Developing REDD+ in Papua New Guinea Briefing Series

This brief is the first in a series of briefing documents to help inform key stakeholders and decision makers of the issues and options for REDD+ development in PNG and to facilitate the decision making processes that are required to develop a National REDD+ Strategy.

REDD+
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Introduction to REDD+

BRIEF ① This brief provides an overview of the fundamentals of REDD+ and what Papua New Guinea is currently doing to develop a national approach to REDD+

What is REDD+?

The aim of REDD+ is to encourage developing countries to conserve and sustainably managing their forests, as part of global efforts to address climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is preparing to implement REDD+ as part of its contribution to tackle global climate change through the Paris Agreement. REDD+ will contribute to PNG achieving its vision of a more environmentally sustainable development pathway.

REDD+ is not about stopping economic activities but implementing and strengthening national policies to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while continuing to support development. As part of the Paris Agreement, developing countries can receive international finance for successfully implementing the "REDD+ activities" identified in Figure 1.

REDD+ refers to efforts to 'Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and plus (+) conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+).

For more information see: **www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/what-redd**

Figure 1: REDD+ activities

Reducing emissions from deforestation

Reducing emissions from forest degradation

Conservation of forest carbon stocks

Sustainable management of forests

Enhancement of forest carbon stocks

How is REDD+ relevant to PNG?

PNG has a globally significant area of forest that provides vital environmental benefits at the local, national and international levels.

PNG's forest resources contribute significantly to the national economy, through commercial timber exports exceeding $800 million per annum – nearly 10% of total exports[1] as well domestic timber and fuel wood use being critical to rural construction and energy needs. The long-term sustainability of these (and other land use-based) economic activities, as well as the provision of environment services by forests, however, rests on PNG's ability to effectively manage its forest resources while navigating the broader development challenges of population growth, poverty alleviation and economic and social development.

Achieving a sustainable approach to managing the country's forests will require strong political leadership, sustainable financial commitments and the ability to manage long and short term economic development interests from national to local levels.

The Government of PNG has emphasized its commitment to the long-term future of PNG's forests through key national strategies and policies including Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development for PNG (2014), the PNG Development Strategic Plan (2010-2030) and the National Climate Change Action Plan (2010). These plans set out ambitious goals for the protection and sustainable use of forest resources. How these goals will be achieved, however, has not been so clearly stated. Within this context REDD+ offers PNG the opportunity to help achieve its development plans and objectives through:

- REDD+ investment finance, which can help the country implement policies and measures for sustainable forest management, and
- REDD+ results-based payments, if PNG shows that it has reduced GHG emissions from forest-related activities.

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The Government of PNG, with coordination and leadership by Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA), is leading national efforts to realise these opportunities offered by REDD+.

Existing REDD+ related targets

Vision 2050 sets a target to conserve 70% of PNG's forest for carbon purposes.

PNG's National Climate Change Action Plan targets a 50% in reduction in national carbon emissions by 2030 and for the country to be carbon neutral by 2050.

What is being done already?

For countries to be able to receive results-based payments for REDD+ under the UNFCCC they must develop four things – see the figure below for the 'Four Design Elements of REDD+'. The Government of PNG, in partnership with development partners such as the UN-REDD Programme, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the European Union (EU) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has started to build capacity and knowledge around these four design elements. Further work in each of these areas is needed with particular focus on developing a REDD+ National Strategy / Action Plan that will specify exactly what REDD+ implementation in PNG will look like.

Four design elements of REDD+

National Strategy / Action Plan (NS/AP)

To provide information on what a country will do and how it will implement REDD+

Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)

An assessment of trends in land use change over time and emissions from landcover change

Safeguard Information System (SIS)

To provide information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected

National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)

System to monitor land use change, and link with a national forest inventory to provide information on emissions from the forest sector

National Strategy / Action Plan (NS/AP)

The UNFCCC requests countries aiming to implement REDD+ to develop and implement a NS/AP that ensures the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders[2].

A NS/AP should include:

- A vision for REDD+
- Policies and measures (PAMs) to address the significant drivers of forest cover change
- When and where PAMs will be done, by whom and how they will be funded
- How the impacts of PAMs will be measured, reported and verified (MRV) and
- How safeguards will be implemented to ensure no environmental or social harm from the implementation of PAMs.

The NS/AP should outline a country's vision and objectives for REDD+, and how these will support national development priorities.

The NS/AP should also provide a clear plan for the implementation of national policies and measures that will reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

What is happening now?

The Government of PNG, with support from UNDP, has initiated work towards the development of a NS/AP. This briefing note forms part of a process to engage key stakeholders in discussions on the NS/AP development. The main drivers of forest cover change in PNG have been identified and all stakeholders now need to design and prioritize appropriate PAMs to address these drivers.

