Satellite ground monitoring system **GEI Inventory** (Satellite image processing / Collect Earth) Fires Activity data Change detection (deforestation, degradation, (cuts and fires) expansion) BN registration and management plans FRA Satellite National Forest Inventory Composition, structure Emission factors (Sampling and permanent plots) and function of the forest Institutional Management Field data Early Warning System Greenhouse Gas

Inventory (INGEI)

BN Registry and Management Plans

Exotic Invasive Species

Maps

Fig. 3. General structure for the SNMF conceptual design (Indicator 30), translated from the R-Package

TAP assessment. Uruguay has made considerable progress on the national forestry monitoring system, and demonstrated its early system development, which builds on the institutional framework and forest monitoring that existed before the REDD+ Readiness process. There is a clear rationale and analytic evidence to support the proposed methodology, which is consistent with the national norms and guidance, in the framework of the IPCC guidelines. There is a clear definition of the institutional arrangements and responsibilities, including transparent data sharing and further resources required. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Sub-component 4b: Information system for multiple benefits, other impacts, governance and safeguards (criteria 32-34)

Table 13. Assessment of sub-component 4b.

| 4b. Information system for multiple benefits, other impacts, governance and safeguards | |
|--|--|
| 32. Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and | |
| environmental issues | |
| 33. Monitoring, reporting and information sharing | |
| 34. Institutional arrangements and capacities | |

According to the self-assessment, the Sub component 4b is progressing well, with the area of 'Monitoring, reporting and information sharing' having the most significant progress (GREEN), while the two other areas are progressing well, but further development is required (YELLOW).

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on how data on other aspects of REDD+ implementation is being collected and shared.

<u>Self-assessment.</u> In order to fulfill the REDD+ safeguards framework, Uruguay designed a model for a National Safeguard Information System (SIS), to be completed at national scale. A proposed implementation plan for the SIS is presented, considering *Indicators 32, 33, and 34*.

There is currently a narrative proposal for each of the REDD+ safeguards, conforming to the reality of the country in accordance with ENREDD+. It was created along with civil society stakeholders in the last national workshop (*Indicators 32 and 33*).

The legal and institutional analysis for the SESA and MGAS framework is important for the REDD+ safeguards at national level. During the implementation of ENREDD+, the REDD+ governance institutions will be responsible for safeguards monitoring, fulfillment and reporting.

It is proposed that the SIS goals should be the following (Indicator 34): (i) Provide information nationally about the form in which the general safeguards framework is 'addressed' and 'respected' in the REDD+ implementation phase; (ii) Unify the existing information base for reporting of the indicators and reports to address and respect the safeguards; and (iii) Strengthen the information exchange and the work on indicators at institutional level that involves REDD+ governance.

TAP assessment. The Self-assessment explains the process of the safeguards process, which is aligned with the REDD+ safeguards from the COP 16 in Cancun. There is a narrative proposal for each of the nationally adjusted safeguards. The R-Package is aligned with the ENREDD+ regarding the institutions that would have responsibility for monitoring and fulfillment of the safeguards, but the brief chapter does not specify the expected institutional set-up, the organization of national information-sharing, and needs for institutional strengthening. The chapter could have benefitted from more detail, but based on information in the rest of the self-assessment and complementary documents, the reviewer concurs with the ratings.

4. Summary assessment and recommendations

a. Overall REDD+ Readiness progress

Based on the documents provided, the TAP reviewer concludes that Uruguay's REDD+ Readiness Package demonstrates the country's firm commitment to REDD+ and seems to paints an accurate picture of its readiness work, including many strengths, but no sub-component has so far reached all its goals and only four criteria are rated as GREEN by the self-assessment. There are especially three different areas for improvement (ORANGE) found in three different sub components under component 2: Feasibility assessment, Benefit sharing mechanisms, and Environmental and social safeguards framework.

Uruguay has been engaged in REDD+ readiness for at least a decade and is eager to move forward. The REDD+ Strategy Options are aligned with the four strategic lines of the national strategy ENREDD+: (i) Native forest management, other forested formations, native trees outside of forests and urban woodlands; (ii) Incentives for the maintenance and increase of the native forest area and associated ecosystem services; (iii) Investigation; and (iv) Environmental citizenship and native forest: knowledge, participation and dialogue.

b. Self-assessment process

Uruguay has executed the Self-assessment process in accordance with the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The R-Package that was presented in 2022 includes information on the self-assessment process and its results. Uruguay has engaged in numerous multi-stakeholder consultations and training events focused on different aspects of REDD+, with at least 6 national and regional workshops and 21 training events.

The Reviewer considers that Uruguay has carried out a complete self-assessment process for REDD+ Readiness. It is positive that indigenous peoples have been integrated in this process despite low indigenous population in Uruguay. It is however not explained in the R-Package how the discussions have moved forward from the original positions of different stakeholder groups and how agreements were reached.

C. Overall assessment and recommendations

Uruguay has made significant progress in REDD+ Readiness since the mid-term review in 2018, but much should still be done. Out of the 34 criteria of the FCPF's Readiness Assessment Framework, 4 now have significant progress (GREEN); 27 are progressing well but require some further development (YELLOW); and 3 of the criteria have a level of progress that requires even more development (ORANGE). It is positive that no criteria demonstrate no progress (RED). Two criteria in the implementation framework were considered as not applicable.

The TAP reviewer found that all nine sub components overall have progressed well, but still require further development (YELLOW).

The reviewer agrees with most of the ratings in the self-assessment, with the following exceptions:

Sub component 2a. Criterion 12. Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/ barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement. The reviewer considers that the criterion has sufficient development to be rated GREEN instead of YELLOW.

Sub component 2c. The R-Package stated N/A on criterion 19 - Adoption and implementation of legislation/ regulations; and criterion 20 - Guidelines for implementation. Due to a strong legal-institutional framework that existed before the REDD Readiness process started, the reviewer

considers that both criteria 19 and 20 should have been rated YELLOW, which gives an overall sub component rating of YELLOW.

Sub component 2d. Criterion 25 - Environmental and social management framework. Since the Environmental and Social Management Framework (MGAS) is established, the reviewer considers that the level of development should be enough for a rating of YELLOW for criterium.

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