



Vanuatu's R-Package: REDD+ Readiness Progress And Multi-Stakeholder Self-Assessment

REDD+ UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF VANUATU

Outline of the Presentation

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2. Background Information about Vanuatu
 - *Land area, Population, Forestry Sector and Vegetation types*
3. Legislations and Policies that are relevant to REDD+ Program in Vanuatu
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Major REDD+ Events

Years	Major REDD+ Events in Vanuatu
2008	The Government of Vanuatu prepared R-PIN with the support of WB. The R-PIN was basis for REDD+ program.
2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The R-PP was endorsed by the FCPF/WB.2. With the endorsement of R-PP, USD 3.6 million Grant was approved. The fund is being used for implementing the Readiness activities in the country.
2015	Implementation of REDD+ Readiness activities started in Vanuatu
2017	MTR with request for Additional Funding was submitted to FCPF/WB.
2018	Additional Fund of USD 2.5 million was approved to implement all REDD+ Readiness activities as per R-PP
2020	R-Package Report submitted to WB

Funding of the REDD+ Project

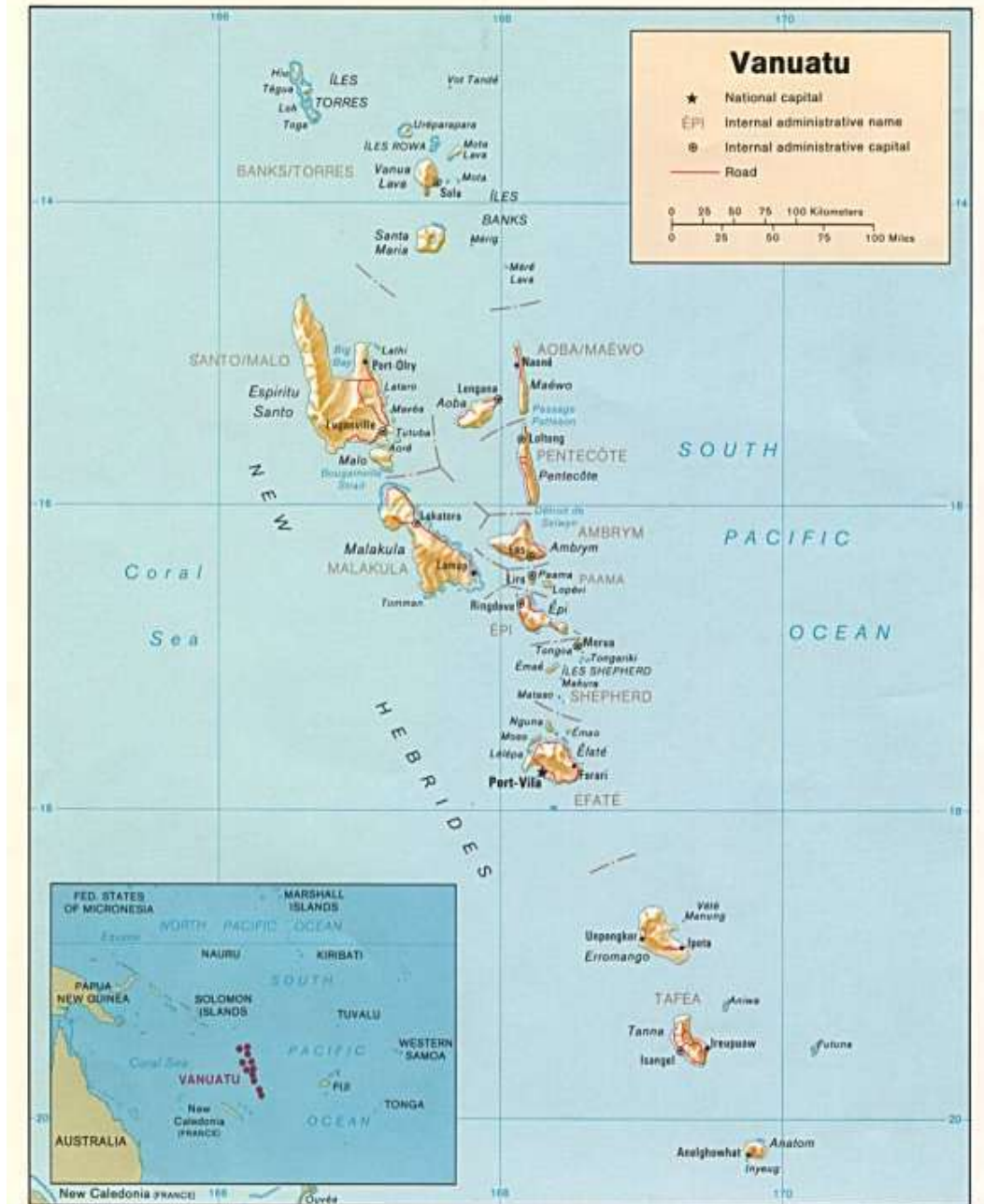
Components	SUPPORT FOR REDD+ READINESS FUNDED BY FCPC, WORLD BANK	Original Funding	Additional Funding
		USD (million)	USD (million)
1	Institutional Strengthening for REDD+ Management	1.300	0.316
	Strengthening of the stakeholders engagement process at the decentralized level	0.980	0.609
2	Development of REDD+ Strategy for Vanuatu	1.320	0.475
3	Reference Emissions Level/Reference Level	0.000	0.230
4	Monitoring Systems for Forests & Safeguards	0.000	0.870
	Sub-Total	3.600	2.500
	Grand Total	6.100	

