**TAP Review of the Readiness Package
submitted by Colombia**

**Independent TAP Expert Review on the Self-assessment
Process of Colombia's R-Package**

Trond Norheim, PhD

August 2022

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

AGA	*Alianza para el Gobierno Abierto* - Open Government Alliance
BMU	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (Germany)
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social – National Council for Economic and Social Policy
CAR	*Corporación Autónoma Regional* – Regional Autonomous Corporation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCI	*Declaración Conjunta de Intención* - Joint Declaration of Intention
CDS	Corporaciones de Desarrollo Sostenible – Sustainable Development Corporations
EICDGB	*Estrategia Integral de Control a la Deforestación y Gestión de los Bosques* Integrated Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FREL	Forest Reference Emissions Level
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation
IDEAM	*Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales de Colombia* Colombian Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies
IKI	International Climate Initiative (Germany)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MinAmbiente	*Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible* Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRCC	*Nodos Regionales de Cambio Climático* - Regional Climate Change Nodes
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PAM	*Políticas, Acciones y Medidas* - Policies, Actions and Measures
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PNN	*Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia* - National Natural Parks of Colombia
PDET	*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* Development Programs with Territorial Approach
PPI	*Plan Plurianual Integral* - Integrated Pluri-annual Plan
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
RENARE	*Registro Nacional de Reducción de Emisiones de Gases de Efecto Invernadero* National Register on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
R-Package	REDD+ Readiness Package
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SINA	*Sistema Nacional Ambiental* - National Environmental System
SINAP	*Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas* - National Protected Areas System
SISCLIMA	*Sistema Nacional de Cambio Climático* - National Climate Change System
SMByC	*Sistema de Monitoreo de Bosques y Carbono* - Forest and Carbon Monitoring System
SNS	*Sistema Nacional de Salvaguardas* - National Safeguards System
TAP	Technical Advisor Panel
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations REDD+ Program
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Objectives

The Participants Committee (PC) of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) should receive an independent review report from the Technical Advisor Panel (TAP).

This report has two main objectives:

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

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

2. Methodological approach

This chapter presents the scope of the work performed for the TAP review, as per the Terms of Reference provided by the World Bank - FCPF:

- Desk review of Colombia's R-Package report, based on the guidelines provided in the R-Package Assessment Framework, and of the key documents underpinning the R-Package report (National REDD strategy, Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment, Environmental and Social Management Framework, Forest reference levels and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System, among others)

- Desk review of Colombia's documentation regarding the self-assessment process, including stakeholder involvement

- Provision of targeted feedback and recommendations for moving forward with REDD+ Readiness.

The TAP assessment reviewed the R-Package provided in Spanish in 2022, which includes the following elements:

i. A summary of the REDD+ readiness preparation process

ii. A report of the national multi-stakeholder self-assessment process

iii. The results of the national multi-stakeholder assessment; and

iv. References to the key supporting documents for each of the nine REDD+ Readiness sub-components

The TAP assessment is presented in three parts:

- Review of Colombia's self-assessment process and documentation, as contained in Colombia's R-Package (Chapter 3.a)

- Review of Colombia's progress on REDD+ readiness, based on the R-Package submitted as well as the supporting documentation referenced in the R-Package, for each of the REDD+ Readiness sub-components (Chapter 3.b)

- Summary Assessment and Recommendations (Chapter 4)

3. TAP Review

Colombia submitted the Spanish version of the REDD+ Readiness Package (R-Package) report to the FCPF (version 4) in 2022, which was the basis for the present review. It was prepared according to FCPF's 2013 Readiness Assessment Framework under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (in the following MinAmbiente, the abbreviation used in Colombia) www.minambiente.gov.co. It is expected that the R-Package will be translated into English by the FCPF later this year. The main body of the R-Package report provides a summary of the self-evaluation of the REDD+ Readiness preparation process and the country's participatory processes and mechanisms to achieve further progress with the four readiness components, as well as activities to consolidate the REDD+ process.

a. Review of Self-assessment process and documentation

Background

This section reviews the process that Colombia followed to conduct its multi-stakeholder self-assessment. The TAP review is based on the description of the self-assessment process contained in the R-Package report, and on supporting documents referenced there. The review considers the documentation prepared for the assessment, the process for selecting and involving stakeholders, and for reflecting their opinions in the R-Package report.

