

TAP Independent Review of Vanuatu's Readiness-Package

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Purpose of TAP review



PURPOSE

- To provide independent technical review of the Self-Assessment Process of Vanuatu's Readiness Package (R-Package), undertaken through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation. The review assesses REDD+ readiness progress and highlights the remaining challenges to be addressed
- To assist the PC in its decision to endorse the R-Package



TAP's R-Package Self-Assessment Review



CONTENT

- Section 1 –S1: Review of self-assessment PROCESS and RESULTS
- Section 2 –S2: Review of PROGRESS on REDD+ Readiness
- Section 3 –S3: Summary Assessment and recommendations



S1- Self-Assessment Process



- The process followed the recommendations included in the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, with respect to the selection of participants, preparation of event, facilitation of the assessment process, outcome synthesis and dissemination and validation.
 - Four workshops were conducted in four of the five REDD+ priority islands (Malekula, Santo, Efate, Tanna), from August to October 2019, followed by a Validation Workshop in November, at the Department of Forests. The workshops were organized by the REDD+ Unit, supported by the Regional Forest Offices, and the local CSO Network. The selection of stakeholders was made in consultation with the Regional Forest Officers, and CSO Network representatives, and included representatives from Government Organizations, CSO/NGO, farmer network groups, and youth groups.
 - There was a total of 67 participants participating in the four workshops, with a majority from Civil Society (61%), followed by government (33%), and youth (6%).
- Building on Vanuatu's comprehensive multi-stakeholder consultation process started in 2015, involving local communities, farmers, women and youth groups, NGOs, government officers, plus civil society.
 - As part of the REDD+ strategy development, SESA, ESMF, REDD+ National Strategy, Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism, there has been a wide and deep participation of relevant stakeholders over a sustained period of time



S1 - Self-Assessment Process

Average Rating

Component	Subcomponent	Average Rating (Color Coded)
Component 1: Organization and consultation for the preparation period	Subcomponent 1a: National management mechanisms of the REDD + MbA program for the National Strategy for the Restoration of Ecosystems and Landscapes (EN-REP)	Yellow
	Subcomponent 1b: consultation, participation y social difusion	Yellow
Component 2: formulation of a REDD+ Strategy	Subcomponent: 2a. Evaluation on Land-use, and causes for changes in land-use, forest sector laws, politics and administration.	Yellow
	Subcomponent: 2b. Options for REDD+ Strategies	Yellow
	Subcomponent: 2c. Execution Framework	Yellow
	Subcomponent: 2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	Green
Component 3 reference levels for emissions.		Yellow
Component 4 monitoring and evaluation	Subcomponent: 4a. national forest monitoring system	Yellow
	Subcomponent: 4b. Information system for multiple benefits, other Impacts, management and safeguards	Yellow



No RED ratings, Most ratings are YELLOW, If split in the 34 criteria, 53% are yellow, 28% green, and 9% orange

S1- Self-Assessment Results

- The participative Self-Assessment Process in Vanuatu followed the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The R-Package Report, which includes sections on the Self-Assessment Process, includes all required information. It included a multi-stakeholder participation in each island, with 67 representatives from various national and regional government officials, NGOs, and Civil Society. There were participants representing the ni-Vanuatu communities, forest dwellers, women and youth groups. The Facilitation Team helped understand what has been done so far, and what is to be done, so that each participant could freely express what areas needed further work.
- However, the TAP Review would have been easier, had the ratings on the assessment criteria been supported with specific feedback from the consulted groups; rather it had a compiled report summarizing all comments received per criteria. So, it was difficult to determine the different perceptions from the different interest groups. The proceedings and minutes from the Workshops presented the ratings resulting from the discussions, and a summary table indicating gaps and areas requiring further development. However, it did not record the different perceptions or points of view of the different interest groups. It is recommended that for future consultation processes, a record of those views and how they are or have been addressed may be available. It will help build stronger involvement from stakeholders and strengthen communication.



