Executive Summary

1. The support from the UN-REDD National Program (UNP) complementing the funding from the World Bank FCPF and Austrian Development Corporation is well appreciated by the Government of Uganda. Given the rate of deforestation and forest degradation over the past two decades, the REDD+ readiness process currently underway enables the country to establish additional mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce the rampant deforestation. Deforestation has reduced Uganda’s forest area from 3.6million hectares in 2005 to 2.42 million in 2015. These statistics put Uganda in position of having one of the highest deforestation rates in the world.
2. The key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Uganda are: i) expansion of commercial and subsistence agricultural into forest lands and bush lands; ii) unsustainable harvesting of tree products, mainly for charcoal, firewood and timber; iii) expanding urban and rural human settlements and impacts of refugees; iv) free-grazing livestock; v) wild fires; vi) artisanal mining operations; and vii) oil exploration activities.
3. The underlying causes are symptoms of underlying socio-economic factors including; i) high rates of population growth and ii) levels of economic performance resulting in high dependence on subsistence agriculture, natural resources and biomass energy as well as competing economic returns from land that do not favour long-term investments such as forestry. Other significant underlying causes include: i) weak forest governance manifested in weak forest management, planning and regulation; ii) weak policy implementation; iii) climate change effects; and iv) land tenure systems.
4. **UNP Design and Relevance:** The UNP had three outcomes as listed below with a total budget of US$1,833,760. This funding complimented $3.634million from the FCPF and $0.89million from the Austrian Development Corporation in addition to the Government´s own contribution. Uganda has also received additional funding under the FCPF readiness support amounting to $3.75million in 2017.

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| Outcome 1  | A transformational national REDD+ strategy is designed through substantial multi-sectorial technical and policy dialogue, including robust policy options and measures, mainstreamed and anchored in national development vision, planning and framework – (UNDP) |
| Outcome 2  | Key elements of the NFMS are developed, and related national capacities are strengthened – (FAO) |
| Outcome 3 | Subnational implementation of the REDD+ strategy is prepared and facilitated through an "integrated landscape management" approach, building on a comprehensive set of analytical work, engagement and capacity building of stakeholders, and early actions (UNEP) (Later revised to [*A Subnational REDD+ implementation roadmap prepared and fed into the REDD+ national strategy development process].* |