Prior to reporting the results of the TAP review, it is important to recognize that Colombia has engaged in numerous multi-stakeholder consultations on different REDD+ components and sub-components since the decision to initiate a national REDD+ process already in 2008, and that it is impossible to do full justice to this extended process in the frame of the R- Package report. As the R-Package report notes on page 27, already in the period 2010-2013 Colombia carried out 31 REDD+ workshops with participation of 690 persons (MinAmbiente & IDEAM 2018). Five sessions of the National REDD+ Forums (Mesa Nacional REDD+) were organized in 2015-2021 with representatives from the public and private sector, indigenous and afro-descendent communities, smallholder farmers, NGOs, academia, and international cooperation agencies. The first of these events had 93 participants (mentioned in the REDD+ package) and the TAP Reviewer found that according to the participant lists the fourth event January 2019 had 101 participants (MinAmbiente 2019). From 2018 to 2021 the process has focused on consolidating the participation of stakeholders interested in assuring the implementation conditions of the "Integrated Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management"[1].

Process and methodology

According to the R-Package report, and as far as the reviewer can be able to assess, the multi-stakeholder self-assessment process followed the recommendations of the Guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, concerning the selection of participants, preparation of the events, facilitation of the assessment process, synthesis and dissemination of results, and validation.

As the main result of the stakeholder participation process, the R-Package Report validates the rating of each subcomponent and criterion according to the traffic light indicators (red, orange, yellow, green) provided in the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework. The TAP Reviewer has included not only information from the R-Package tables "Self-Assessment Result", but also additional relevant information from the text.

---

[1] Spanish: *Estrategia Integral de Control a la Deforestación y Gestión de los Bosques* (EICDGB).

Table 1. Total participation of stakeholder groups in the REDD+ consultation process in Colombia.

Stakeholder group	Events	Men	%	Women	%	Total
Smallholders	3	82	72	32	28	114
Indigenous	60	1.505	76	481	24	1.986
Multi-actor/Institutions	153	2.403	56	1.917	44	4.320
Afro-Colombians	34	669	57	507	43	1.176
Total	250	4.659	61	2.937	39	7.596

Results

Colombia has made impressive progress since the mid-term review in 2017, which did not register much results, but much is still to be done. Out of the 34 criteria of the FCPF's Readiness Assessment Framework[2], 10 now 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**). Finally, 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**).

Table 2. Consolidated Results of the Participatory Self-Assessment

Criteria evaluated by component and sub-component
Component 1. Readiness Organization and Consultation
Sub component 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
Component 2. REDD+ strategy preparation
Sub component 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
Sub component 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

---

[2] The original explanations for the color scores in the Readiness Assessment Framework are as follows: (i) GREEN, Considerable progress made; (ii) YELLOW, Progress but needs to be developed further; (iii) ORANGE, Further development required; (iv) RED, No progress shown as yet. While these are slightly different from the explanations used in the Colombia R- Package (see color code below the table), the terms used are equivalent and there is no risk of confusion.

🟧		*Sub component 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
🟩		*Sub component 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

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

🟨		*Sub component 4a. National forest monitoring system*
🟨	29	Documentation of monitoring approach
🟨	30	Demonstration of early system implementation
🟨	31	Institutional arrangements and capacities
🟧		*Sub component 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

Color code

🟩	Significant progress
🟨	Good progress, require more development
🟧	Require significant development

TAP assessment. *The participatory Self-assessment process in Colombia followed the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The R-Package Report includes information on the Self-assessment process as well as its results. The Self-Assessment process was elaborate, with 173 local and 77 national workshops, including five national REDD+ forums (Mesa Nacional REDD+), mobilizing people from all the main stakeholder groups relevant for forest use and management. Information provided in the R-Package report confirms the broad dialogue between different stakeholder groups, which is highly positive. As presented in table 1, it involved 39% women, and the ethnic minorities (indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian) represent 41,6% of the participants.*

It seems to have been a gradual process of consolidation from event to event, but this process is not explained. The 5th and so far, last Mesa REDD+ (July 2021) had three main objectives: (i) Achieve a joint understanding of the progress of the First Report of the Joint Declaration of Intention (DCI); (ii) Present the results achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Pluri-annual Plan (PPI); and (iii) Consolidate the inputs and contributions of the strategic stakeholders of the PPI and DCI[3]. Despite the important achievements mentioned in the R-Package Report, it is considered a certain weakness of the document that it does not permit an assessment of whether there were major differences in perception of REDD+ Readiness between the stakeholder groups, and if these differences were largely resolved during the process or still persist.

---

[3] Abbreviations according to Spanish wording.

b. Review of Progress on REDD+ Readiness

This section assesses the progress on REDD+ Readiness for each of the four Readiness components:

(i) Readiness arrangements and organization; (ii) National REDD+ Strategy Preparation; (iii) Reference Emissions Level; and (iv) Monitoring systems and Safeguards, and the nine sub-components. The assessment is based on the criteria that Colombia used for its self-assessment, which follow the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework guidelines. The TAP assessment discusses both the strengths and weaknesses of each Readiness component and sub-component.