S2 - Progress Review per Component

Component 1: Readiness, Organization and Consultation (criteria 1-10)

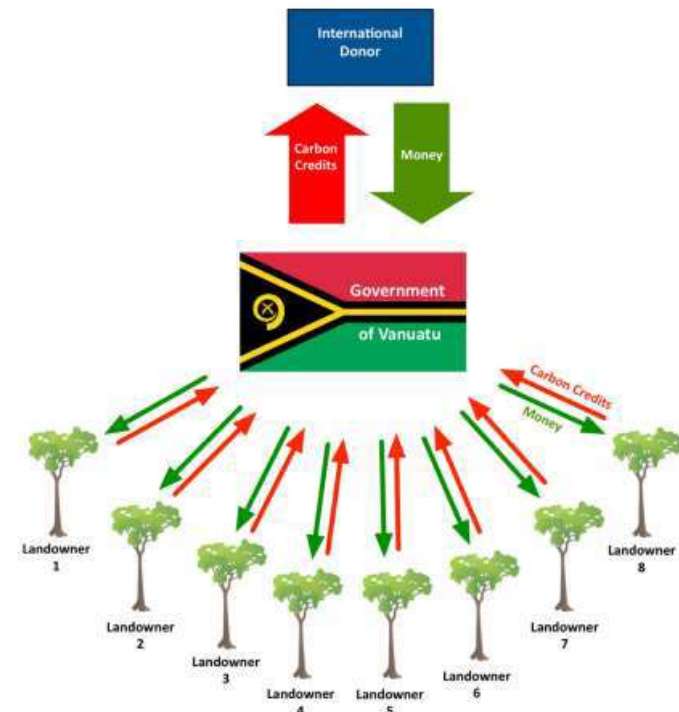
- National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB) responsible for overall policy guidance and coordination of REDD+ (government and non-government). National REDD+ Unit at Department of Forestry coordinates and implements REDD+ Readiness activities, and reports to NAB and Technical Committee. This committee is formed by representatives from Departments of Agriculture, Livestock, Horticulture, Fisheries, Forestry and Environment, and CSO members. Ad-hoc Thematic Working Groups to deal with specific REDD+ topics: (i) Data management; (ii) FREL; (iii) NFI; (iv) REDD+ Strategy. Also Provincial Technical Committees established in the 5 REDD+ islands: committees have members from government departments, Women Groups, and Youth Groups. Likewise, networks of CSOs at provincial level, to help coordinate and implement REDD+ activities at the local level. CSO Networks include forest dwellers, farmer's associations, and NGOs.
- Although there are customary conflict management and resolution mechanisms in place, FGRM will include issues pertaining to REDD+ such as the distribution of benefits, or land use restrictions.
- R-Readiness process in Vanuatu has been participative and all relevant stakeholders have been involved in the different development stages, as part of the preparation of the REDD+ National Strategy, SESA, FGRM, Technical Committees meetings, ad-hoc working meetings, and to present the REDD+ mechanism.



Still to be done

Component 1: Readiness, Organization and Consultation (criteria 1-10)

- Technical supervision capacity of the Department of Forestry Regional Offices need to be strengthened. Also, there should be more involvement of other sectorial departments such as Agriculture, or Livestock, as well as a better clarification of their roles. Regarding the perception of financial management weakness, better communication about the use of funds, and the contracting processes may be needed, as well as training for the PMU officers. Concur with the ratings.
- FGRM is still pending. Training and workshops are required, and the mechanism needs to be in place in order to test its effectiveness, so that it can be adjusted and enhanced. Concur with the rating.
- TAP recommendation is to further strengthen the feedback part of the consultation process, especially with regards to land use choices and restrictions. This can be done through publication of consultations on the key topics and on how these have been addressed in the different documents or instruments. It will help gain additional support and participation, if draft materials can also be translated into Bislama. Concur with the rating.



