
TERMS OF REFERENCE

BRIEFING PAPER ON STRENGTHENING FOREST GOVERNANCE IN AFRICAN NDCS

1. Title of Project:

Achieving the NDCs in African VPA countries: the need to strengthen forest and land governance?

2. Background and rationale

Many countries have recognised the importance of forests for climate change mitigation. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change integrates action on land use, including REDD+. A substantial number of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by countries to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) include land use and forest targets. The implementation of these NDCs will determine whether the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement will be achieved including limiting the average global temperature increase by 2100 to well below 2°C, and undertaking efforts for limiting them to 1.5°C.

Most NDCs from African forested countries are vague in their adaptation and mitigation aspirations and very often fail to integrate forest governance in their plans. Despite the defective NDCs, the unprecedented momentum for implementing the Paris Agreement presents an urgent opportunity for African forested countries to revise their climate plans to address gaps, increase ambition levels where appropriate, and strengthen the role of forest governance primarily in the context of Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) under the EU's Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan. This includes developing adequate policy frameworks and legislation, incorporating the needs and views of different stakeholder groups through dialogue and participation, and ensuring a transparent and accountable implementation process.

Fern is supporting its local partners in Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Republic of Congo (Congo), Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia to engage effectively in climate related processes, including REDD+ and the emerging Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). It is therefore important that Fern and its partners fully understand the state of play of NDCs in these countries, and are able to advocate for stronger inclusion of forest governance in them. It is also important that EU donors recognise that VPAs are a key instrument to support national climate plans, and raise the profile of forest governance in climate debates.

Although Fern does not work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), an understanding of DRC's NDC including strengths and weaknesses, is important and could inform advocacy work in other Congo Basin countries.

3. Aim of the report and rationale:

The main purpose of these short country briefing papers (one per country excluding DRC, and one consolidated summary comparing the findings from the various countries and providing a short overview on DRC) are to discuss the role forest governance could play in achieving the climate objectives laid out in the NDCs, and to offer recommendations on how African VPA countries can better integrate forest governance mechanisms in their mitigation (and adaptation) measures. The specific objectives of the paper are to:

1. Provide a brief context on the development of the targeted countries' NDCs including multi-stakeholder participation and transparency;
2. Analyse these NDCs through a forest and forest governance 'lenses';
3. Discuss the correlation between improved forest governance and positive climate outcomes; and
4. Provide concrete recommendations on how targeted countries can better integrate forest governance in their NDCs and measure progress.

The intended audience for the paper are:

- EU Commission officials
- African country governments
- EU Member State officials
- EU based NGOs working on climate, forest governance issues and VPAs
- International institutions supporting climate programmes including AfDB, CAFI, FCPF, and UNDP
- CSOs in VPA partner countries
- Governments in VPA countries
- Experts working on NDC impact monitoring

2. Report content/outline:

For the country briefs:

1. Introduction:
 - Background on the NDCs of Cameroon, CAR, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, and Liberia)
 - Why forest governance is critical to achieve the NDCs and challenges faced at country level
2. Methodology
3. Process for developing these NDCs
4. Forests and forest governance in these NDCs and an overview of best practices
5. Considerations including scientific evidence and quantitative data on the positive correlation between forest governance and climate mitigation (excluding DRC)

6. Recommendations for strengthening forest governance in the NDCs and measuring progress (excluding DRC)
7. Concluding comments (excluding DRC)
8. Appendix

3. Those involved in the project

The project will be overseen by members of Fern Forests and Development Campaign. An editorial group comprised of Fern campaigners and communications staff, and Fern's partners in the targeted countries will input the paper including providing contributions to help shape it and feedback on key outputs. The Communications Manager will supervise an external editor who will review the paper.

4. Methodology

The methodology for the research will include a desk review (including a review of relevant academic literature, relevant Fern and other NGO publications and programme materials, and material from other institutions such as EFI, FAO and the UN), as well as key informant interviews with Fern staff in Brussels and the United Kingdom.

The consultant will provide oversight for the study and work with Fern partner organisations in targeted countries who will be in charge of interviewing civil society/forest community representatives, and government officials and donor agencies involved in the NDCs, and organising country level meetings to validate the findings from the study. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, only a desk study will be required.

5. Timeline

20 days of full time work carried out over a 6 week period. The draft report will be available by July 2017. The final report will be published in September 2017.

Deliverables:

- A draft work plan outlining timeline, refined methodology, clarification of conceptual framework, list of definitions to be used, list of key resources, and refinement of research questions.
 - A refined structure for the country briefs and overall summary, as well as list of key informants.
 - An inception report, outlining preliminary findings of desk review of available data and analysis.
 - Draft country briefs (10-15 pages) and an overall summary (8 pages) providing answers to the 4 specific objectives of the paper, as well as presenting 5 - 6 concrete recommended actions that can be taken forward to ensure forest governance is properly integrated into NDCs.
 - A presentation of the draft paper to the editorial group and Fern staff.
 - A final paper feedback from the editorial group.
 - A PowerPoint presentation of the findings.
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