The current TAP review is based on the REDD+ Readiness Package (R-Package) document prepared for FCPF by Colombia and on the supporting documents referenced in the R-Package, which are available from the website https://forestcarbonpartnership.org/country/colombia

It is important to note that the national political and institutional context for Colombia's REDD+ Readiness process has developed over time, which has to do with the national framework conditions. Especially the national peace process and integrating former guerilla soldiers into civil society has impacted on the land use. While the civil war had a strong negative impact on the society and local communities, it also to certain extent maintained the forest cover in the tropical forest regions, while the situation changes after the peace agreement (2016). Deforestation for land use change to agriculture and livestock has recently increased. According to a bulletin from MinAmbiente July 15, 2022[4], a total of 174,103 ha was deforested in 2021, which represents an increase of 1.5% compared with the year 2020.

Component 1: Readiness Organization and Consultation

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

Sub component 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

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on national REDD+ management arrangements and their effectiveness in fulfilling core functions. The sub-component has on average satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW), especially on the operative mandate and budget (GREEN), but two performance criteria lag behind (ORANGE): Technical supervision capacity, and mechanisms for information exchange and compensation due to claims.

Self-assessment. The REDD+ preparation process in Colombia has according to the Government's self-assessment constituted a consistent national mechanism. It has developed high skills and capacities that are reflected in the success of managing international funds and participating as a relevant actor in global agreements and discussions. But the Government recognizes that strengthening of the mechanisms adapted to regional/local needs and conditions is needed to avoid the centralization of action plans.

In the regional workshops carried out in the self-assessment process, the self-assessment considers that the message was clear: -not all stakeholders in the process have access to information, and publication on the Internet is not sufficient as a means of dissemination, especially in the rural areas. As a mechanism to improve the exchange and availability of information, it is considered convenient

---

[4] https://www.minambiente.gov.co/bosques-biodiversidad-y-servicios-ecosistemicos/se-reduce-y-se-contiene-la-deforestacion-en-colombia-durante-los-ultimos-cuatro-anos/

to have a national platform for all the information about REDD+ in Colombia, to be consulted even by local officials in order to provide a faster local response.

In development of the 3rd FCPF grant, it is expected to strengthen the REDD+ program management to overcome gaps and build on established platforms. It is considered important to include the control entities (Attorney General's Office, Comptroller's Office) and the environmental oversight offices in the process, as well as the commissions that are receiving petitions and claims for violation of rights.

The Government of Colombia formulated the Integrated Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management[5] (EICDGB according to Spanish abbreviation) as the National REDD+ Strategy, which is part of the actions in the national climate change policy. The strategy has the vision to reach cero deforestation in 2030 through five main lines of action: (i) Socio-cultural management of forests and citizen awareness; (ii) Development of a forest economy for closure of the agricultural frontier; (iii) Cross-sector management of land use planning and environmental factors; (iv) Monitoring and permanent control; and (v) Generation and strengthening of legal, institutional and financial capacities.

The institutional structure is consolidated within the framework of the National Climate Change System SISCLIMA which, at the national level, establishes instances for intersectoral coordination and at regional level defines the Regional Climate Change Nodes (NRCC). The EICDGB is led by the MinAmbiente, in coordination with the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM). At the regional level, forest management is the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR) and the Sustainable Development Corporations (CDS), which are responsible for forest management and forest areas, granting and monitoring of their use, as well as restoration of degraded areas.

The Special Administrative Unit called National Natural Parks of Colombia (PNN) is responsible for administration of the forest areas that are within the National Protected Areas System https://www.parquesnacionales.gov.co/portal/es/sistema-nacional-de-areas-protegidas-sinap/. The Strategy also has the support of national and regional advisory groups with participation of academia and research institutes, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and smallholder farmers, NGOs/CSOs, and the private sector.

The National REDD+ Strategy was developed in the framework of the National Forestry Development Plan [6]. It is related to the international conventions and agreements signed by Colombia in the areas of forests, biodiversity and climate change, e.g. the UNFCCC, as well as the national policies corresponding to these.

The REDD+ preparation process has involved the mentioned stakeholder groups in dialogue and communication, information exchange, and capacity development. This has allowed Colombia to advance in the development of the four pillars required by the UNFCCC for REDD+. At the same time, the country has implemented early and strategic actions to reduce deforestation, such as: (i) The Program Visión Amazónica https://visionamazonia.minambiente.gov.co/; (ii) the GEF project "Amazon Heart"; (iii) the Joint Declaration of Intention https://www.norway.no/es/colombia/noruega-colombia/noticias-eventos/noticias/alianza-renovada-entre-colombia-alemania-noruega-y-el-reino-unido-sobre-cooperacion-en-bosques-y-clima/, signed between the Governments of Colombia, Norway, United Kingdom and Germany; and (iv) the Sustainable Forest Landscape Initiative https://www.biocarbonfund-isfl.org/programs/orinoquia-sustainable-integrated-landscape-program.