S2- Progress Review per Component

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation (criteria 11-25)

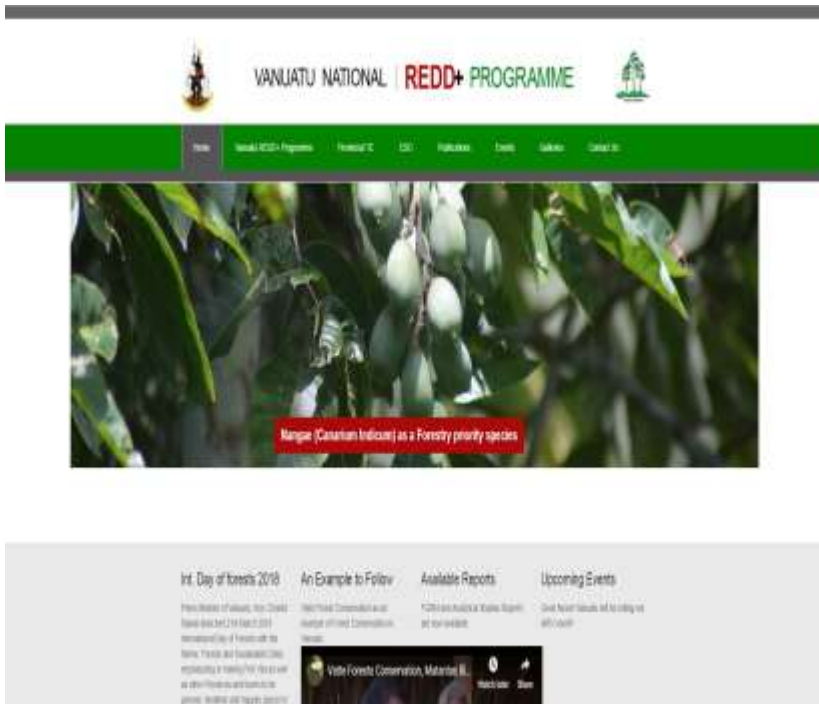


- There is good progress with relation to the assessment and analysis, and prioritization of direct and indirect drivers. A comprehensive study on land use and land use change has been carried out, using remote sensing data, and complementing the analysis with participatory consultations. Also, the study included an overview and analysis of the legal framework related to land tenure, and to forestry and environmental conservation.
- National REDD+ Strategy, currently under development, is considering all drivers and agents, and barriers for carbon stock enhancement and conservation. Barriers include conflicting sectorial policies, weak law enforcement in forestry sector, and diverging priorities of people and government.
- The sectorial action plans will include provision to address land tenure, titling, natural resources rights, livelihood and governance.

Still to be done

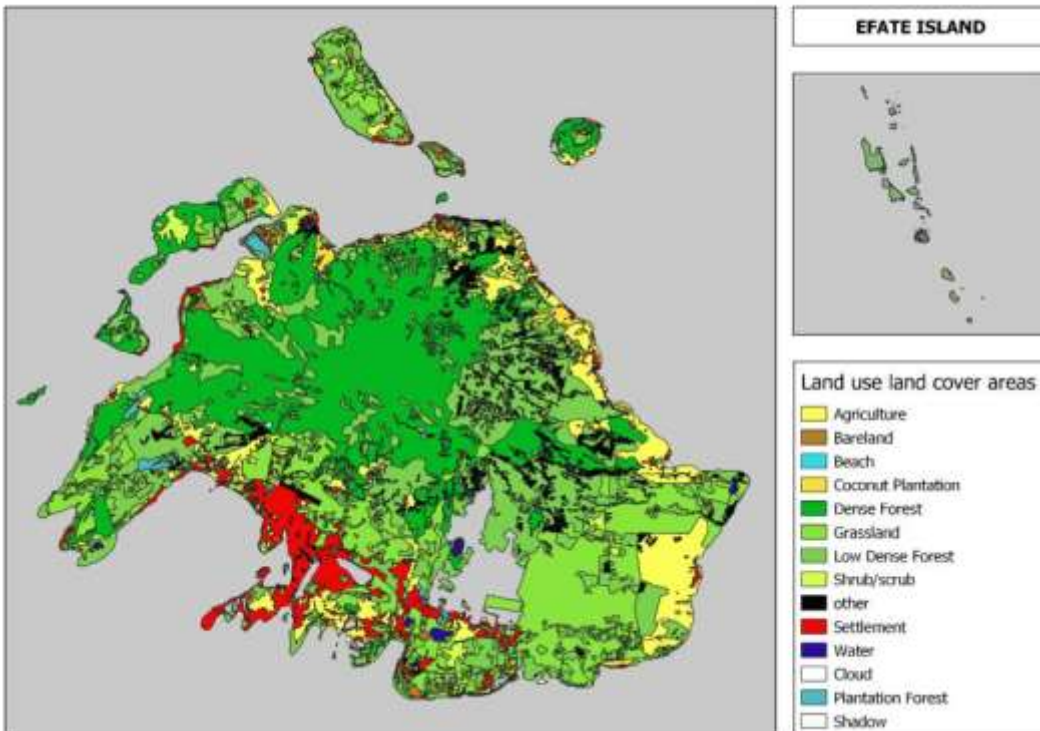
Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation (criteria 11-25)

