

TAP Review of the R-Package Submitted by Côte d'Ivoire

Independent TAP-Expert Review on the Self-Assessment Process and R-Package - 11.09.2018¹

Content

Purpose of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) expert review	1
Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review	2
TAP Review Part A: Review of the Self-Assessment Process and the Documentation	2
Review of the results of the multi-stakeholder assessment	2
Facilitation by an independent facilitator	3
Participation, communication and information	3
TAP Review Part B: Summary of the REDD+ Processes - Strengths and Weaknesses of the R-Package	4
Self-assessment of the readiness process	4
Understanding of the REDD+ Readiness process	4
Respect of the FCPF R-Package Guidelines	4
Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation	5
Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation	7
Component 3: Reference Emission Levels/Reference Level (Criteria 26-28)	10
Component 4: Monitoring Systems for forests, and safeguards	10
TAP Review Part C: Summary Assessment and Recommendations to the PC	12
Objectives of Côte d'Ivoire Self-Assessment report based on the R-Package achieved	12
Timeframe and progress of the Readiness process	12
Some issues still need to be addressed to strengthen the Readiness Process	12

Purpose of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) expert review

The TAP review of the R-Package document “Readiness Package (R-Package) for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Côte d'Ivoire”, dated August 24, 2018, assessed (i) the process of this self-assessment by the national REDD+ Commission), (ii) the results from the multi-stakeholder assessment of the Readiness process in the country, and (iii) the remaining challenges in the Readiness process. The review thus focused on determining whether a due process and approach was followed while performing the self-assessment and provides feedback to the REDD+ country and the FCPF Participants Committee.

¹ TAP Expert: Jürgen Blaser

Methods Applied for the TAP Expert Review

A simple methodology has been applied which consists of the following steps:

- Step A: Review of the self-assessment process of REDD+ Readiness based on the report of Côte d'Ivoire².
- Step B: Review of the results from the multi-stakeholder R-Package self-assessment process.
- Step C: Assess what still needs to be done to further develop the Readiness Process (additional work plan, issues still to address).

The assessment is based on the [FCPF Assessment Framework](#) and on the R-Package document provided by Côte d'Ivoire, including the documents and URL linked as outputs within. An assessment of further needed achievements as basis for the ERPA is also part of the present task.

TAP Review Part A: Review of the Self-Assessment Process and the Documentation

This part of the TAP report provides a feedback on the multistakeholder self-assessment report and outcomes, including the summary of the multi-stakeholder process and discussions (Chapter 5 of the Self-Assessment Report, August 2018).

Review of the results of the multi-stakeholder assessment

The R-Package is the culmination of widespread inputs from various stakeholders committed to the development of the national REDD+ strategy and reflects the progress achieved since 2014 (p. 9). It has been prepared according to the evaluation framework given by FCPF. It defines progress on the development of tools and various necessary elements, the participation of the various stakeholder groups and the strengths and weaknesses and measures to be taken to strengthen the preparation process.

Chapter 4 (page 87) of the R-Package outlines the way the self-assessment process was run and lists the categories of stakeholders involved. The national self-assessment process was based on “a first R-package of the R-Package”, which was developed with the assistance of a World Bank consultant. A second version of the R-Package has then been prepared for validation by the National REDD+ Committee that “takes into account stakeholder comments” (p 87).

Chapter 5 of the R-Package provides summarized results of the self-assessment held over two rounds, “consultation” and “validation” of 2 days each, in Abidjan respectively on 12-13 and 16-17 July 2018 (Appendix 7, p. 130-131).

The tables related to «Assessment of criteria» (p 91-105) of the R-Package include a synthesis of the main views of stakeholders, which is valid and contains suitable information. However, with the information given, it is difficult for the TAP reviewer to distinguish the views of specific stakeholder groups. No links or references are made in the document to the regional and national meetings and workshops provided in the appendixes 1 and 3 of the R-Package report, which impairs the comprehensiveness of the present report on this point.

