

Yaoundé, 9 October 2015

Analysis of Cameroon's ER-PIN by the National REDD&CC Civil Society Platform

Dear participants, Carbon Fund Thirteenth Meeting, October 13-16-2015, Brussels, Belgium,

Cameroon's National Civil Society REDD and Climate Change Platform would like to present its analysis on Cameroon's ER-PIN document recently submitted for consideration at the 13th Meeting of the Carbon Fund.

The National REDD+ Civil Society Platform was put in place in July 2011. This was a major step towards ensuring civil society participation in the REDD+ process from local to national level. The national REDD+&CC platform is the recognized civil society interlocutor by MINEPDED and Cameroon REDD+ partners and is open to as many civil society organizations as are interested in working on REDD+ and climate change.

Since its creation, the national REDD+ Civil Society Platform has carried out a number of activities and accompanied civil society participation in the national REDD+ process with several local civil society organizations. The involvement of civil society in the REDD+ process in Cameroon has been a positive and dynamic process, which we applaud. This platform represents around 73 Networks, 429 National, Sub-national and Community-based Organizations, covering Cameroon's 10 regions, 43 councils and 15 villages and has successfully established 204 Coordinators at regional, council and community levels with at least one-third of these coordinators representing women and indigenous people. These coordinators are recognized as civil society representatives involved in the REDD+ process at their respective levels following various REDD+ stages.

The proposed ER-PIN covers three regions and seven divisions for which the National REDD+ Civil Society Platform is represented. We consider this a great opportunity for both the communities living in this area and civil society organizations that have been part of ER-PIN elaboration process. It will be a challenging opportunity for Cameroon to ensure sustainable forest management particularly within threatened ecosystems considering pressures exerted on the forest.

Strengths of Cameroon's ER-PIN

- **Multi-stakeholder elaboration process:** From the early idea of the ER-PIN elaboration process, Cameroon opted for a multi-stakeholder consultative process. The elaboration of the early idea power point although fundamentally at the initial kick off stage was done through a multi-stakeholder process involving ministry of environment, protection of nature and sustainable development (MINEPDED), the ministry of forestry and wildlife (MINFOF), the National REDD+ Civil Society Platform, development partners and research institutions. The validation of this early idea in May 2015 is a reflection of dynamic nature of this multi-stakeholder group. The elaboration process of ER-PIN adopted this same consultative multi stakeholder approach with the technical group with majority of its members with demonstrated expertise and experience in sustainable forest management, carbon accounting, gender and minority groups participation etc
- **Community and Civil Society Involvement:** During ER-PIN elaboration process, local communities in the program area were sensitized and consulted especially with regards to activities which are part of their daily living and livelihood. The Mbalmayo consultation meeting involved sensitization of different stakeholders and constituted a platform for information sharing among key actors. Civil society organizations from the seven divisions targeted by the emission reduction program including representatives of indigenous people, sectoral ministries at divisional level and the private sector attended this meeting.
- **A unique time and budget friendly sensitization and consultation approach:** Although the time frame for developing the ER-PIN was very limited, the ministry used the opportunity with workshop on validation of parameters for Cameroon's national forest carbon monitoring system - NFCMS (Douala 27-29 July 2015), the IP meeting in Abongbang and the National Civil society REDD+ and Climate Change regional workshops in Garoua and Buea, to sensitize REDD+ stakeholders on the ER-PIN elaboration process. It was during the NFCMS workshop that proposal on evolution of Cameroon's Gender REDD+ agenda was raised. This approach proved to be cost effective with mobilization of great number of stakeholders within a short timeframe and with not so much financial investment.
- **REDD+ options which simultaneously promote sustainable livelihoods and reduced deforestation and forest degradation:** Results from past and current consultations of local communities during forest dependence evaluation studies clearly demonstrated that activities to simultaneously reduce deforestation and forest degradation within TRIDOM and TNS landscapes which are part of the project area include but are not limited to valorization and domestication of non timber forest products, improved agricultural techniques (mainly intensification and reduced slash and burn), development of small scale livestock farming and

creation of revenue generating activities¹. These are some of the activities proposed in the ER-PIN document.

- **Frequent request for feedback and comments for improvement from stakeholders, especially civil society organizations on safeguard issues:** The first draft of the ER-PIN document was shared with stakeholders prior to sensitization and consultation workshop convened in Mbalmayo on 9 September 2015 with all relevant stakeholders in the ER Program area. The stakeholders included local communities, indigenous people, sectoral ministries, private sector and civil society. The civil society consistently received feedback on draft versions of ER-PIN from the technical group. They were also s invited to provide their inputs and comments to an online google version of the document. This was an effective way of ensuring transparent management and coordination of various contributions.
- **An ambitious emission reduction program, proposing to reduce over 6M tCO₂ in 10 years, in spite of Cameroon's vision 2035 of becoming an emergent economy:** Cameroon's vision of becoming an emerging economy by 2035 has had several impacts in country's national development plan. . An increasing number of mining permits have been issued in and around the ER program area including planned infrastructural developments. However the country targets sustainable economic emergence and the ER program is an opportunity to attain such objectives. The ongoing elaboration of Cameroon's zoning plan mentioned in the ER-PIN is an indication of a national engagement and an attempt to address issues on land use conflicts over natural resource and land management.
- **Significant political engagement to simultaneously complete REDD+ readiness and emission reduction program:** Cameroon has the opportunity to work both on its ER-PIN and readiness process but should have submitted its readiness package prior to ER Program Document. We are pleased by the fact that the country has taken responsibility to work on its ER-PIN simultaneously with completion of readiness package with a given timeframe to accomplish both processes. The ability of using existing studies such as on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation within TNS and TRIDOM² landscapes including general guidelines³ on deforestation drivers with a proposal on main drivers and options to address them is a timely strategy.

