



# Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

## **Independent TAP Expert Review of Colombia's REDD+ Readiness Package**

Trond Norheim, PhD

FCPF PC31 and PA15 Meeting  
Washington DC, October 18-20, 2022



**FOREST  
CARBON  
PARTNERSHIP**  
FACILITY

# Objectives and modality of the TAP review

To provide an independent technical review of the REDD+ Readiness Package (R-Package) elaborated by the Republic of Colombia and of the Self-Assessment Process that Colombia conducted to develop its R-package and

To inform the FCPF Participants' Committee decision regarding endorsement of the R-Package

Part A: Review of Self-assessment process and documentation

Part B: Review of Progress on REDD+ Readiness

Present TAP overall assessment and recommendations

# Part A: Review of the Self-assessment Process and Documentation

The R-Package demonstrates Colombia's firm commitment to REDD+.

Colombia has executed the Self-assessment process in accordance with the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The R-Package 2022 includes information on the self-assessment process and its results, incorporating inputs from nearly the whole REDD+ development period, which started already in 2008. Colombia has since 2010 engaged in numerous multi-stakeholder consultations with a total of 173 local and 77 national workshops.

Five sessions of the National REDD+ Forums (*Mesa Nacional REDD+*) were organized 2015-2021 with participation of the public and private sector, indigenous and afro-descendent communities, smallholder farmers, NGOs, academia, and international cooperation. 2018-2021 the process focused on consolidating the participation of stakeholders in assuring the implementation conditions of the Integrated Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management (EICDGB).

Colombia has carried out a long, broad and honest self-assessment process. It is however not easy to understand how the discussions have been moving forward, from the original positions of different groups to the current R-package, and how agreements were reached. It would also have been useful with information on any continued opposition to different parts of the REDD+ framework. The text is however quite self-critical, and it seems like some stakeholder groups (e.g. indigenous communities) have been able to be heard.



# Part B: Summary of REDD+ Readiness progress: Component 1

## Criteria evaluated by component and sub-component

### Component 1. Readiness Organization and Consultation

#### 1a. National REDD+ management arrangements

- 1 Accountability and transparency
- 2 Operating mandate and budget
- 3 Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration
- 4 Technical supervision capacity
- 5 Funds management capacity
- 6 Feedback and grievance redress mechanism

#### Sub component 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



# Part B: Summary of REDD+ Readiness progress: Component 2

## Component 2. REDD+ strategy preparation

### 2a. Assessment of land use, land use change drivers, the 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 resources rights, land tenure, governance
- 15 Implications for forest law and policy

### 2b. REDD+ strategy options

- 16 Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options
- 17 Feasibility assessment
- 18 Implications of the strategy options on existing sectoral policies

### 2c. Implementation framework

- 19 Adoption and implementation of the legislation/regulations
- 20 Guidelines for implementation
- 21 Benefit sharing mechanism
- 22 National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities

### 2d. Social and environmental impacts

- 23 Analysis of social and environmental safeguards issues
- 24 REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts
- 25 Environmental and social management framework

# Part B: Summary of REDD+ Readiness progress: Component 3

## Component 3. Emission reference levels/Reference levels

### Reference Emissions Level/ Reference level

26 Demonstration of methodology

27 Use of historical data and adjusted for national circumstances

28 Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guideline

## Component 4. Monitoring Systems for Forests and Safeguards

### 4a. National forest monitoring system

29 Documentation of monitoring approach

30 Demonstration of early system implementation

31 Institutional arrangements and capacities

### 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

# Part B: TAP assessment: Component 1

**1a. The REDD+ management arrangements** have been positively developed, but should still be improved. A national user-friendly REDD+ platform would be a good measure, but is not enough since many remote communities have no Internet or weak signal. Also, many indigenous communities have limited knowledge of Spanish, requiring communication in their languages, e.g. through radio. Around 70 indigenous languages are spoken in Colombia and by more than 750,000 people, others spoken by isolated tribes who only recently came into contact with the society outside. It is not realistic to reach all, but a prioritization should be made based on available resources and expected impact.

The inter-institutional coordination is highly positive, but should be developed further and integrate all the most relevant NGOs/CSOs, academia and the private sector. The National REDD+ strategy has incorporated elements of the three Rio Conventions and reporting on the progress of REDD+ in Colombia could be incorporated into the national reporting to the conventions. The process could be strengthened with public and private sector co-financing. Colombia is an upper middle-income economy, and should more easily be able to co-finance REDD+ than many other recipient countries. The reviewer concurs with the rating of YELLOW.

**1b.** Colombia has made significant progress in **consultation, participation and outreach**. The reviewer does not agree with the need for considerable time between the preparation and implementation phases, because the progress of development is very variable in different parts of the country. In some regions it would be possible to continue with implementation nearly immediately, while other regions would require more time. The participatory consultation process has been long and broad, and the participants are on alert for continuing with concrete actions. The reviewer considers that even though the public disclosure of the consultation process should be improved, especially in remote rural areas, the average satisfactory progress is sufficient to give it a rating of YELLOW.

# Part B: TAP assessment: Component 2

**2a. The analysis of land use, and drivers of land use changes** was done using a robust methodology, including the important issue of forest degradation. The review of the national political and legal framework is also complete, and shows that Colombia has advanced in this area and is institutionally well prepared to take the next step into results-based payment on national level. The reviewer concurs with the rating of GREEN.