Brief Background

1. Vanuatu is made up of some 83 islands located in south Pacific Ocean,
2. There are 68 inhabitant islands,
3. Total land area of the country is 1,226,905 hectares,
4. Total population is 307,000 in 2020 and almost about 80% live outside the urban centers like Port Vila and Lugainville,
5. Vanuatu is still largely an agriculture-based economy,
6. The weather is tropical characterized by moderate rainfall with cyclone starting from December to April.

The Forestry Sector

1. The government of Vanuatu is strongly committed to manage its forest resources on a sustainable basis,
2. Forests are important to the rural communities and in many cases they derive their cash income from forestry activities,
3. Major areas of commercial forests are found in larger islands like Santo, Malekula, Erromango and Efate.



Vegetation Types of Vanuatu

1. As per the 1993 NFI, The natural vegetation types of Vanuatu is about 1.2 million hectares.
2. Total area of plantations is about 2,910 ha.

Vegetation Types	Area (ha)	% of land area
Mid Height Forests (20 - 30 m)	205,307	16.73
Low Forests (10 - 20 m)	234,089	19.08
Woodland (< 10 m)	386	0.03
Thickets (3 -8 m)	433,941	35.37
Scrub (< 3 m)	45,018	3.67
Grassland	51,128	4.17
wamp Communities	2,261	0.18
Mangroves	2,519	0.21
Bare Ground/Human made	252,256	20.56
Total	1,226,905	100.00

Source: VANRIS, 1993

The National Forest Inventory which is being carried out with the support of FCPF (under REDD+ Project) will come up with updated figures.

Legislations and Policies Relevant to the REDD+ Program in Vanuatu

Policies and Plans that are relevant to the REDD+ Program

1. National Forest Policy of Vanuatu (2013 – 2023)
2. Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan “Vanuatu 2030-The People’s Plan (2016 – 2030)
3. National Environment Policy and Implementation Plan (2016 – 2030)
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy of Vanuatu (2016 – 2030)

The following Sectoral Policies are relevant for REDD+ but many provisions in the policies need harmonization like;

1. Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy
2. Vanuatu Livestock Policy (2015 – 2030)

Acts that are relevant to REDD+ program

1. Forestry Act of 2019
2. Forestry Rights Registration and Timber Harvest Guarantee Act No 28 of 2000
3. Environment Protection and Conservation Act of 2002
4. Land Acquisition Act of Vanuatu
5. Custom Land Management Act of 2013
6. Land Reform Act of Vanuatu
7. Land Leases Act of Vanuatu

Participatory Self-Assessment Process

1. The Participatory Self-assessment workshops were conducted in 4 REDD+ islands. viz (a) Malekula (b) Santo (c) Efate and (d) Tanna.
2. In addition to the above, 1 validation workshop was conducted in Forest Department Office in Port Vila,
3. The workshops were conducted as per the guidance provided in the FCPF Guidelines “A Guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework-2013”
4. The workshops were conducted by a Facilitation Team comprising of experts from REDD+ Unit, Forestry Department, and local NGO. The workshops were conducted in participatory and transparent manner.
5. The Facilitation Team was supported by the staffs of Regional Forest Offices, CSO Network Members in the islands for arranging the logistics
6. The participants, to be invited, was decided jointly in collaboration with the Regional Forest Offices concerned and the CSO Network.