National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)

A NFMS provides transparent information on the status of forests in a country. It has two core functions:

- to monitor changes in a country's forests, which will help improve forest policy making and planning.
- to measure, report and verify (MRV) GHG emissions from forests.

The Government of PNG will use the NFMS to report GHG emissions and removals from the land use sector to the UNFCCC.

What is happening now?

The Government of PNG, in partnership with the UN-REDD Programme and JICA, is developing systems to remotely map, monitor and measure the country's forests – **Terra PNG** (managed by CCDA), the **National Forest Monitoring Portal** (http://png-nfms.org/portal/) (managed by PNGFA) and the design and implementation of a national forest inventory that will, among other things, measure the carbon stocks in PNG's forests.
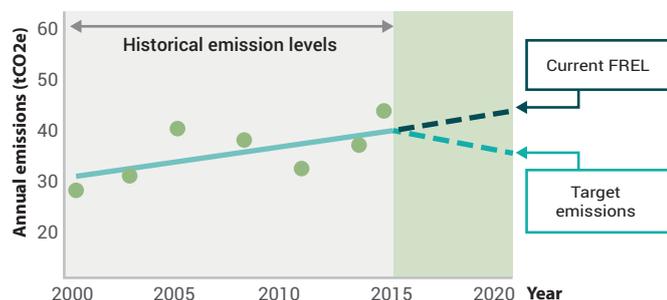
Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)

Countries are required to develop a FREL that will be the benchmark against which the implementation of REDD+ will be measured. Before PNG begins reducing emissions from the forest sector, it must determine a starting point based on historical levels of emissions: this is known as the FREL. According to international guidance, FRELs should consider historical land use change trends and national circumstances such as future development scenarios[3] (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Establishing a country's FREL

What is happening now?

The PNG Forest Authority (PNGFA), with support from the UN-REDD Programme and EU, is developing PNG's FREL and aims to submit this to the UNFCCC at the beginning of 2017. The work involves assessing historical changes in forest cover since 2000 and assessing whether historical deforestation rates are a good predictor of what will happen in the future, for example: will PNG's development trajectory mean that there will be more deforestation in the future than there was in the past? This work is closely linked to the National Forest Monitoring System.

Safeguards Information System (SIS)

The UNFCCC has specified seven REDD+ Safeguards (commonly referred to as the **Cancun Safeguards**). These are intended to ensure that REDD+ actions do not cause any social or environmental harm. For example, policies to reduce deforestation should not negatively impact local people. Countries are required to demonstrate that they have addressed and respected these safeguards, through a safeguards information system. SISs can vary in their design but should provide information to all relevant stakeholders that is comprehensive, accessible and up to date.

What is happening now?

PNG has made initial steps in reviewing existing policies, laws and regulations to identify how well they cover the REDD+ safeguards. The Government of PNG, with support from UNDP, is developing a country approach to safeguards and has prepared a roadmap that will guide the country towards the development of its SIS.

The UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards

The UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards agreed in Cancun 2010 require countries REDD+ actions to:

- Be complementary to existing national policies and international commitments;
- Be transparent and effective in their governance;
- Respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous people and local communities;
- Allow for the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders;
- Be consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity;
- Address the risks of reversals;
- Reduce displacement of emissions.

(Text adapted from UNFCCC Decision 1/CP16 Appendix 1, para 2)

What next?

The Government of PNG is leading the development of a coherent national approach to REDD+ implementation. To achieve this, PNG will continue to build capacity, make decisions and commit to take action in a number of areas related to REDD+.

The development of a REDD+ National Strategy will be the central coordinating process for achieving this and will define exactly what REDD+ implementation will look like in PNG, who will be involved, and how actions will be financed. The Government aims to have a first draft of PNG's National REDD+ Strategy by March 2017.
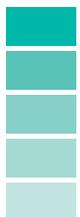
What we need from you

Help PNG maintain its momentum in preparing a national approach to REDD+ by:

- **Staying engaged in the process**
- **Reading the briefs**
- **Providing your feedback and thoughts**

REDD+ in numbers

5 Activities

Reduce emissions from; Deforestation **(1)** and forest degradation **(2)**, and support the sustainable management of forests **(3)**, the enhancement of forest carbon stocks **(4)** and forest conservation **(5)**

4 Design elements

- National REDD+ Strategy/Action Plan (NS/AP)
- Safeguard Information System (SIS)
- Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)
- National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)

7 Safeguards

Help ensure REDD+ actions do no harm and create positive environmental, social and economic benefits.

FOREST CARBON PARTNERSHIP FACILITY

Government of Papua New Guinea

UNDP
Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

1 The Observatory of Economic Complexity http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/png/
2 Decision 1/CP16, para 71(a)
3 UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, par. 7

Want to know more?

Valuable introductory information on REDD+ and REDD+ online training, please check out "REDD+ Academy E-course" at: **www.unredd.net**