---

[5] Estrategia Integral de Control a la Deforestación y Gestión de los Bosques
[6] The National Forestry Development Plan is a long-term inter-ministerial policy in force until 2025

Colombia has since 2012 been part of the multilateral initiative Open Government Alliance (AGA), seeking to improve government performance, promote effective participation and improve the response capacity towards the citizens, through transparency, information access, participation, innovation and new technologies.

Colombia's progress on establishing institutional REDD+ mechanisms, instruments and projects have supported political and technical decision-making. During the consultation process some stakeholders mentioned that the instruments must be combined with work plans that allow incorporating the interests of the local communities, and strengthen the capacities of representatives of national, regional and local public institutions to achieve intercultural dialogue, as well as ensure consideration of the process of disclosure and access to information about the EICDGB. Since 2014 Colombia has a Law of Transparency and the Right to National Public Information. The institutions involved in REDD+ (MinAmbiente, CAR, PNN) must inform about their progress and results on guaranteeing civil rights.

REDD+ initiatives promote the strengthening of technical, legal and administrative governance capacity of the stakeholders directly involved, which is expected to achieve that the initiatives will meet their objectives and goals. Currently, the technical supervision of REDD+ initiatives focuses on identifying and strengthening existing coordination processes.

MinAmbiente, has carried out a proactive management of international funds, and only international funds have been used for the REDD+ readiness process. Resources were obtained from the FCPF Readiness Fund, UN-REDD, GIZ REDD+ Program, and joint cooperation resources from the governments of Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as funding from the German government BMU-IKI program[7].

TAP assessment. The national REDD+ management arrangements have been positively developed, but should still be improved. A national user-friendly REDD+ platform would be a good measure, but it is not enough since many remote communities have no Internet or very weak signal. Another important issue is that many indigenous communities speak only or mostly their own language, and have limited knowledge of Spanish[8], requiring to develop communication in their languages, that could be transmitted e.g. through radio. Around 70 indigenous languages are spoken in Colombia and by more than 750,000 people, including Arhuaco and Quechua, and others spoken by isolated tribes who only recently came into contact with the society outside. While it is not realistic to reach people in all these languages, a prioritization should be made based on available resources and expected impact.

The inter-institutional coordination on national and regional level is highly positive, but should be developed further and integrate all the most relevant NGOs/CSOs, academia and the interested private sector parties, including the forestry and agricultural sector. The National REDD+ strategy has incorporated elements of the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD), and reporting on the progress of REDD+ in Colombia could therefore be incorporated into the national reporting to the conventions. Even though Colombia has been efficient in disbursing funds for the REDD+ process, the process could be strengthened with public and private sector co-financing. Colombia is classified by IMF as an upper middle-income economy, and should therefore more easily be able to co-finance REDD+ than many other recipient countries. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Sub-component 1b: Consultation, participation and outreach (criteria 7-10)

Sub component 1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
7	Participation and engagement of key stakeholders
8	Consultation processes
9	Information sharing and accessibility of information
10	Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes

---

[7]Investment in climate protection (REDD+) and peacebuilding in Colombia.
[8] https://www.colombia.co/en/colombia-country/counting-colombias-languages/

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework reviews how consultations with key stakeholders were performed to ensure participation of and social dissemination among different social groups, as well as completeness and transparency of the consultation process.

This sub component has on average satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW), except for the execution and public disclosure of the consultation results that require significant development (ORANGE). This area should however not be difficult to improve, since all information is available.

Self-assessment. The R-Package self-assessment considers that the map of actors should be updated during the implementation phase of the EICDGB, including improvement of the linkages with agricultural smallholders, who are living in the areas that are current sources of deforestation. It is also considered that there should be considerable time between the preparation phase and the implementation phase to give new actors the opportunity to be involved in REDD+ initiatives.

A participation strategy was developed in the framework of the REDD+ preparation process, involving indigenous, Afro-Colombian and agricultural smallholder communities, as well as other vulnerable groups (e.g. women) and local civil society organizations. The main mechanism was organization of workshops and regional events 2010 – 2017, with a total of 7,596 participants, with the following main results:

- Greater involvement of the actors in REDD+
- Wide dissemination and appropriation of information for decision-making
- Strengthened instances of participation
- Incorporation of the visions, recommendations and proposals given by the actors.

The mechanisms for information exchange are established, structured and well designed. The documents of the REDD+ preparation process in Colombia are in digital formats with access from the internet. There is sufficient information on the methodology of the workshops and the preliminary results of the consultation process.