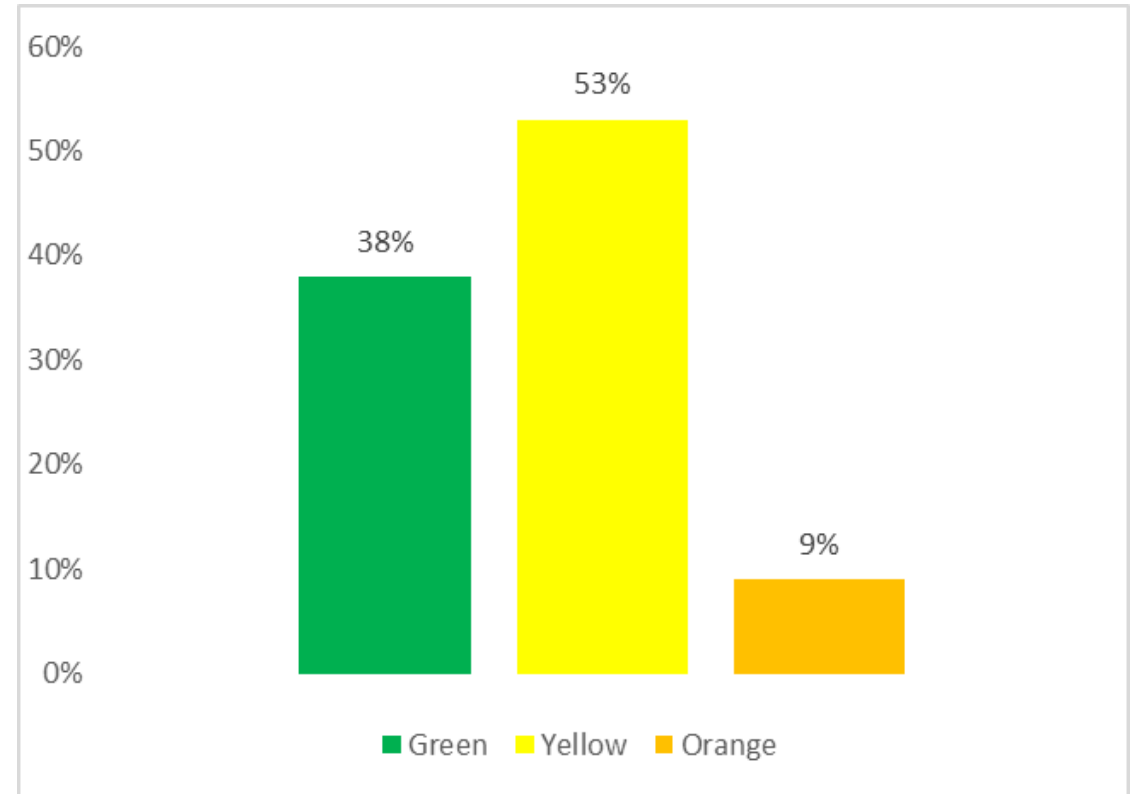
Participatory Self-Assessment Process (contd)

7. Overall 84 communities took part in the four assessments workshops including the validation workshop. Out of total 26% were female participants.
8. The workshop participants represented government organizations, CSO networks members, private sector representatives, provincial officials, women groups, youth groups, church representatives, forest dependent communities and local *ni-Vanuatu* communities.
9. Before conducting the workshops all preparation was done like preparing materials like power point presentation, overhead projector, chart papers, note books etc.
10. The workshops were facilitated by the Facilitation Team. The Team explained the rationale of conducting the self-assessment workshops,
11. The participants were also organized into groups and allowed to discuss each criterion among themselves before rating the assessment criteria,
12. At the end they were asked to rate each criterion by putting a check mark on the appropriate progress indicator which was marked by traffic light color coding.