¹ Eyong et al 2015. Gender and forest dependence in the Cameroon portion of the Dja-Odzala-Minkebe Tri-national landscape: implications for REDD+.

² UICN-PC (2014a). Les Facteurs de Déforestation et de Dégradation des Forêts: Résultats d'une analyse participative dans les Paysages TNS et TRIDOM (Cameroun, Congo, Gabon et RCA). Yaoundé, Cameroun. 81 pages + Annexes.

³ GIZ 2013. Methodology to assess drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

Weaknesses of Cameroon's ER-PIN

- **Activities proposed for the emission reduction program are insufficient to address all drivers of deforestation identified hitherto:** The ER-PIN does not provide an exhaustive approach on handling forest pressure due to mining and infrastructural development, which remain important deforestation drivers. We strongly suggest that these issues should be considered in the on-going national zoning process elaboration process.
- **Slow evolution of the REDD+ readiness process:** Following Cameroon's R-PP several important studies such as on drivers of deforestation, the mechanism for benefit sharing, the strategic environmental and social assessment still have to be completed. The delay in carrying out these studies is a major setback to the REDD+ and the proposed emission reduction program, if studies remain uncompleted by the implementation phase.
- **Failure to elaborate and consider a benefit sharing mechanism, specific for REDD+:** The REDD+ national evolution has until now failed to develop a benefit sharing mechanism as planned in the R-PP. The ER-PIN clearly highlights that studies by CIFOR highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the existing benefit sharing mechanism within the forest sector. The weaknesses of the existing system cannot be undermined. The ER-PIN suggests that benefit sharing mechanism designing process will be built up in accordance with the FCPF Methodological Framework criteria and opts for a mechanism that would secure benefits to individuals who contribute to REDD+ activities, whilst recognizing the role of the wider community. We strongly recommend that this should be considered by the REDD+ technical secretariat in recruiting the consultancy firm to develop the REDD+ benefit sharing mechanism, including the establishment of an independent monitoring and auditing committee responsible for monitoring and auditing of management, disbursement and use of the funds as mentioned in the ER-PIN.
- **Insufficient consultation of communities outside the ER program target area:** The issue of time and budget constraints is understood but in our opinion the ER program is a national initiative which should be carried out with due consultation of all REDD+ stakeholders in and out of the target area. It is expected that ERPA will give an indication of what could be done in other agro-ecological areas of the country.
- **Land use management governance challenges:** We also acknowledged the huge governance challenges Cameroon is currently facing in land use management, land tenure and resources issues, as well as challenges to secure effective coordination amongst the different sectors engaged in land use. However we are confident that as the readiness process rolls out and the strategic social and environmental assessment is implemented to include assessment in land tenure/forest governance, benefit sharing and Grievance

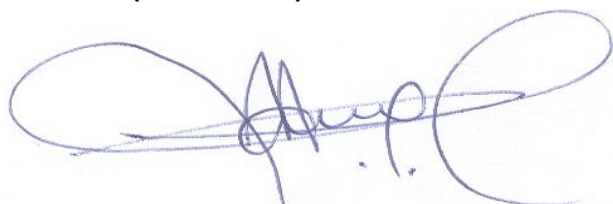
redress mechanisms, it is expected that with the active participation of the CSO Platform amongst others would facilitate the process of ensuring that these critical issues are addressed accordingly. Furthermore all the analytical work for the strategy development would help ensure the right policies and institutional strengthen and effective coordination to be put in place in order for the sectors, to meaningfully address land use management and sustainable forests management in a multi sectoral and socially inclusive manner.

Despite some of the shortcomings we would like to commend efforts made by government of Cameroon through MINEPDED in ER-PIN elaboration process, and request the Carbon Fund to endorse Cameroon into the pipeline with the aim of providing an opportunity for the country and its stakeholders to correct what has been wrong for a long time in country. We hope these shortcomings will be addressed in sufficient and timely manner during development phase of the emission reduction program. This program should present specific safeguards with respect to local communities' involvement in general and indigenous people in particular including women and youths participation. It is good to state that the ER program will comply with World Bank safeguard standards but even better to practically ensure these standards are implemented.

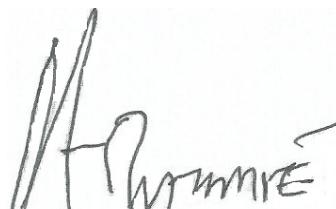
In conclusion as representatives of the National REDD+ Civil Society Platform we endorse Cameroon's proposed ER-PIN and recommend its validation during the 13th meeting of the Carbon Fund.

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