²Republic of Ivory Coast (2018). *Readiness Package (R-Package) for the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the Ivory Coast. Version August 24, 2018. Ministry of Health, Environment, and of Sustainable Development. Permanent Executive Secretariat for REDD+*

The report properly outlines the conducted stakeholder assessment and the results achieved in all R-components (Chapter 3 to 5). All the 34 criteria have been rated in the self-assessment process, the strengths and weaknesses highlighted and the activities to be carried out have been identified. The TAP thus notes that significant progress has been made in the readiness process, particularly in the period (2016-2018). However, in the TAP's view, there is still a lack of a clear plan when and how the country intends to carry out the activities still to be completed. Also, in the TAP's view, a short analysis of the substantial discrepancies among the different stakeholders on the criteria assessed would ensure a better comprehension of the issues at stake. Such an approach would have helped the process in defining suitable solutions and better address those issues for future implementation.

The self-assessment process found that 20 out of 34 criteria are rated «green», which reflects substantive progress and the ownership over the process by the different stakeholders. It can also be noted that given that the results are not presented by group of stakeholders, it is somehow difficult to comprehend the true appreciation of progress by each stakeholder group.

The R-Package properly presents a process of multi-stakeholder assessment, but it falls a bit short on information about the methodology applied to conduct the process, information about the stakeholders' profiles and the type of documentation made at the disposal to the attendees to the workshops (e.g. not clear if some documents have been translated to local language(s) and on the use of supporting tools so that stakeholders can understand the R-Package elements, etc.)

Facilitation by an independent facilitator

The process of multi-stakeholder assessment appears as having been conducted in a way that ensured a reliable process. The CN-REDD+ benefited from technical assistance provided by World Bank consultants for the multi-stakeholder consultation, which ensured impartiality and methodological rigor and thus increased its credibility.

Insufficient information however has been given on the way how the rating (green, yellow, orange) was finally obtained. The results of the rating have been presented for all stakeholders together, though, it would have been more transparent also to show them distinctly according to the stakeholders' groups

Participation, communication and information

The process was conducted in a participatory, inclusive and transparent manner with the stakeholders involved in the REDD+ mechanism. The participation materialized through consultation, the creation of a platform including civil society and private sector representatives, traditional authorities, local elected representatives and researchers to name but a few.

However, as pointed out earlier, the report did not mention whether the documentation ("R-Package first version") has been adapted to the background of the participants (e.g. translated in local language) and provided in advance. The report also pointed out the «insufficient capacity of civil society to take an active part in the national REDD+ process». This raised the question as to whether this category of stakeholders will further feel like being capable to participating in the planned REDD+ implementation stage. This weakness, already pointed out by the CN-REDD+, should be rectified through targeted capacity building and more appropriate communication. Nothing is said about how the information finds its way up from local level to regional and national level and how the views and needs of local people are considered (i.e. in a bottom-up process).

→ In the TAP's view, despite some weaknesses encountered, the self-assessment process was done with great care and in an inclusive way. However, the TAP recommends a continued and sustained effort to improve transparency and capacity for a true multi-stakeholder involvement in the further development and implementation of the REDD+ strategy.

TAP Review Part B: Summary of the REDD+ Processes - Strengths and Weaknesses of the R-Package

This part of the TAP review focuses on the self-assessment results; progress indicators (color scores) for the nine subcomponents, significant achievements and areas requiring further development related to the corresponding 34 assessment criteria, and activities that address identified areas which require further work.

Self-assessment of the readiness process

The report is well-written and the information clearly laid-out. The self-assessment consultation and the validation workshop took place in July 2018. Some major activities still need to be carried out. The self-assessment thus reflects only the present perception, which is prone to evolve substantially over the coming months or year. The TAP noted that important capacity building efforts and the development of an adequate communication strategy are still needed.

→ An organizational chart and a detailed institutional framework of the REDD+ process would lead to a better understanding of the links between the different stakeholders involved in the REDD+ process.