Outcomes of the Self-Assessment

Overall it was found out that out of 34 assessment criteria, 13 criteria were awarded GREEN, rating which indicate “significant progress were made” and 18 criteria were awarded **YELLOW** meaning “progressing well but further development required” and 3 criteria were awarded ORANGE which indicate “further development required”. The percentage is given in the figure.



Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

Subcomponent 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements

ACHIEVEMENTS

National Level: (i) National REDD+ institutions established (ii) National Advisory Board (iii) The REDD+ Unit (iv) Technical Committee (v) Ad-hoc Thematic Working Groups (vi) CSO Platform (vi) PMU.

Provincial Level: At the provincial level the following institutions are established (i) Provincial Technical Committee (ii) CSO Networks in the provinces.

Cross-Sectoral coordination: Cross-Sectoral institutional coordination is enhanced

Technical supervision capacity: Technical supervision capacity of the staffs both at national and provincial level enhanced

Fiduciary and Fund Management capacity: Effective fiduciary, procurement process and fund management enhanced following the World Bank and Vanuatu Government's guidelines

Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism: The design for Vanuatu FGRRM completed.

Subcomponent 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements

Activities that are still challenge and required further efforts to sustain the progress

1. Capacity of the human resources both at national and provincial level is still a challenge- needs further up-gradation.
2. Institutional co-ordination mechanism needs further improvement to sustain the progress made so far.
3. Implementation of the FGMR, in the field, is required- the work is scheduled to begin by mid 2021.

Subcomponent 1b: Consultations, Participation, and Outreach

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Consultations and Participation, with the core stakeholders, have been done as per the Communication and Participation Plan;
2. Key stakeholders were sensitized and engaged in all decision making process before embarking in any activity in the field.
3. The key stakeholders are government organizations, policy makers in the ministries, private sectors, NGOs/CSOs, women groups, youth groups, Farmers' networks in the provinces;
4. Stakeholder engagement specialist hired to coordinate consultation process,
5. The communication materials, developed by the project, are culturally appropriate for forest dependent communities.



Activities that are still challenges and required further efforts to sustain the progress

The followings activities are major challenges however DOF will make efforts to address them.

1. Regular Meetings on REDD+ program, needs to be conducted with core stakeholders;
2. Trainings and workshops needs to be conducted to raise the capacity of the staff;
3. Specific trainings needs to be conducted for the staff of Forest Department on implementation of FGMR.
4. Clear roles and responsibilities needs to be developed for core stakeholders;
5. The Department of Forests should make efforts to extend the activity to more number of islands and communities.
6. The Department of Forests should continue consultations and awareness raising activities targeting all sections of the stakeholders

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

Subcomponent 2a: Assessment of Land Use, Land Use Change Drivers, Forest Laws, Policy and Governance

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation identified through the analytical studies,
2. The analysis was carried out based on the existing datasets on forest and land uses,
3. The prioritization of the drivers was done through stakeholder engagement process in all the REDD+ islands.
4. The study examined the acts and policies that are relevant for REDD+ implementation;

Subcomponent 2b: REDD+ Strategy Options

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The REDD+ Strategy Options have been prioritized for their significance in reducing emissions and enhancing removals and their co-benefits;
2. Participatory approach was followed for identification and prioritization of strategy options,
3. The options with the highest chances of success were prioritized. The options identified are:

Option 1: Land use planning (a cross-cutting REDD+ strategy option)

Option 2: Government acquisition of leases (acquisition of degraded agriculture leases to transform them into productive forest landscapes).

Option 3: REDD+ on customary land (activity-based services to smallholder farmers to support uptake of agroforestry schemes).

Option 4: REDD+ on customary land (expansion of Vanuatu's protected area network by strengthening conservation mechanism).