**2b.** The elements of the **Strategy Options** sub component have all a satisfactory progress (YELLOW). The reviewer concurs with the rating.

**2c. The Implementation Framework** is considered by both the self-assessment and the reviewer as one of the weak areas. There is limited knowledge of laws and regulations among regional and local stakeholders, especially in remote communities. This makes it easy for stronger actors to take advantage of those that lack sufficient information and economic resources. It is important to develop a solid grievance mechanism and inform about its existence and rules. The development of a benefits-sharing system is still in its early stage, and Colombia could take advantage of reviewing examples from other REDD+ countries. MRV is considered by the reviewer to be a somewhat stronger area than the other areas, however it needs more transparency. The reviewer concurs with the rating of ORANGE.

**2d.** The component of **Social and Environmental Impacts** has a very positive development, achieving an overall GREEN rating. The consultations about SESA have been extensive, and the results of the analysis are integrated in the R-Package. However, since the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has not yet been updated, the reviewer considers that this criterion should have been given a yellow rating (still maintaining overall GREEN rating).



# Part B: TAP assessment: Component 3

**Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels:** The R-Package does not mention which IPCC standard method Colombia has used to measure Forest Reference Emissions Level (FREL). The highest technical standard IPCC Tier 3 should be possible to use in Colombia.

According to the UNFCCC Report on the technical assessment of the proposed FREL of Colombia submitted in 2020, the projection of the expected increase in emissions is a result of the peace agreement. The adjusted FREL values presented in the modified submission with the aim of accessing results-based payments for REDD+ 2018-2022 present an estimated annual increase in emissions of 32-54% in this period. What is especially worrying is that the emissions due to deforestation are increasing year by year compared with the historical average of 91.65 million ton CO<sub>2</sub>/year:

2018: 120.8 million ton CO<sub>2</sub> (increase 32%)

2019: 127.0 million ton CO<sub>2</sub> (increase 39%)

2020: 132.5 million ton CO<sub>2</sub> (increase 45%)

2021: 137.1 million ton CO<sub>2</sub> (increase 50%)

2022: 140.7 million ton CO<sub>2</sub> (increase 54%)

The mentioned issue that “the scale does not allow applying the methodology to assess degradation in more detail” could partly be resolved through first a screening with satellite images and then the use of drones on the main areas detected. The reviewer concurs with the rating of YELLOW for methodology and GREEN for the other 2 criteria (overall GREEN).



# Part B: TAP assessment: Component 4

**4a. National Forest Monitoring System** Colombia has made considerable progress on the national forestry monitoring system. The reviewer agrees with a national platform that includes all relevant information. It is however necessary to assure user friendliness, and complement that with advisory on how to access and use the platform. The most important information should be provided also in indigenous languages, especially those languages that are most important for indigenous communities. The reviewer concurs with the rating YELLOW.

**4b.** It is a pity that **information system for multiple benefits, other impacts, governance and safeguards** has not been developed further, since there is a need for multiple benefits and Colombia has great potential for forest livelihood development, demonstrated in pilot projects. The country is on the right track to incorporate income from NTFP, however other income should be incorporated, such as eco-tourism and PES, to avoid conversion to non-forest land use. It is important to reach out to the communities with information that REDD+ has developed since the process started, no longer focusing only on carbon.

The current project development process should change, where “project development experts” prepare and present the projects to the potential beneficiaries. Local projects should be developed through a bottom-up approach, where the landholders/owners (including communities) are the main stakeholders and should be involved from the first project ideas. This would also improved sustainability.

It is serious that the REDD+ Safeguards System is not developed, since it is a cross-cutting issue. This should be a priority and requires institutional arrangements and capacity development at all level. The reviewer concurs with the rating ORANGE.

# Part C: Summary assessment and recommendations (1)

Colombia has made significant progress in REDD+ Readiness since the mid-term review in 2017, but much should still be done. Out of the 34 criteria of the FCPF's Readiness Assessment Framework, 10 have a very satisfactory level of progress (GREEN); 16 have a satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW); and 8 criteria have a level of progress requiring improvement (ORANGE). It is positive that no criteria are scored as demonstrating no progress (RED).

Overall, the self-assessment showed that three of the nine sub components (33.3%) were found to have achieved significant progress (GREEN), four of the sub components (44.4%) have progressed well but require further development (YELLOW), and two of the sub components require major development (ORANGE).



# Part C: Summary assessment and recommendations (2)

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

Sub component 1b. Criterion 10. Public disclosure of the consultation process: Even though this area should be improved, especially in remote rural areas, the average satisfactory progress is considered to be sufficient to give it a rating of YELLOW.

Sub component 2d. Criterion 25. Environmental and Social management framework: Since the ESMF has not yet been updated, criterion 25 should have been given a YELLOW rating.

**Colombia should focus especially on the two sub components with ORANGE rating:**

2c. Implementation framework: Weaknesses found in guidelines for implementation; benefit-sharing mechanism; and national REDD+ registry and system for monitoring.

4b. Multi-purpose information system, other impacts, governance and safeguards: Weaknesses found in monitoring, reporting and information sharing; as well as institutional arrangements and capacities.

Colombia has however built a strong institutional capacity that is based on strong political priority so that most probably the country would soon be able to initiate national-level results-based payment for REDD+.

**THANK YOU**

**FOREST  
CARBON  
PARTNERSHIP  
FACILITY**