Understanding of the REDD+ Readiness process

The R-Package document provides evidence that good foundations are up and running (e.g. the REDD+ Platform and the full operationalization of CN-REDD+). However, on the one hand, the report pointed out weaknesses regarding involvement of at least one group of stakeholders (i.e. Civil society): a comprehensive communication strategy is not yet fully developed. On the other hand, the TAP noted weaknesses in delivering feedback (top down) and capacity building. In the TAP's view, there is still some work to do regarding these issues since a key element for a successful implementation of a national REDD+ strategy is the ownership by all stakeholders. This must be kept in mind when implementing the Action Plan for completing REDD+ readiness.

Respect of the FCPF R-Package Guidelines

The R-Package document is complete and fulfills the FCPF requirements. The document provides a lot of references and hyperlinks to important information, which could only be partly assessed in the short time slot available for the present TAP review. The following observations can be done:

- A summary of the readiness preparation process is provided, from the conceptual stage (p. 11) to concrete achievements since 2011 within the R-PP components. Planned activities to be achieved in the future are also listed.
- A description of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process is provided (but see above mentioned observations in part A of the TAP report)
- The results of the multi-stakeholder assessment of progress in readiness are provided (see also observation on this issue in part A of the TAP report);
- The needed links to most of the important outputs and information are provided and are functional. However, many hyperlinks provided in the "Bibliography and reference" chapter

do not lead to the expected document or sometimes are not functional. Eight hyperlinks (URL) lead to a Dropbox, which is not public and reachable for the TAP reviewer (e.g. the first three references related to component 1, p. 132, others are found notably on pages 134 and 135, respectively 4 and 2 references).

- The list of acronyms and abbreviations is incomplete and needs to be complemented as the text uses a multitude of short names that are difficult to understand for the outside reader.

Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

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

C1 – Accountability and transparency; C2 – Mandate and operational budget; C3 – Multi-sectoral coordination mechanism and inter-sectoral collaboration; C4 – Technical supervisory capacity (criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 [Green])

The ministerial decree establishing the REDD+ National Commission (CN-REDD+) was issued in Oct. 2012 and took 4 years to become operational (p. 13 & 93). Arrangements at higher government level have been designed for the implementation of the National REDD+ strategy and planned regional REDD+ strategies (the commission is chaired by the Prime Minister or his representative). Support organizations have been put in place, at national and regional levels, i.e. the Interdepartmental Technical Committee (CTI-REDD+), the Permanent Executive Secretariat (SEP-REDD+) and The Ivorian Observatory for the sustainable management of natural resources (OI-REN) (p. 14-16).

The civil society is organized within the OI-REN platform, which makes them easily reachable and potentially increases their influence to have a say regarding REDD+ issues. On this basis, answers to some of the weaknesses listed in the assessment of criteria are likely to be found (e.g. C1, p. 91).

The operationalization of some of the crucial bodies and tools for implementing the national REDD+ strategy is still in preparation and important structures at regional/local level still need to be formed. This concern, inter alia, the Complaint Resolution Mechanism for REDD+ which is envisaged to be set up by the end of 2018 and a communication strategy and plan still under development by the SEP-REDD+ which is intended to consider information flows between local and national levels. This communication strategy and associated plan are to be finalized by November 2018.

The report deplores that the governmental decree establishing the CN-REDD+ has ignored several key actors, namely local authorities and civil society at the level of the National Committee (p.14 & 91).

→The operationalization of some of some of the crucial bodies for implementing the national REDD+ strategy is still not fully in place and, as mentioned in the R-Package, not satisfactory in its composition. In the TAP's view, considering the weaknesses identified for criterion 2 (Operational mandate), the rating of this criterion is rather "yellow" and not «green»³.

C5 - Fund management capacity; C6 - Feedback and redress mechanism (criteria 5 and 6) [Yellow]

The self-assessment points out some worries related to the Fund management capacity and the Feedback and grievance redress mechanism (Complaint Resolution Mechanism, MRP), which is still not operational). Among the activities to be carried out in the frame of criteria 5 and 6 are: (i)

³There is a discrepancy between the rating in Table 1 (page 12) and the detailed Assessment Tables shown on Pages 91 following. Indeed, in the Table 1 Criterion 2 is rated with "yellow", but later in the report with "green".

conducting regular audits to report on progress in financial management; (ii) organize training for local facilitators of the MRP bodies and (iii) testing the functioning of the MRP in the pilot project area.