1. The overall design of the UNP is satisfactory and aligned well with the ongoing R-PP implementation. The stated program goal i.e. “Enable Uganda to be ready for REDD+ implementation, including development of necessary institutions, policies, instruments and capacities, in a collaborative and leveraging way with other REDD+ readiness partners” is clear. The selected Outcomes are also in line with the described context of the GoU, FCPF, ADC, and other development partner support for REDD+.
2. The Government views forestry as one of the key sectors to support its climate change response hence REDD+ is one of many options that the Government considers as relevant to support its objectives. Uganda is one of 56 countries that indicate in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) the aim to implement REDD+ as part of their broader strategies to address climate change. REDD+, and indeed the UNP, support several national economic development agendas. The Government has developed the Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy (UGGDS) to operationalize green growth principles and accelerate the implementation of global development goals, Uganda Vision 2040 and the second National Development Plan (NDP II). One of the focus areas of the UGGDS is natural capital management and development which focuses on tourism development, sustainable forestry, wetlands and optimal water resources management. Hence efforts to address forestry sector challenges are important for this focus area.
3. Vision 2040 sets a target of increasing forest cover to 24% against a 2010 baseline of 15%. It is also encouraging to note the setting of important ENR targets in the NDP II that encompass the need for taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts through sustainable use of natural resources for sustainable development. REDD+ is one of numerous projects listed under the Public Investment Plan continuing from NDP I. As such, REDD+ has an elevated and a significant role to play in achieving the country´s economic development agenda.
4. **Delivery of Outputs:** The UNP achieved many of the outputs it set out to implement. Over and above the contributions from development partners and GoU, the UNP led by UNDP, contributed towards the development of the National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) under Outcome 1 and this is well acknowledged by the Government. The NRS was launched at COP23 in 2017. There is strong national support based on feedback from a sample of stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation mission but also an acknowledgement that the suite of strategy options now need to be translated into actions on the ground. Senior government officials including a Minister were interviewed and reiterated the importance and relevance of REDD+ as well as acknowledging the support received under the UNP.
5. Under Outcome 2, the progress with the NFMS is commendable and there is constant reference that, while not yet complete, Uganda now has one of the more advanced NFMS in the region. The progress with this component of the R-PP is a result of the support provided by FAO with funding from the FCPF, UNP, ADC as well as the GoU. The technical support from FAO and of course the effort of the NFA team enabled Uganda to finalize a national forest definition using a robust process that involved the methodological Task-Force and National Technical Committee with further endorsement by NCCAC in November 2016. Uganda submitted a Forest Reference Level (FRL) to the UNFCCC in January 2017.
6. Under Outcome 2, Uganda also developed a time series data for the year 1990, 2000, 2005 and 2015 including accuracy assessment and identified hot spots and trends of land conversions over the last 25 years. This information was instrumental in the development of the NRS and would also be useful for designing intervention programs going forward.
7. Outcome 3 was implemented under UNEP oversight in collaboration with IUCN. A set of analytical studies were completed and give insights into land use systems, temporal land use patterns, as well as the policy, legal and regulatory framework needed for the sub-national REDD+ interventions. Important work was also carried out to strengthen participatory structures, to ensure that cultural, religious and forest dependent people are informed and can participate in REDD+. Under this outcome, a roadmap was developed outlining a framework for subsequent implementation of the NRS at sub-national level or landscape level setting up platforms for consulting all the relevant sub-national stakeholders. This road map provides an important outline of options and opportunities for strengthening REDD+ implementation.
8. Another important output from this outcome is the development of a prototype National Forest Accounts intended to capture the contribution of forests to the national economy. The process used to prepare the prototype was effective enough to establish necessary collaboration with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. However, UNEP and IUCN acknowledge that the outputs need further work to fully show the value of the forests to the economy and potential for climate change mitigation. These accounts could provide an important basis for informed policy-making in the forestry sector moving forward and a valuable tool for the country’s Forest Investments Programme and the Uganda Green Growth Strategy.
9. **Capacity Development, Sustainability, and Impact:** The successful completion of the UNP and continuing implementation of the FCPF readiness activities denotes that there is capacity for implementation at the programme level but of course being cognisant of some critical challenges that affect the effective and efficient implementation of programmes. Feedback from government staff is that there is work overload and that REDD+ is in fact additional work with no additional permanent staff resources. There are ceilings to annual budgets irrespective of changes in annual workplans and government institutions are not able to increase their staff numbers. The institutions that will play a central and long-term role in the implementation of REDD+ such as the FSSD and NFA are under-resourced hence there is a fundamental need to prepare a sustainable capacity development plan in line with the national REDD+ strategy options.
10. There is significant appetite among stakeholders for the government to expedite the implementation of REDD+. However, despite this interest, there are some major challenges that Uganda faces and needs to address including some important pre-conditions to create the necessary enabling environment for REDD+ to succeed. Land and forest governance reforms are often considered as preconditions for implementing REDD+ and underpin the government´s objectives to the forestry sector transformation agenda. There is consensus that forest governance, spatial planning, and land tenure will need to be addressed but this will require additional political support and vigorous resource mobilization.
11. The likelihood for impact and sustainability will be the result of combined contribution by the UNP, FCPF ADC, GoU and continued linkages to National Development Plans and keeping in line with Vision 2040, NDC pledges, and the Uganda Green Growth Strategy among others. However, such linkages can only be adequately maintained with appropriate resource of the FSSP and support from the NCCAC. At the operational level, institutional sustainability also needs significant support as outlined in the Roadmap prepared under Outcome 3.
12. Finally, upscaling REDD+ and implementing the strategy options will need to achieve short term intermediate gains that address community livelihoods and create the momentum for transformative actions. This is where the impact of the REDD+ readiness process will start to become more visible. Continued formulation, strengthening and implementation of policies rests with the Government and relevant institutions – but more so, it comes down to effective mainstreaming of REDD+ across sectors (agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, mining etc.). External capacity support is only effective if there is national ownership. This evaluation highlights several areas that still needs further work – some aspects are more fundamental and require a cultural shift, while others require transformative managerial and political commitment with the understanding that the ultimate beneficiaries (communities) are the most affected yet hold the least influence.