- Vanuatu has not yet defined the framework for implementation. A mechanism to define and transfer title of carbon rights is being developed, as it is the benefit distribution mechanism, and the national REDD+ transaction and data management system. Major pieces of the National REDD+ Strategy, such as the Benefit Sharing, Registry and Implementation Framework are expected for April 2021.
- The benefit sharing mechanism, is important to set incentives to the local communities for adopting REDD+ policies and activities.
- Further development is needed with relation to the action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure and governance and carbon rights (expected for July 2021).
- SESA process is complete, and the other environmental and social instruments are almost ready, with drafts to be finalized by October 2020. As there is still important work to be done with regards to each environmental and social risk management instrument, the TAP recommendation is to rate criterion 25 as Yellow. This, as topics are not completed and agreed as yet



S2- Progress Review per Component

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

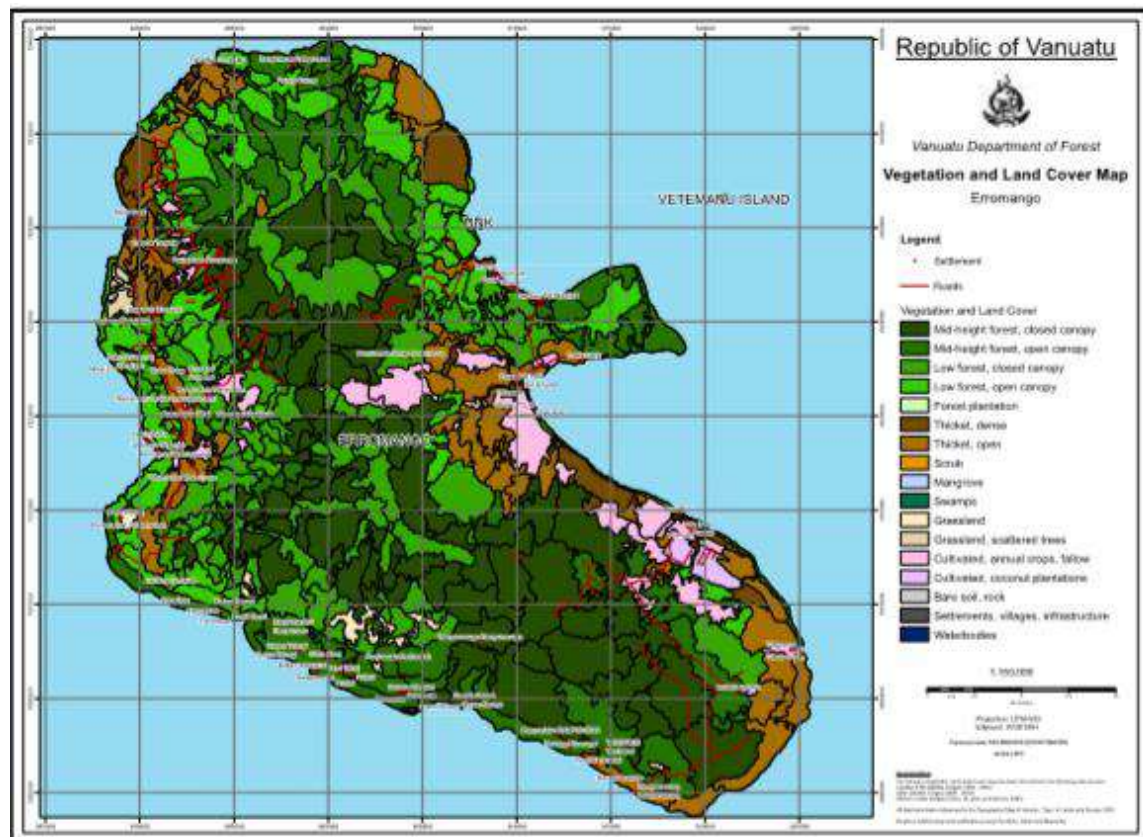