→ The TAP therefore recommends, *inter alia*, that efforts be focused on implementing an efficient complaints mechanism as soon as possible.

Sub-Component 1b: Consultation, participation and outreach / awareness(Criteria 7-10)

C7 – Participation and commitment of key stakeholders; C8 – Consultation process; C10 – Use and disclosure of the results of the consultations (criteria 7, 8 and 10) [green]

The participation of all categories of stakeholders is not fully ensured. This issue was already pointed out as a significant weakness since the coming into force of the Decree that established the National REDD+ commission. The place and role of certain key stakeholders such as the civil society are side-stepped in the Decree (see weakness 2, criterion 1). The R-Package has pointed out weaknesses regarding the “Capacity of civil society to take an active part in the national REDD+ process.”

→ In the TAPs view, the actions proposed for criterion 7 seem insufficient: a strong capacity building programme would need to be built not only restricted to the civil society but with an objective that takes a broad view to help provide the weakest with the tools they need so they can have a voice within the REDD+ process.

C9 - Dissemination of information and access to information (criteria 9) [green]

The self-assessment states that consultations carried out for each of the axes of preparation for REDD+ have systematically started with information and awareness sessions on the concept and the process.

The main communication tools currently used have been developed with the aim of ensuring awareness and informing all stakeholders and all categories of actors. Emphasis was placed on communication both through new information and communication technologies and traditional means of communication with the aim of reaching all the segments of the population within the country and across regions.

However, the report pointed out that «communication actions are carried out without the strategy being validated». From the TAP's view, this weakness was to be expected since the R-Package stated that the communication strategy is still under development by the SEP-REDD+ so that the information flow between local and national levels can be properly taken into consideration.

The TAP noticed that there is still considerable effort to be made regarding both the top-down and bottom-up flow of information. It also recommends the validation of the communication strategy as soon as practicable.

→ In the TAP's view, this criterion might be rather evaluated “yellow” given the weakness identified.

In conclusion for Component 1 (criteria 1-10), substantial efforts were made, and the country should continue this pathway. However, the TAP recommends that the participation of all stakeholders and communication should be further improved. In addition, suitable mechanisms should be devised to address the deficiencies identified in the financial management.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

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

C11 - Assessment and analysis; C12 - Prioritization of direct and indirect favorable/unfavorable elements for forest valorization; C13 - Links between these favorable/unfavorable elements and REDD+ activities; C15 Impacts on forest law and policy (criteria 11, 12, 13 and 15) [green]

The R-Package presents historical and recent development of forest/land use and its trend and links to people's livelihoods. It also shows how the slash-and-burn farming practices led to a loss of forest cover, which remains an important deforestation/degradation driver. Several studies were carried out to better understand (i) the situation and dynamics of the forests, (ii) the sectors involved and the sectoral policies and measures necessary for REDD+ (Agriculture, Wood-Energy, Conservation, Forestry/Reforestation, Land Use planning), (iii) the framework legal, regulatory and economic framework of the REDD+ and (iv) land use, customary and traditional rights. These studies identified and characterized the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the seven agroecological areas of the country.

Prioritization of deforestation and forest degradation factors were carried out through a consultative and participatory approach and based on reliable studies and linkages between key drivers. Also, the barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement were identified. Hyperlinks to the reports and studies are provided in the reference section of the R-Package.

The TAP noted, however that criteria 11, 12, 13 and 15 are presented as not having any weaknesses and there are no activities to be carried out under criteria 12 and 13. Regarding the criterion 15, the report indicates that shortcomings were identified in the legal text, but no weakness are described under this criterion. Since the R-Package considers «proposals for improving the laws and policies» as a strength, there must be weaknesses regarding forest laws and policies that are worth to be identified in the R-Package and subsequently addressed when preparing the ERPD.