Subcomponent 2c: Implementation Framework

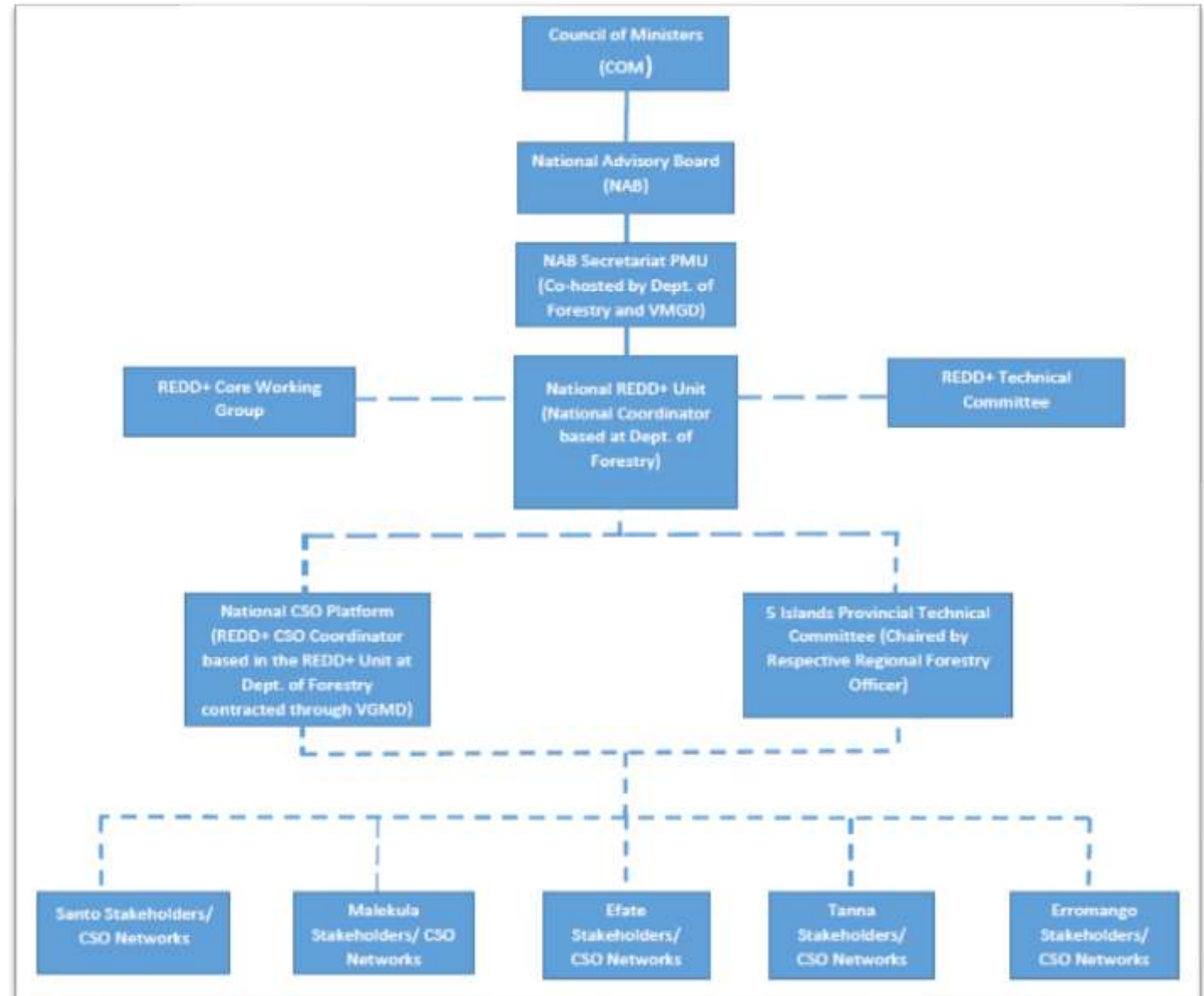
ACHIEVEMENT

1. REDD+ Implementation Framework developed.

Activities that are still challenges and required further efforts to sustain the progress

1. Guidelines for implementation Framework need to be developed,
2. Capacity to implement the benefits sharing mechanism needs to be developed,
3. National REDD+ Registry needs to be developed.
4. Capacity of the staffs for implementation needs to be upgraded