- The methodological approach has been established.
- The Department of Forestry has started the National Forest Inventory (NFI), and the field work is expected to be ready by January 2021. NFI has been completed in 7 islands. Enhancement of forest carbon stocks will be assessed using data from registered commercial and community plantations, and agroforestry systems.
- FRL are being built for each of 13 islands at sub-national level, for later aggregation into the national FRL. Soil carbon has been left out for the moment being, due to the lack of data. Activity data will be estimated according to land cover for deforestation, forest degradation, and carbon stock enhancement. Emission factors will be based on NFI field plots. And an uncertainty assessment will be made.
- Historical data for 2008-2018 will be used as reference period, based on Landsat data, and NFI field data.

Still to be done

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

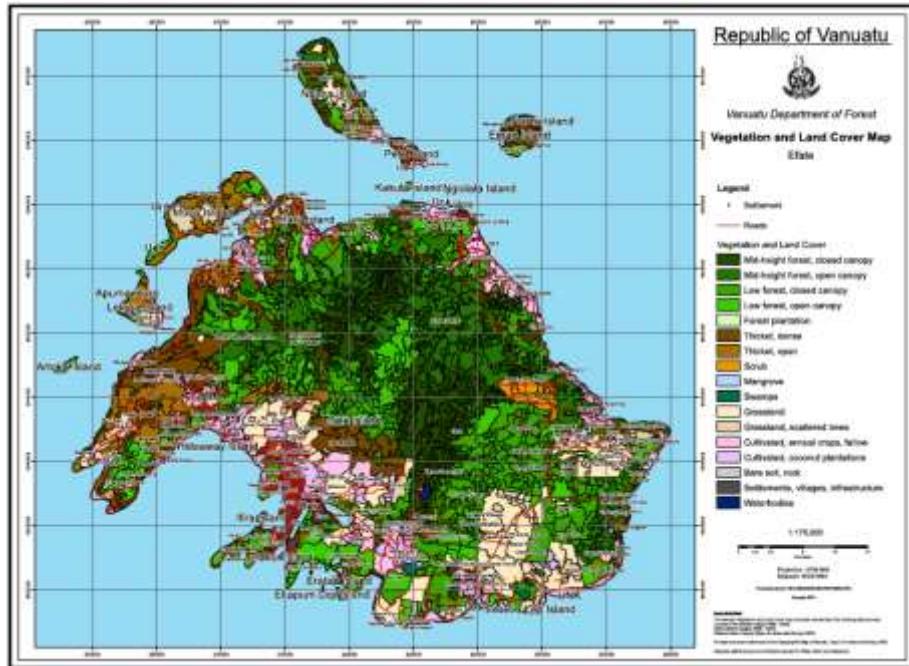
- National Forest Inventory still to be complete by January 2021
- FRL estimation expected to be ready by April 2021
- TAP recommends incorporating reference to national circumstances, and downgrading the rating in Methodology to yellow