→The TAP noted that, although several studies were carried out, especially those related to criterion 11 (p. 41-45), no information is given about the results obtained by these studies. In the TAP's view, at least a short summary of the results of the analyses of the studies on property and governance could have been presented. Since no challenges are identified, the TAP assumes that this analysis is yet to be completed.

C14 - Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance (crit. 14) [yellow]

Some important tools were created during the readiness phase, such as the procedure for the participatory delimitation of village territories in 2013; the creation of the Rural Land Agency (AFOR) in 2016; the process of drafting a National Planning Policy (PNAT) initiated in 2016 that should evolve into the Land Use and Development Law (LOAT). Most of these new tools are still not operational. As this appears in the R-Package (p. 44), the issues of land tenure and property rights are still at an early stage. For example, consultations for the establishment of an Independent Rural Land Observatory have only been initiated and its formalization is expected in 2019.

The R-Package indicates that next step for these criteria is to finalize the study on the profit-sharing mechanism and the setting up of the environmental and social safeguards instruments. In the TAP's view, the issues of land tenure, resource use and property rights should be included in the activities to be carried out.

Sub-Component 2b: REDD+ Strategy options (criteria 16-18)

C16 – Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategic options; C17 – Assessment of the feasibility; C-18 Impacts of policy options on existing sectoral policies (criteria 16-18, [green])

The process of selecting and prioritizing REDD+ strategic options was carried out in three main phases namely, (i) the preliminary identification of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, (ii) the carrying out of studies concerning the drivers identified in the first phase and (iii) the communication phase accompanied of a prioritization of REDD+ strategy options. The drivers of deforestation were selected via a transparent and participatory informed process (p. 53 and 96).

The accession of Côte d'Ivoire to the REDD+ led to the adoption and promulgation, in 2014, of the new Forest Code to replace that of 1965, followed by a series of exchanges around forest policies and REDD+ mechanism (see p. 57 following of the R-Package).

The R-Package document states that the strategic options have been selected for implementation of REDD+ and they consider the results of the several consultations with all the stakeholders mobilized for the development of REDD + strategy. The strategic options were prioritized by the same stakeholders. The self-assessment provides only one single input regarding weakness (criterion 17) and no activities are indicated for the criterion 16. The R-Package states that the CNI-REDD+, which is being finalized, is conducting a cost-benefit analysis of REDD+ strategic options.

→ While the TAP recognizes the efforts made thus far under this sub-component, it questions the overall “green rating”, since the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (EESS) and the REDD+ investment Framework (CNI-REDD+) are still to be finalized. Additionally, in the TAP understanding, the impacts on the actual policies have not been assessed yet (see p. 56 and 96 of the R-Package) even though some discussions have taken place. They are important for defining the REDD+ strategic options.

Sub-Component 2c: Implementation Framework (criteria 19-22)

C19 - Adoption and enforcement of laws and regulations; C20 – Implementation guidelines (criteria 19 and 20) [yellow]

As mentioned before, Côte d'Ivoire is currently implementing some important legislative and regulatory reforms in line with the REDD+ process in various related sectors (e.g. the new forest code, National Planning Policy (PNAT), Law related to Sustainable development (2014)). Discussions are underway regarding implementation (p. 59).

The R-Package shows two important weaknesses namely the lack of enforcement of certain laws and regulations and a delayed finalization of REDD+ implementation guidelines. The R-Package also points out the need for an assessment on the effectiveness of the legislative and regulatory reforms. Activities to be carried out are also listed (see p. 61 and 97).

→ In the TAP's view, a clear definition of the pitfalls and barriers to an effective implementation should be provided in the document.

C21 - Benefit sharing mechanism; C22 – REDD+ National registry and REDD+ activity monitoring system (criteria 21 and 22) [orange]

Studies for both the definition of the benefit-sharing mechanism and the development of a National Register REDD+ are still in preparation.