TAP assessment. 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.

Component 2: REDD+ Strategy Preparation

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

Sub component 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/ barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement
13	Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities
14	Action plans to address natural resources rights, land tenure and governance
15	Implications for the forest law and policies

This sub component has on average a very satisfactory level of progress (GREEN), with only one area, Action Plans, considered as YELLOW.

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on how the REDD+ strategy preparation process integrated the causal relationships between the economic, legal and policy context of Colombia on the one hand, and the associated patterns of land-use change, deforestation and forest degradation on the other.

Self-assessment. The self-assessment highlighted that a broad and in-depth analysis has been carried out for the formulation of the EICDGB, which considers historical changes in land use, drivers of deforestation, consultations with local stakeholders and national experts. The Forest - Carbon Monitoring System has been strengthened during the last ten years, allowing for more detailed information to guide decision-making and actions to reduce deforestation. Understanding of the causes and drivers has led to the prioritization of instruments such as the multi-purpose cadaster and cooperation resources for its implementation. Participants in the workshops valued positively: (i) the criterion assessment and analysis; (ii) prioritization of direct and indirect drivers and barriers to enhancement of forest carbon stocks; and (iii) relationships between drivers and barriers of REDD+ and implications for forest laws, regulations and policies.

The criterion Action plans to address the rights to natural resources, land tenure and management also had a positive evaluation, but the self-assessment indicated that it still requires more development, given that not all regional REDD+ plans have finished their process of formulation. The development of the EICDGB is recognized in its lines of measures and actions, including regional action plans that did advance (Pact for the Antioquia Forests), but REDD+ projects were prioritized in 14 PDET Zones[9].

At the end of 2018 Colombia approved the EICDGB, which expands the actions to reduce GHG emissions due to deforestation and forest degradation. This strategy document acknowledges the information generated by several national studies regarding characterization of the direct and underlying causes and agents of deforestation. Criterion 12 deals with the prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to enhancement of forest carbon stocks, where UN-REDD published the report "Causes of forest degradation in Colombia: A first approximation" (UN-REDD 2018). A third line of action established in the EICDGB was trans-sectoral management of land use planning and environmentally determined proposals. This included the measure to resolve and avoid conflicts of land use, occupation and land tenure, with special emphasis on protected areas.

Regarding the issue of relationships between causal factors/barriers and REDD+ activities (criterion 13), the Forest and Carbon Monitoring System was improved and implemented with greater national coverage, where it is possible to improve the of decisions on control of deforestation. It is based on an analysis of historical changes in land use and its relationship with anthropic activities.

---

[9]The Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET) are a special 15-year planning and management instrument, which aim to stabilize and transform the territories most affected by violence, poverty, illicit economies and institutional weakness, and thus achieve the rural development required by these 170 municipalities grouped into 16 sub-regions.

Criterion 14 is covering action plans to address rights to natural resources, land tenure and land management. Current formulation of regional action plans is a result of the progress of the "Design and Planning Working Groups" of the Comprehensive Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management – EICDGB. Development of the framework of the Programs for Development with a Territorial Approach (PDET) was assigned to the REDD+ budget, but it is necessary to update and review these Action Plans, based on their progress, strengths and weaknesses.

Forest legislation and policies (criterion 15) includes among others the CONPES 4021 National Policy for the Control of Deforestation and Sustainable Forest Management (2020), and decree 690 that regulates the sustainable management of wild flora and non-timber forest products. Law 2111 of 2021 replaced "crimes against natural resources and the environment" of the Criminal Code, modified the Code of Criminal Procedure and created new institutions. Finally, "The Climate Action Law" (Law 2169) of 2021 has the objective to establish goals and minimum measures to achieve carbon neutrality, climate resilience and low-carbon development.

TAP assessment. 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 ratings.

Sub-component 2b. REDD+ Strategy Options (criteria 16-18)

Sub component 2b. REDD+ strategy options	
16	Selection and prioritization of the REDD+ strategy options
17	Feasibility assessment
18	Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies

The elements of this sub component have all a satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW).

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on the adequacy of selected REDD+ strategy options vis-à-vis identified drivers, and their opportunity for implementation.

Self-assessment. The self-assessment highlighted that the different strategy options have been widely discussed from the early stages of the process, with much stakeholder involvement. This is considered to have matured to integrate the best and greatest knowledge about the causes and agents of deforestation, but also successful experiences to be replicated. The lines of action and measures of the EICDGB recognize the diversity of understanding and use of the territory and forests, with a higher purpose of maintaining the environmental services necessary for life and productivity.

