

Independent Technical Review: ECUADOR National Programme Document

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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General comments for National Programme Document of ECUADOR (maximum 200 words):

The NPD National Programme Document (NPD) of Ecuador presents a clear governmental Institutional structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities. The political leadership required to consider the inclusion of REDD+ under the Ecuadorian development strategy is rooted in the Climate Change Inter-institutional Committee operation and in the Climate Change institutional structure presented.

The legal framework existing and in development in Ecuador presents a good and timely opportunity to include properly REDD+ legal requirements for implementation. The Environmental services approach and the elements inserted in the new constitution bring in an interesting umbrella for the government to regulate not only forest lands but also to explore environmental services as an independent legal right.

The information presented in the document in relation to the drivers for deforestation will be improved by more studies to be completed under the NPD, therefore the actual regional land use change problem does not depict clearly the key players, sectors or private actors responsible for deforestation and degradation. This information is relevant to evaluate if the design of the consultation and coordination process and structures has properly considered key actors.

The private sector participation in the process requires more elaboration, specifically the agricultural, petroleum and gas sectors.

The NPD focus on improvements in the forest sector situation, nevertheless the deforestation threats come from the agricultural frontier expansion, among others, therefore more attention to other key sectors (agricultural, Oil and Gas) can add to a more integral contextualization of the problem and also can guide the search of alternative solutions in the implementation of the NPD.

The indigenous sector is presented as a key sector and the outreach strategy presented in the document is consistent with the requirements. Also it is important to highlight the capacity building linked to the consultation process, which supports real participation for the indigenous sector.

The National REDD + strategy planned to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation, include 6 key components, and 5 transversal elements, the NPD objectives proposal responds to the elements included in the National REDD+ Strategy.

Assessing the National Programme Document against review criteria

1. Ownership of the Programme (maximum 200 words):

The Ecuadorian NPD shows a good level of ownership. The institutional framework in place shows the integration of the Climate Change variable in the Ministry of Environment and details the integration mechanisms with other key ministries/governmental institutions.

It is important that the document define the means, requirements and coordination mechanism by which the local and regional governments will participate in this process as part of the National Structure already in place.

The coordination mechanism planned and in use with the civil society and indigenous sector can be integrated in the structure of the MAE to ensure its longevity throughout the process. A coordination mechanism and process need to be elaborated with key private sectors.

In addition to conforming with the new constitution, the NPD is in line with the relevant regulations that are evolving and planning tools such as the National Climate Change Strategy, Forest Governance Model, National Adaptation Program and the development of the legal and institutional framework for Climate Change and environmental services.

The government is coordinating and integrating other REDD related activities, such as funds, projects, studies and research activities in the elaboration of the ENREDD+.

In this regard, is recommended a special attention to continue the strengthen of the actual government structure which is key for the coming process cause, the lack of a clear orientation on the side of the government could result in dispersion of funding, methodological chaos and in waste of resources. The leadership of the Ecuadorian Government needs to be maintained and strengthen.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement (maximum 200 words):

The Ecuadorian Environment Ministry has developed the Civil Society Involvement Program (Programa de Involucramiento de la Sociedad Civil), which has already started and will be strengthened by the UNREDD funding, a specific program for the Indigenous sector is mentioned. Given that Output 2 includes the development of a consultation and involvement process for the participation of indigenous peoples in the REDD +, it is important that this activity is initiated as a first step at the very beginning of the process to ensure that the plan created is able to be put into practice in a timely manner. The UN-REDD Programme Operational Guidance: Engagement of Indigenous Peoples & other Forest Dependent Communities recommends that the timeline for the consultation is aligned with the project cycle. The planning of these activities must take into account that Indigenous Peoples rely on their own institutions, mechanisms and processes to make decisions and reach a consensus and that the strengthening of their own institutions and decision processes is key for meaningful participation.

The Act of the Third Meeting of Follow-up Tables of the NPD (Acta de la Tercera Reunion de las mesas de seguimiento del Programa Conjunto) provides documented understanding of an ongoing consultation process, which will allow inclusion of new elements in the inception process. Therefore, the matrix that was elaborated with recommendations and analysis should be included as an Annex to the NPD.

3. Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency (maximum 150 words):

The objectives and expected results of the programme in 2 years dedicate around 30% of the resources for consultation process. The technical development information is focused on forest information that is needed including the baseline reference scenario. Only 12% of the resources are dedicated to study income generating activities to reduce deforestation and degradation in line with regional development strategies and or planning tools. The inclusion of more resources from other funding for this key purpose is recommended as well as the creation of a national information system is a key element which is not considered in the NPD.

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 200 words):

The NPD document includes a risk assessment which provides adequate risk management measures in the majority of cases. However, it does not include climate change, which will increase the risk of fires, floods and extreme events. The adaptation strategy needs to be considered complementary to a REDD+ scheme because the positive results of an adaptation strategy could benefit the REDD+ strategy and vice versa. A key indicator of success is the sustainability of results after the UN-REDD programme end date. The NPD gives a strong justification of the reasons that it will be sustainable at institutional level, this could be strengthened by describing the structure for participation and engagement the NPD has with the indigenous sector and civil society as another strong justification.

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Framework Document and Strategy (maximum 200 words):

With respect to the rationale established for the UN Collaborative Programme, the NPD takes into account the component of experience with payment structures but does not include elements to enable experience with risk management formulae.

Of the five inter-related principles of the UN Development Group, the NPD takes into account four but neglects one: gender equality.

With respect to the two key components established for collaborative programmes, according to the "Programme Outline" section, the NPD is directed towards the first: i) assisting developing countries prepare and implement national REDD strategies and mechanisms.

The NPD covers the following areas of support: REDD Readiness for Monitoring and Assessment. REDD Dialogue, REDD Payment Distribution, Monitoring Systems and REDD Awareness. However, it does not include REDD Data Management; REDD Payment Structuring, Accounting Methods and Verification of Reduced Emissions and Co-benefit and Trade-Off Tools in all its elements.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance (maximum 200 words):

In general, the NPD complies with the requirements of the UN-REDD operational guidance. With respect to the Joint Programme format, the structure of the NPD is consistent with the framework document. However, there is a lack of consistency with the recommended numbers of pages per section, such that the total length of the document.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the National Programme Document of ECUADOR (maximum 400 words):

The NPD in its Result No.1 is elaborating the information needed but is not considering the platform or a National Information System to manage, integrate and report all the data or information generated to operate a REDD+ Mechanism at a National Level, element that is included in the National REDD+ Strategy.

A suggestion will be to include the development of a data management system/platform under Result No.1.

Other suggestions already explained are to:

Extend the description on key players, sectors or private actors responsible for deforestation and degradation.

Describe better the private sector participation mechanism and process, specifically the agricultural, petroleum and gas sectors.

Explain how the coordination mechanism planned and in use with the civil society and indigenous sector will ensure its longevity throughout the process. (as a suggestion consider its integration in the MAE.)

Include the matrix that was elaborated with recommendations and analysis in the consultation process as an Annex to the NPD.

In the matrix for risk assessment, climate change should be included under environmental threats, and the Adaptation National Plan included as a mitigation proposal.