The R-Package document does not provide any information related to the way the benefit sharing mechanism will be carried out and what will be the safeguards (e.g. inclusiveness, fairness, criteria for allocation, etc.). Discussions on the final mechanism should involve all parties. Considerable work is still needed to fulfill the requirements of benefit sharing. Attention should be given to the participation and acceptance of all stakeholders. For transparency reasons, an external and independent supervision assessment of the benefit sharing mechanism, once effective, may be reassuring.

→ To provide a detailed assessment about the benefit sharing, the TAP would require additional information and/or materials such as draft documents. As for the REDD+ National Registry, initial progress has been made by the setting up of an operational geoportal. The TAP suggests that the country should continue this pathway.

Sub-Component 2d: Social and Environmental Impacts (criteria 23-25)

C23 - Analysis of the issues related to social and environmental safeguards (criterion 23) [yellow]

The SESA process and ESMF⁴ aim at creating a sustainable institutional structure that ensures effective management of social and environmental issues beyond the Readiness phase. The R-Package indicates that the EESS (SESA) on the SN-REDD+ was conducted in a participatory manner and backup instruments are only available in provisional versions. The EESS and backup framework report is not yet finalized, consequently, not validated yet, thus, the “yellow rating” is justified.

C24 - Design of REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts (criterion 24, green)

The Strategic Environmental and Social Survey (EESS) initially focused on the preliminary strategic options that had been defined through the R-PP and the analysis on deforestation and forest degradation. This preliminary analysis enabled the working groups responsible for the development of SN-REDD+ to formulate final policy options, policies and measures aiming at maximizing positive social and environmental impacts and minimizing the negative ones.

→ The R-Package document does not mention any weaknesses or activities to be carried out. Since neither challenges nor activities to be carried out are identified, the TAP concluded that this analysis is yet to be completed, thus, in the TAP’s view, the criterion 24 does not provide the justification of the “green rating”.

C25 - Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) (criterion 25, orange)

A draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is available and should be finalized shortly. The assessments that will be carried out will define the prevention, mitigation, enhancement and monitoring measures of the potential impacts related to the REDD + project.

→ The R-Package rating is correct in the view of the TAP. It would be important however to clearly define the further steps and to include a clear timeline in the process, also in view of the forthcoming submission of the ERPD.

⁴The ESMF sets out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures to assess potential environmental and social impacts and risks, and contains measures to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset adverse environmental and social impacts and enhance positive impacts and opportunities of said projects, activities, or policies/regulations.

Component 3: Reference Emission Levels/Reference Level (Criteria 26-28)

C26 – Demonstration of the method (Methodological basis for the establishment of Reference Level Criterion 26) [green]

A national NRF has been developed in a participatory, transparent manner consistent with international recommendations and verified by the UNFCCC. A NRF for the southwest area of the country was developed in that way and an action plan for the improvement of the NRF was developed.

However, considerable and important work remains to be done through the Action Plan for the improvement of the NRF, including, *inter alia*, additional studies for the estimation of activity data and emission factors related to forest degradation, the collection of additional data to account soil carbon and most importantly the conduction of the National Forest Inventory that is expected to start in the third quarter of 2018 amongst other actions relating to enhancement of sinks.

→ Considering that main work remains to be done through the proposed Action Plan, the TAP questions the “green rating” under C26.

C27 - Use of historical data, adjusted for national circumstances (criterion 27) [green]

National Historic data 2000-2015 used in the development of the NRF in accordance with the UNFCCC guidelines and the FCPF methodological framework. Neither weaknesses, nor activities to be carried out are mentioned in the R-Package.

C28 - Technical feasibility of methodological approach and compliance with UNFCCC guidelines and IPCC recommendations (Criterion 28) [green]

According to the R-Package document, the FREL used the UNFCCC, IPCC and FCPF guidelines as a basis. The methodology is a calculation of forest losses and gains to estimate the variation in the carbon stock. No remaining work is mentioned.