Policies, actions and measures for the REDD+ framework implementation have been built and articulated throughout the preparation process. The lines of action were generated in a consolidated and detailed way, considering the needs and potentials of the national territory. It is however considered necessary to improve the continuity and presence of key actors at the regional and local levels, and to make significant efforts to decentralize the implementation of the EICDGB, while expanding its benefits. One additional aspect to improve is to ensure inter-sectoral activities at the regional and local levels.

Colombia approved the National Climate Change Policy in 2017, establishing climate change as a national priority, followed by the Climate Change Law in 2018. These elements establish the guidelines for climate change management in the country. On the other hand, the National Policy for Control of Deforestation and Sustainable Forest Management was approved by CONPES in 2020.

Sub-component 2c. Implementation framework (criteria 19-22)

Sub component 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 for monitoring REDD+ activities

The implementation framework requires significant development (ORANGE) since three out of the four criteria have an ORANGE rating.

This part of the assessment framework focuses on the structural legal, policy and institutional measures taken to facilitate implementation of the REDD+ strategy.

Self-assessment. The self-assessment concluded that there is a lack of knowledge of laws and regulations among the main regional actors involved, and operation of the disclosure mechanisms is not in accordance with the conditions of access to information of many rural communities. It is also necessary to strengthen the mechanisms for complaints and claims, integrate information on projects under development (who leads them, where they are, value of investments, and estimates of GHG reductions). Further discussion on benefit sharing mechanisms is still needed for the communities so they would be able to make informed decisions when agreeing on REDD+ projects.

Colombia has for the moment no plan to develop benefit sharing legislation, but recognizes the need for generating specific regulations to assure that the communities that carry out activities for conservation, restoration and sustainable forest ecosystems management in the framework of REDD+ get a fair and equitable distribution of the resources and benefits generated.

Colombia has a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRV) for mitigation actions at the national level. The RENARE platform is part of the MRV standardized by Resolution 1447 of 2018 , with the purpose of managing information at the national level of GHG Mitigation initiatives. Despite the RENARE platform, the self-assessment considered that greater transparency is needed in the information on development of local and subnational initiatives, since at this level there are possible violations of community rights.

TAP assessment. This 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 both regional and local stakeholders, especially in remote rural 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 process of discussing and developing a system for benefits-sharing is still in its early stage, and Colombia could take the advantage of reviewing examples from other REDD+ countries. MRV is considered by the reviewer to be a somewhat stronger area than the other areas mentioned, however it has a clear need for more transparency. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

Sub-component 2d. Social and environmental impacts (criteria 23-25: GREEN)

Sub component 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

All issues of sub component 2d have a very satisfactory level of progress (GREEN).

Self-assessment. The self-assessment concluded that the analysis of the SESA was extensive both in time and national coverage, discussed in an organized way with stakeholders in the regions, and the results of this dialogue were integrated in the analysis. This was the basis for defining the lines of action of the EICDGB. A national interpretation of the REDD+ safeguards was carried out, but the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has yet to be put into operation.

The review of progress in the regions as part of this subcomponent reflected that the communities feel a lack of protection against external actors, mainly private sector stakeholders. Private firms are willing to participate and commit themselves in the development of REDD+ projects, but the communities consider to be in disadvantage in negotiations with them, which subsequently could generate disagreements and conflicts within the communities.

As part of the process for preparation and feedback to the EICDGB, a progress report on national interpretation of the social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ under the UNFCCC was generated (Camacho, Lara & Guerrero 2017). The document aims to support understanding and report on progress of the interpretation as a tool to inform and guide the actors on the subject.

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment SESA (HINCAPIE 2018) is an instrument that makes it possible to identify the social and environmental benefits and risks of each of the lines of the EICDGB. SESA contributes to the National Safeguards System (SNS) since it has included in its structure the PAMs that are related to the fulfillment and guarantee of environmental and social rights, in order to prevent the risks and maximize the benefits of implementing a broad emissions reduction strategy with the participation of all the actors involved.

TAP assessment. This sub component 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, it is considered that the criterion 25 should have been given a YELLOW rating.

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

This component does not have any sub-components, and only three criteria.

Reference Emissions Level/ Reference levels	
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 guidelines

Demonstration of methodology (YELLOW); Use of historical data, adjusted for national circumstances; Technical feasibility of the methodological approach and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines (GREEN).

Self-assessment:

The self-assessment considers that the robustness of the deforestation evaluation methodology is evidence based on the structuring and the documentation. It also presents the progress of the initial sub-national considerations and their transition to the national scale together with the uncertainties found. The scale of work does not however allow applying the methodology to assess degradation in more detail, perhaps due to the lack of better spatial resolution, since carbon storage in forests requires analyzing beyond the forest condition/not forest. On the other hand, the quality of the SMByC technical team, as well as the recognition of its efforts and progress, was generally high during the workshops that were held for the self-assessment.