S4 - Progress Review per Component

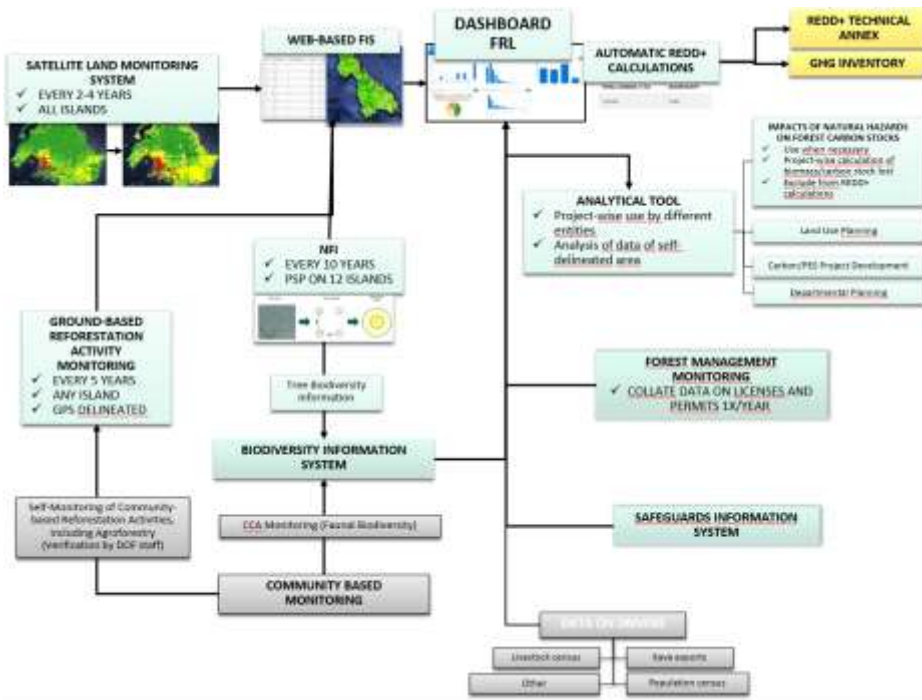
Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards (criteria 29-34)

- Work on documenting the monitoring approach is in progress and to be completed by April 2021. The proposed monitoring approach for the National Forest Monitoring System-NFMS complies with international reporting and accounting requirements.
- Key personnel from the Department of Forests has already been trained in remote sensing/GIS methods and QA/QC for the NFI and Activity Data. In any case, further capacity building will be sought to manage and adjust the NFMS.
- Non-carbon benefits, and environmental and social issues have been identified.



Still to be done

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards (criteria 29-34)



- NFMS still to be complete and operational. Safeguard Information System, also in the making.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and quality assurance/quality control (AQ/QC) measures will be identified and documented. The monitoring approach is to align and coordinate with the procedures followed by the Departments of Climate Change, Agriculture, Livestock, Lands, Environment to produce the national GHG inventories.
- NFMS also to include monitoring and reporting of non-carbon aspects and environmental and social issues.
- NFMS will allow it to identify capacity gaps in the Department of Forestry, so that it can effectively operate the system. Capacity building and training is expected to allow adequate NFMS management. Human resources to manage the system need to be prioritized.



S3 - Summary Assessment

Self Assessment Process

The Self-Assessment process in Vanuatu has been done in accordance with FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, it has incorporated good stakeholder participation, and has made participatory consultations possible at the National, and Subnational Levels (5 islands). Further, it has involved the participation of civil society, NGOs, farmers, youth and women groups.

The information and document preparation for the Self-Assessment events clearly convey the on-going participatory process of REDD+ in Vanuatu. The documentation integrated all required R-Package elements, with links to complementary and underpinning information. Additional documents such as the draft REDD+ Strategy, NFI progress reports, SESA, ESMF, FRGM, were also consulted.

Overall R-Readiness Progress

Based on the documents consulted, the TAP Reviewer considers that the R-Readiness Package demonstrates Vanuatu's commitment to REDD+, displays transparency in its readiness preparations, and shows that potential social and environmental risks are being addressed. The R-Package information confirms that Vanuatu's progress on REDD+ readiness is well oriented and moving on all fronts. Vanuatu started its REDD+ strategy building process in 2015 and has progressively strengthened the participation of different stakeholders at all levels. Progress has also been achieved at the technical policy level, especially on the identification and estimation of forests' related carbon, deforestation and degradation drivers, and in the preparation of the NMFS, REDD+ Strategy, SESA, and ESMF.

S3 - Summary Assessment

Self Assessment Process



The self-assessment ratings show a good level of acknowledgement of Vanuatu's progress in REDD+ readiness, as indicated by the Yellow and Green scores. Vanuatu has placed important efforts to disseminate the national REDD+ Strategy at the central and local level, allowing stakeholder engagement in its development process.

Local implementation of REDD+ seems to be a commonly accepted goal, which requires further capacity building and dissemination of information, especially regarding benefits distribution, land use planning, land tenure, and links between drivers and forest carbon enhancement.

Identification of co-benefits, and further workshops and consultations on the risks and economic feasibility of REDD+ activities at the local level will be important to incentivize forest conservation and carbon stock enhancement in productive activities in certain areas.



THANK YOU