Component 4: Monitoring Systems for forests, and safeguards

Sub-Component 4a: National forest monitoring system (criteria 29-31)

C29 - Documentation of monitoring/tracking approach (Criterion 29) [green]

NNSW developed in a participatory manner under the coordination of the SEP-REDD+ with the setting up of a dedicated working group composed of national data-producing structures. It is clearly structured in 4 components that are interlinked: (i) satellite-based land cover monitoring (ii) a national forest inventory with biomass and soil data [which however has not been started yet!!!] (iii) community-based forest observatory [also in development], and (iv) the use of the national greenhouse gas inventory. Additional work is being done, including a coordination with the Cocoa-Forest initiative to integrate into NNSW, the cocoa traceability system developed by the cocoa sector. The R-Package refers to additional work to be conducted in the action Plan NNSW 2017-2020 without giving further details.

→ In the view of the TAP, the MRV system of the R-Package document would have benefited by presenting direct hyperlinks to relevant documents and reports in the respective sections of the document, as there is a lot of work embraced in the 4 components that are relevant to understand the entire MRV process.

C30 - Demonstration of early system implementation (Criterion 30) [yellow]

The SNSF of Côte d'Ivoire was developed in a participatory manner under the coordination of SEP-REDD+, with the establishment of a dedicated working group, composed of national data-producing structures whose capacities have been strengthened. The NNSW combines remote sensing and field data.

As a weakness, the R-package indicates that specific methodologies referring to the follow-up of high carbon stock forests, the monitoring of forests with high conservation values (HCV) and the monitoring of land use in deforestation hotspots are not yet tested or validated. This will be done as next steps justifies the “yellow” rating of the criterion.

C31 - Institutional arrangements and capacities (Criterion 31) [yellow]

The different mandates of the various structures involved in REDD+ were defined and are well explained. All mandates are articulated within a document specifying the institutional arrangement for the proper functioning of the NNSW. A geoportal portal has been developed to ensure the compilation and dissemination of data from the NNSW, and memoranda of agreements, for data exchange, have been signed. Still, Data exchange is not yet fluid between the institutions. However, in the view of the TAP, the further steps (“confirm the TORs of each working-group stakeholder”) are vaguely formulated and it is not clear how demanding and time-consuming this task will be.

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

C32 - Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues (criteria 32) [green]

According to the R-package, the strength of this criterion appears to be based on the identification and mapping of the multiple benefits of REDD+ in Côte d'Ivoire through the completion of a study on the one hand and on the other hand, the identification of the social and environmental impacts of the implementation of REDD+ strategic options in the EESS.

→ In the TAP's view, the green rating is not justified and should be rather “yellow”. The R-Package showed earlier (criterion 29) that the EESS and backup framework report is not yet finalized and consequently, there is no validation yet.

Monitoring, reporting and information sharing (criteria 33) [yellow]

A SIS (Geographic Information System) for REDD+ in Côte d'Ivoire has been conceptualized in a participatory way. However, the software part of SIS is yet not developed and partnerships for the successful implementation of SIS are not yet discussed and in place. Activities that are to be carried out to address these issues have nonetheless been identified.

Institutional arrangements and capacities (criteria 34) [yellow]

An environmental and social safeguards unit has been set up within the SEP-REDD+. Moreover, a first estimate of the financial needs for the implementation of the safeguard instruments is carried out in the preparation documents.

The weakness identified is that the collaborations to be developed with the stakeholders for the proper functioning of the safeguard system have not yet been formalized.

Activities to address the issues have been identified and are planned to be carried out.

Objectives of Côte d'Ivoire Self-Assessment report based on the R-Package achieved

Based on the R-Package, version 2 of August 24, 2018, as well as on the analysis of some, but not all, links and documents referred, the TAP reviewer concludes that **the enumerated accomplishments described in the Côte d'Ivoire Self-Assessment report and based on the R-Package have been effectively achieved**. Also, the proposed work programme for consolidation of the Readiness phase in an Action Plan is well prepared and potentially will lead to full accomplishment of REDD+ Readiness within a reasonable time frame (2019). In the view of the TAP, in spite of the complex and diverse enabling conditions in the country, Côte d'Ivoire has reached a high level of preparation for REDD+ in September 2018.