The documentation generated on the methodology and approach recognizes as a fundamental step for the future, adopting the information derived from the National Forest Inventory and participatory community monitoring processes. In this way, the impact on the conservation and sustainable use of forests can be estimated.

The challenge ahead is to incorporate new technologies and information sources to meet the needs for information about the carbon market, to which the country is betting for both programs and projects. These challenges will require cooperation with other actors that have technical capacities, such as the SINA research centers and universities, to distribute efforts and subsequently the results that are consolidated by the SMByC, to continue reporting on a national scale.

The MinAmbiente resolution 1447 (2018) defined the Forest Emission Reference Levels as baselines, measured in tons of CO_2eq of GHG emissions expected in the absence of REDD+ initiatives, and calculated for national and subnational areas, for one or several REDD+ activities and one or several carbon compartments in line with the UNFCCC and IPCC guidelines.

Colombia has voluntarily presented two forest emissions reference levels, in 2014 at a subnational scale and 2019 at a national scale (received by UNFCCC in 2020), as part of the technical requirements for results-based payments. These are aimed at generating the baseline to allow measuring performance.

TAP assessment. The R-Package does not mention which IPCC standard method Colombia has used to measure Forest Reference Emissions Level (FREL). IPCC Tier 3 (highest technical standard) methods should be possible to use in Colombia. According to the UNFCCC Report on the technical assessment of the proposed forest reference emission level 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: 2018: 120.8 million ton CO_2 (increase 32% compared with historical average of 91.65 ton CO_2/year), 2019: 127 million ton (increase 39%), 2020: 132.5 million ton (increase 45%), 2021: 137.1 million ton (increase 50%) and 2022: 140.7 (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 ratings.

Component 4. Monitoring systems for forests, and Safeguards

Sub-component 4a: National Forest Monitoring System (criteria 29-31)

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on progress made in designing and developing operational forest monitoring systems.

Sub component 4a. National forestry monitoring system	
29	Documentation of monitoring approach
30	Demonstration of early system implementation
31	Institutional arrangements and capacities

The elements of this sub component have all a satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW).

Self-assessment: The self-assessment considers that Colombia has made progress by having a forest monitoring system in line with the guidelines of the agreements on climate change that have been signed. The stakeholders however mentioned that the information presented on the technological platforms in some cases does not reflect the reality of the territory because the information is outdated. Other actors stated that they do not know how to manage and interpret the information presented there, while others were unaware that these monitoring systems even existed. This implies that the implementation of the EICDGB should have the information in a single space, updated, with access to the consultation mechanisms at the national level. It should also use technical language, communication formats and channels that are easily understandable in the communities, and work should be done to strengthen knowledge of the means of access to information and training in how to use the platform or platforms generated.

The self-assessment however highlights that the SMByC has been strengthened in recent years. Currently, it generates reliable and robust information and reports that are used by different types of actors. It has options for improvement and innovation, integrating information from participatory community monitoring schemes that allow gathering information at the local level and generating capacities in the territory, in addition to integrating other methodologies. Its operation depends on the availability of resources allocated in the IDEAM budgets, so it is necessary to continue managing resources for its operation and sustainability, under a long-term mechanism.

TAP assessment. 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 ratings.

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

Sub component 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

According to the self-assessment, the Sub component 4b requires significant development (ORANGE) since two of the three criteria have an ORANGE rating. Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects and social and environmental issues (criterion 32) has however a satisfactory level of progress (YELLOW).

This part of the Readiness Assessment Framework focuses on how data on other aspects of REDD+ implementation are being collected and shared.

Self-assessment. The self-assessment observes that the EICDGB, by having a comprehensive approach to forest management, recognizes the possibility of maintaining livelihoods and facilitating access for

forest-dependent communities to adopt means of generating income from non-timber forest products (NTFP) and, at the same time, that they should be strengthened in their capacity for the formulation of projects and resource management. It is recognized that there is still a need for generating indicators that allow the measurement and monitoring of livelihoods of the rural population, biodiversity conservation and the provision of ecosystem services, to understand how related actions are giving impact beyond carbon.

It is considered necessary to improve the mechanisms and/or tools so that the information is not only available, but also ensured access by the most important stakeholders through coordination with other instances of participation, as well as exchange and updating of existing information in the territories. It is reiterated by the communities consulted that MinAmbiente as the lead agency must promote broad discussions and give training in aspects related to benefits and their distribution in REDD+ projects**.** Currently this process is developed by project formulators and presented as results to the potential beneficiaries.