**Uganda REDD+ Readiness Status**

1. The FCPF has established a framework for assessment of REDD+ Readiness and at the time of this evaluation, the REDD+ Secretariat had begun a self-assessment process. The Readiness Assessment provides a common framework to measure a country’s progress on core readiness activities. It is a thorough self-examination by REDD country stakeholders to take stock of the activities implemented during the REDD+ readiness preparation phase and assess progress on REDD+ readiness. The results of the Readiness Assessment are compiled in an R-Package, which documents the country’s progress, captures lessons learned, assesses remaining gaps, and identifies activities for the way forward to transitioning to the implementation of performance-based activities. Therefore, that is the process that is recommended to assess the country´s readiness status. This process will summarize the readiness process, undertake multi-stakeholder self-assessment process, and outline the key outputs of the readiness preparation process.

Summary of Evaluation of Programme Performance[[1]](#footnote-2)

| **Criterion** | **Rating** | **Summary Assessment**  |
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| **Concept and relevance of the NP** |  |  |
| Design | R | This final evaluation finds the design to be relevant.  |
| Relevance  | R | The UNP is highly relevant especially noting the critical need for transformation of the forestry sector  |
| **Results and contribution to stated objectives**  |  |  |
| Delivery of Outputs  | S | The overall delivery of the program and outputs is not solely attributable to the UNP, but the contribution of the UNP is satisfactory noting Uganda has prepared a National REDD+ Strategy, significantly advanced NFMS incorporating MRV and submitted a FREL to the UNFCCC.  |
| Effectiveness | S | In the context of the complementary role, the UNP effectively contributed to the objectives of the R-PP objectives but the overall impact should be evaluated at the completion of the REDD+ Readiness process which is still in progress.  |
| Efficiency | MS | The UNP had a no-cost extension from 1st August – 31st December 2017 but mostly attributable to issues at the beginning due to the need for adjustments to fit in within the existing FCPF program framework and slow recruitment.  |
| Cross-cutting issues:  |  |  |
| Gender | MS | Crosscutting issues are becoming increasing important in mainstreaming climate change. This rating reflects the design aspects. Fundamentally, design at the minimum, necessarily need to include gender issues.  |
| Capacity Development | MS | The capacity development is satisfactory but there is general feedback for further capacity building at both national and sub-national level. |
| Normative Products | S | Working as three agencies with capacity and expertise across a wide spectrum of thematic areas remains one of the strongest comparative advantages of the UN agencies. The key result from the normative work of each agency has been the increasing and supporting dialogue necessary to enhance sectoral integration and mainstreaming climate in line with the Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy |
| Sustainability  | L | The likelihood for sustainability is moderate because of the capacity challenges facing government institutions. The freeze on recruitment is a significant limitation to continuity since the national REDD+ program implementation has been supported by a large pool of international experts with terminal involvement.  |
| Up-scaling | L | The complimentary role to the FCPF program makes the likelihood for upscaling high since the FCPF is continuing with additional funding. There are plans already underway to develop emission reductions programs in selected landscapes.  |
| Likelihood of Impact | S | The results of the UNP will have a significant impact in the long-term but this will depend on the ability of the GoU to maintain the systems setup under both the FCPF, ADC and UNP. For instances, there is need for substantive capacity to maintain the NFMS, the necessary engagement with the communities who will be involved in implementation of intervention.  |
| **Factors affecting performance** |  |  |
| Programme management and coordination  | MS | Coordination of the program implementation was a joint effort between the government and the UN agencies and this seems to have worked satisfactorily.  |
| Human and financial resources administration | MS | Staff resourcing with the UN agencies was adequate to support the delivery of the UNP. International advisors are imbedded in government agencies such as FD. There were some delays in bringing technical advisors at the beginning and this report proposes some options for preventing delays at the beginning.  |
| Technical backstopping and supervision | S | The technical backstopping was adequate and satisfactory. Both UNDP, FAO, and UNEP provided technical backstopping through the regional offices and Head offices. |
| Government participation and ownership | S | The GOU showed its interest in taking ownership of the implementation of the UNP right from the beginning and continued with making incremental institutional adjustments necessary for the success of the UNP.  |
| Monitoring, reporting and evaluation | S | Effective reporting was performed through semi-annual and annual progress reports. The mid-term review provided an opportunity for re-aligning the UNP.  |
| **Overall Programme Performance** | **S** | **The UNP is satisfactory and both the GOU and the UN agencies should be credited for a well implemented program that is likely to have a significant impact.** |