Timeframe and progress of the Readiness process

The progress of the country in the Readiness process is well detailed for each component of the [Readiness Preparation Proposal](#) (R-PP). However, there is often no timeline specified for the future achievements to be done. There is a need to develop a timeline with specific milestones, which should clearly state which activities will be finalized with urgency over the coming months as part of the readiness process, considering that the first version of the ERPD has already been formulated and some of the open issues need to be resolved before entering a full ER-Program preparation.

Some issues still need to be addressed to strengthen the Readiness Process

Côte d'Ivoire has done considerable progress in its REDD+ readiness. As assessed by the stakeholders in the self-assessment process, several activities still need to be conducted to consolidate the Readiness phase. These issues can be solved in a reasonable time frame and in parallel to the preparation of the ERPD, which is forthcoming. The main comments made by the TAP have been highlighted in the respective sections (→ in red), including *inter alia*:

- For Component 1 (criteria 1-10) overall, the participation of all stakeholders and communication should be further improved. The self-assessment pointed out the insufficient capacity of civil society to take an active part in the national REDD+ process (criterion 7) while at the same time civil society and local authorities are not represented at the level of National REDD+ committee (criterion 1). These crucial issues need to be addressed.
- A certain amount of work described in the criteria have not been finalized or are still in their preliminary stage of implementation, nonetheless, they are presented as having made substantive progress ("green"). This, for instance, is the case for criteria 9, 17, 24, 32. No explanation is given to allow the TAP to undertake a more in-depth view on this issue.
- Suitable mechanisms should be devised to address the deficiencies identified in the self-assessment process in addressing financial management. In the TAP's view, substantial efforts were made, and the country should continue this pathway.
- A validated communication strategy should be used to ensure effective and efficient information sharing on readiness outcomes to all relevant stakeholders
- At the level of criteria 1 and 2, weaknesses related to salary are pointed out. The TAP expert recommends that this issue be discussed but not in the framework of a R-Package.

- In respect to component 3, considerable and important work remains to be formulated in the Action Plan for the improvement of the NRF, as described under C26. As it is planned to integrate forest degradation in the NRF before the submission of the ERPD, this includes considerable additional work that needs to be in a timely and in-depth manner.
- For criteria 29-30: The National Forest monitoring System (NNSW 2017-2020) is planned to be carried out through three phases (p. 74-75), the implementation one being the second. The R-Package indicates that the Action plan is being implemented (criterion 29, p. 75 & 100) while at the same time, at the level of criterion 30 (“Demonstration of the first phase of application”), the report points out that “the methodologies are not yet tested or validated”. Here some clarity should be provided.

The TAP further noted that there were no weaknesses at all have been mentioned in the analysis in 15 out of the 34 criteria. This can be interpreted in different ways, from complete successful completion to omission of analysis.

Delays in respect to accomplishment were noted in 12 criteria. As the ERPD analysis is approaching, it is important to show a clear plan on delivery on those aspects that have not been finalized yet in the readiness phase.

There are some elements that need to be further clarified in the process of preparing the ERPD. Some of these issues that have risen in the Readiness phase will continue to be important in the further development of REDD+ as a GHG mitigation scheme, including, *inter alia*:

- a. Implementation of the zero-deforestation agriculture
- b. Continuous policy dialogue at the level of national government and law makers to consolidate the REDD+ approach and to create the enabling conditions for a national REDD+ Program, particularly in respect to laws and regulations;
- c. Conclude the national RL and introduce a national MRV system based on the current achievements;
- d. National REDD+ registry, benefit sharing and FGCM.

To summarize, the Self-Assessment process and the analysis of progress of the readiness phase has been clearly presented in the R-Package documents and its various annexes/URLs (as much as they could have been consulted). The TAP expert therefore congratulates the Cdi Team for the enormous effort undertaken. The TAP noted that while important work to finalize the readiness process is still ongoing, the country is ready to embark on the implementation arrangements of its REDD+ strategy.