The National Safeguards System still needs to be developed, to monitor compliance with the safeguards at the different levels of REDD+ implementation, on national, subnational (programs) and local level (projects). This system requires an institutional body established for this purpose, such as the SMByC.

***TAP assessment**. It is a pity that this sub component has not been developed further, since there is a need for multiple forest benefits in the communities and Colombia has great potential for forest livelihood development, which has been demonstrated in several pilot projects. The country is on the right track by wanting to incorporate income from NTFP, however also other compatible sources of income should be incorporated, such as eco-tourism and payment for ecosystem services (PES). Increasing the total income from the forest area would reduce the possibility of conversion to other types of land use, especially agriculture and livestock. REDD+ has developed much on international level since Colombia initiated its REDD+ process, and the focus is no longer only on carbon. This change has probably not been understood in all the communities, and it is therefore necessary to reach out with information.*

It is important to change the current project development process, where professional "project development experts" prepare the projects and present them 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 through the whole process. This is a question of sustainability, because only the local actors know their real needs.

It is serious that the National REDD+ Safeguards System is still not developed, since it is a cross-cutting issue for implementing all aspects of the REDD+ program. This should therefore be a priority area when moving forward, and will require establishing institutional arrangements and developing capacities at national and regional/local level. The reviewer concurs with the ratings.

4. Summary assessment and recommendations

a. Overall REDD+ Readiness progress

Based on the documents provided, the TAP reviewer concludes that Colombia's REDD+ Readiness Package demonstrates the country's firm commitment to REDD+ and paints an accurate and honest picture of its readiness work, including many strengths, but also several areas for improvement. The recently elected new president Gustavo Petro has confirmed a high priority to climate change issues, which in Colombia would have a strong focus on forest conservation.

Colombia has been engaged in REDD+ readiness for fourteen years and is eager to move towards implementation. The REDD+ Strategy Options are well-aligned with the main direct and indirect drivers of forest-based Greenhouse Gas emissions, but several areas need strengthening before national-level results-based payments.

b. Self-assessment process

Colombia has executed the Self-assessment process in accordance with the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The last version of the R-Package that was presented in 2022 includes information on the self-assessment process and its results. It is however not easy to define when the process started since the document incorporates inputs from nearly the whole REDD+ development period in the country, which started already in 2008. Colombia has engaged in numerous multi-stakeholder consultations on different REDD+ components and sub-components, with a total of 173 local and 77 national workshops, the first back in 2010.

Five sessions of the National REDD+ Forums (Mesa Nacional REDD+) were organized during 2015-2021 with participation of the public and private sector, indigenous and afro-descendent communities, smallholder farmers, NGOs, academia, and international cooperation agencies. From 2018 to 2021 the process focused on consolidating the participation of stakeholders interested in assuring the implementation conditions of the EICDGB.

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

c. Overall assessment and recommendations

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 now 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). Finally, 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).

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 (ESMF): Since the ESMF has not yet been updated, criterion 25 should have been given a YELLOW rating.

In is recommended that Colombia in the continuation should focus especially on the two sub components with ORANGE rating, that are:

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+.

5. References and background documents

Camacho A., Lara, I. & Guerrero, R.D. 2017. *Interpretación Nacional de las Salvaguardas Sociales y Ambientales para REDD+ en Colombia*. (National interpretation of social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ in Colombia). MADS, UN-REDD, WWF & Norad.

CONPES 2020. *Política Nacional para el Control de la Deforestación y la Gestión Sostenible de los Bosques* (National Policy for Control of Deforestation and Sustainable Forest Management).

Hincapié 2018. *Evaluación Estratégica Ambiental y Social SESA* (Strategic Environmental and Social Evaluation). FCPF, World Bank & Fondo Acción.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development 2017. Mid-term Progress Report Colombia FCPF Readiness Fund

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development 2018. Resolution 1447.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development & IDEAM 2018. *Estrategia Integral de Control a la Deforestación y Gestión de los Bosques EICDGB* (Integrated Strategy for Control of Deforestation and Forest Management).

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development 2019. *Cuarta Mesa Nacional REDD+. Memorias*.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development 2022. *Lanzan el Proyecto pago por resultados para reducir la deforestación en seis departamentos. Noticias*, www.Minambiente.gov.co

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development 2022. *Se reduce y se contiene la deforestación en Colombia durante los últimos cuatro años. Noticias*, www.Minambiente.gov.co

UNFCCC 2022. Report on the Technical Assessment of the Proposed Forest Reference Emission Level of Colombia Submitted in 2020.

UN-REDD 2013 (revised 2019). National Forest Monitoring Systems: Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (M & MRV) in the Context of REDD+ Activities.

UN-REDD 2018. Causes of forest degradation in Colombia: A first approximation.