**Recommendations**

The recommendations are formulated based on the Evaluator’s view on what could be done to enhance the readiness process for Uganda. The first set of recommendations address the UN-REDD agencies with regards to programme design. The second set is for consideration by the GOU and World Bank FCPF program. These recommendations summarise the broader discussions presented throughout the report.

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| Summary Recommendations  |
| *For the UN-REDD agencies with regards to programme design*  |
| RECOMMENDATION 1 – Staff Recruitment: Staff recruitment needs to be expedited to avoid program delays. Understandably, UN agencies processes can be protracted but considerations could be made to initiate program staff recruitment at the earliest possible time. This could potentially reduce some of the implementation delays and failure to meet targets. For instance, considerations could be made to initiate the recruitment process once it is certain that a program will go ahead by soliciting expressions of interest conditional on final project funding approval.  |
| RECOMMENDATION 2 – Activity Sequencing: During the formulation phase, it is important to consider sequencing activities in such a manner that they are useful for the key products. The forest accounts work proved to be a key output, but the sequence resulted in the loss of opportunity to inform the REDD+ process on data gaps that could have informed the formulation of the activities under the FCPF additional funding. As outlined in this report, Forest Accounts could be a highly valuable tool for informing policy and key decision makers on the critical value of the forest sector and justification for equitable fiscal support going forward.  |
| *For consideration by the Government of Uganda* |
| RECOMMENDATION 3: National REDD+ Strategy: Following the acknowledgment that additional work is necessary to improve that NRS, the Roadmap prepared under Outcome 3 by IUCN outlines important aspects that are in the critical path for successful implementation of the REDD+ strategy options at sub-national level. It is highly recommended that considerations be made on how to respond to the proposals. In doing so, further considerations could be made how REDD+ can add value towards strengthening forest sector governance in anticipation of the implementation of landscape emission reductions programs that are being planned.  |
| RECOMMENDATION 4: Institutional Capacity: Noting the future role of NFA GIS Unit, the current level of staff complement is inadequate considering the high demand for services, data, and analytical support in future as the implementation of the NRS begins. Technical units can benefit from closer collaboration with tertiary institutions by having defined internship programs for instance. |
| RECOMMENDATION 5: Upscaling and fund/resource mobilization: As the country transition from REDD+ Readiness to implementation, there are significant efforts across institutions, development partners, CSOs and private sector to develop program proposals to mobilize funding resources. This is a positive sign but also one that needs careful coordination and collaboration to reduce the risk of duplication, inconsistencies, and potential conflicts between program proposals in different institutions. The coordination capacity of FSSD will need to be strengthened to ensure proposal to international climate funds are complementary and not competing. |

1. **Agency coordination and implementation; outcomes; overall programme results:** Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Sustainability:** Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).

**Relevance:** relevant (R) or not relevant (NR).

**Impact:** Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)