Current REDD+ Implementation Framework



Subcomponent 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The reports on SESA and development of ESMF, RPF and PF are in final stages;
2. Validation workshop was held on 14th and 15th of October 2020,
3. Participatory process was adopted for carrying out the SESA study.
4. The consultations were carried out at the community level in 8 locations across the 5 REDD+ islands,
5. The consultations resulted in approximately 85 communities being represented for a total of 216 individuals, 68 (31%) of whom were women.
6. Key thematic environmental and social issues have been highlighted,
7. The ESMF highlights the processes for screening and managing environmental and social risks,
8. The Resettlement Policy Framework presents the processes for screening and managing the impacts of involuntary land acquisition, including displacement of people;
9. The Process Framework describes the processes for identifying and managing risks relating to restricting access to forests



Component 3: Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The framework proposed for construction of FRL is to develop the FRL at sub-national level for each island,
2. The data on forests of 13 islands that account for more than 90 percent of forest area of Vanuatu covered in the national forest inventory is considered for FRL,
3. The sub-national FRLs of 13 islands are proposed to be aggregated into the national FRL. [Reference period 2008-2018]
4. The methodology followed in the development of FRL includes:
 - *Estimation of activity data on land cover and land use change over the reference period;*
 - *Estimation of emissions factors based on national forest inventory field plot data; and*
 - *Assessment of accuracy and uncertainty of emission and removal estimates of the FRL*
5. Construction of FRL takes into account historical data and adjusted for national circumstances:
 - Deforestation: The approach to deforestation includes sample based estimation of land use change to estimate the conversion of area under forests to non-forest area over the reference period.
 - Forest degradation: The proposed approach of assessing degradation will be (i) through estimation of activity data of forests that transition from dense canopy (closed forest) to less dense canopy (open) forest to estimate area that is subject to degradation.
 - Enhancement of forest carbon stock: The contributions of commercial and community plantations, afforestation on grasslands, and agroforestry systems will be as part of the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Emission Factor Data:

1. The national forest inventory which is in implementation on 13 islands covering different forest types serves as the basis for emission factor data.

National Circumstances:

1. There are gaps in the availability of remote sensing data during the early part of the reference period;
2. The available remote sensing imagery was used to conduct the spatial data analysis,
3. The low spatial resolution of the remote sensing data has constrained the estimation of forest degradation;
4. A phase-wise improvement plan to improve the emissions estimate of forest degradation is proposed.

Activities that are still challenges and required further efforts to sustain the progress

1. Capacity of the Forestry Department staffs on the analysis of remote sensing data and QA/QC is still a challenge;
2. Estimating forest degradation is a challenge. Therefore continuous change detection algorithm (CODED) is being tested to estimate area subject *forest degradation* and *deforestation*.

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for Forests, and Safeguards

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The work on documentation of monitoring approach is in progress and is expected to be completed by mid 2021,
2. The monitoring approach is based on ground-based national forest inventory and remote sensed activity data;
3. The monitoring approach and NFMS proposed for establishment has been technically reviewed at the National Workshop;
4. GIS and the MRV Working Group is established. Generation of activity data is in progress.
5. National Forest Inventory is in progress. Work on seven out 13 islands completed. Results for 7 islands calculated.

Uncertainty:

1. The sources of uncertainty that can impact the quality of outcomes are identified and targeted for phased improvement.



Subcomponent 4b: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The SESA has identified several social and environmental issues requiring analysis and response,
2. The value of non-carbon benefits including social and environmental issues are taken into consideration for designing the NFMS,
3. Non-carbon benefits such as biodiversity, forest governance, NTFPs and environmental services are also taken into consideration,

Activities that are still challenges and required further efforts to sustain the progress

1. There is considerable gap, within the Forestry Department, if the ESMF is to be implemented. Capacity of the staffs need to be upgraded.



Next Steps and the Conclusion

1. SESA and ESMF including the RPF and PF are at the final stage. These documents need to be reviewed and finalized. Reports planned to be finalized by end of 2020.
2. The work on National REDD+ Strategy preparation is progressing well. The report is planned to be completed by early 2021.
3. Launching of the report by mid 2021.
4. The National Forest Inventory for 7 islands completed. The work on the remaining 6 islands is planned to be completed by early 2021.
5. NFI results calculation and finalized by mid 2021.
6. FRL construction to be completed by mid 2021.
7. National Forest Monitoring System including the MRV will be finalized and established by mid 2021.
8. Database development and capacity development plan to be finalized by Mid 2021.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**

