

## Template for report and accounts for organisations under the Climate and Forest Initiative funding scheme for civil society

2013-2015

### 1. General project information

- 1.1 Name of recipient organization: Rainforest Foundation Norway (Regnskogfondet)
- 1.2 Reporting year: June 2013 - 2015
- 1.3 Agreement Number: GLO-0850 QZA-13/0557
- 1.4 Name of project: "Building REDD+ from the bottom up: Civil society as agent for change towards a transformative and sustainable REDD+?"
- 1.5 Country and region in the(se) country if applicable: Indonesia, Ecuador and Democratic Republic of Congo plus global policy.
- 1.6 Financial support to the project from Norad for last calendar year 2015: 16 432 178 NOK
- 1.7 Thematic area: Analysis, concept and methodology development that contribute to planning and implementation of REDD+

### 2. Please describe the project's progress for the whole grant period

- 2.1 Please repeat the **project's target group(s)** and the baseline for the target group at the start of the project (from the approved project document).  
**Primary target group:** Decision makers with power to influence forest management and land use policies in rainforest countries.  
**Secondary target group:** Civil society organizations in general and Rainforest Foundation Norway's partners in particular.  
**Beneficiaries:** Indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.  
The baselines are described below (under point 2.4).
- 2.2 Please repeat the project's **desired impact** (from the approved project document).  
Rainforests are sustainably managed and the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent groups are respected.
- 2.3 Is the project still relevant for the desired impact? (Yes/No): Yes
- 2.4 **Main outcome(s).**
  - a) **Please repeat the project's planned outcome(s) (effect on project's target group(s), beneficiary (-ies)) (from the approved project document).**  
**Program goal (expected outcome):** National and multilateral REDD+ policies are ecologically sustainable and benefit indigenous and other forest dependent peoples.

#### Outcome indicators:

- 1) **Benefit sharing:** Models for fair and equitable benefit sharing are included in REDD+ national policies (the DRC, Indonesia and Ecuador) and addressed by multilateral REDD+ policies (UN-REDD Program, Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and others).  
**Baseline:** Some models for REDD+ benefit sharing exist, but the discussions are still at a very early stage, particularly on how benefits can be shared in a fair and equitable way. There is no formally established international guidance for REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms.
- 2) **Spatial planning and land tenure:** REDD+ programs in the DRC, Indonesia and Ecuador, and multilateral REDD+ funding, is based on coherent land use plans for forest areas, taking into account the drivers of deforestation as well as customary land claims and rights of forest peoples.  
**Baseline:** The importance of land tenure for REDD+ is recognized in general terms, but there is a

significant gap when it comes to the implementation of necessary governance and policy reforms at the national level. In multilateral agencies, too much emphasis is placed on location-specific “carbon rights”, compared to broader tenure rights issues.

**3) Safeguards:** Cancun REDD+ safeguards are implemented in national REDD+ policies in the DRC, Indonesia and Ecuador and supported by the policies of multilateral agencies (UN- REDD/WB).

**Baseline:** Safeguards (as agreed in the UNFCCC) are reflected in the general REDD+ policies, but the policies lack specification of how these safeguards should be implemented at the national level. RFN’s partners call for recommendations for the implementation of safeguards, and many are engaged in dialogue with respective governments to advocate safeguards implementation and monitoring.

**b)** The program’s outcome is ambitiously formulated on a level close to impact, meaning that its achievement is dependent on other actors and factors outside of RFN’s control. While the outcome has not been fully achieved, there has been important progress on all elements in the program. Delivery on the outcome indicators merits further explanation: REDD+ has neither had sufficient political backing nor advanced at the pace anticipated when the program was established. Progress has been slow in government-led REDD+ in all program countries, and this has been a barrier for achieving this program’s outcome. If there is no REDD+ policy in a country, working on safeguards and benefit sharing is less relevant. This is further explained in section 2.5 and 2.9.

Below we describe results at the outcome level, organized country by country and theme by theme (corresponding to the outcome indicators, and also including capacity building, which is a cross-thematic key output in the program).

## **ECUADOR**

A national REDD+ regime is not yet in place. However, the program has resulted in improved models for benefit sharing and strengthened land tenure, and that the target groups benefit from ecosystem services with their forests intact. The program has also led to significantly increased capacity and knowledge among targeted indigenous peoples and civil society representatives.

**Outcome indicator 1 on benefit sharing:** Regarding the first thematic priority of the program – benefit sharing – RFN and partners have analyzed different benefit-sharing models implemented within indigenous peoples’ groups and local communities. Together with indigenous partners, we will share these experiences with the aim of promoting best practices in the field. The Pueblo Kichwa of Rukullacta (PKR) and Pueblo Shuar Arutam (PSHA) indigenous peoples have improved their benefit-sharing models. An administration code has been developed for the PKR, establishing guidelines for the communal banks to ensure sound management of the funds from the Socio Bosque Program (PSB). In the PSHA, the model is linked to their life plan, and the project team in Ecuador has worked continuously together with the PSHA leadership on analysis and improvements.

RFN and partners have also coordinated, where possible, with the PSB program office, following their implementation at the local level and providing feedback to achieve improvement in their work. Ecuador has not yet implemented a REDD+ program, therefore the PSB is funded mainly over the state budget, awaiting international funding.

A summary report on experiences with benefit-sharing mechanisms in Ecuador has been produced and is currently being validated by the three peoples that were chosen for case studies. The study provides valuable information on lessons learnt concerning benefit-sharing mechanisms and on the need for functioning indigenous organization structures or government in order to achieve fair and equitable distribution. We will share and build on these experiences in our ensuing work in Ecuador and beyond.

**Outcome indicator 2 on spatial planning and land tenure:** Regarding spatial planning and land tenure, indigenous peoples’ rights to their customary land are threatened by state policies allocating oil and

mining licenses without Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Several indigenous peoples have made advances in the development of sustainable management plans with support from RFN and partners.

Three indigenous peoples' organizations and one local government have included climate change, rights and forest protection in their territorial management plans as a result of this program. Pueblo Shuar Arutam (PSHA) approved a new and updated version of their life plan that addresses climate change mitigation, after trainings and follow-up by program staff. Improved mapping of the area has also contributed to a better understanding of the forest cover and the causes of deforestation. With the Life Plan of PSHA, an area of 2,300 km<sup>2</sup> in the Condor Mountains is covered by a sustainable land use plan. In this territory, the use of the forest is regulated with 50% under strict conservation, 15% for sustainable use and 35% for access without deforestation.

A climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy was developed together with 16 communities of the Kichwa people of Rukullacta (PKR) and incorporated into the PKR's territorial management plan, placing nearly 920 km<sup>2</sup> under sustainable management, while in the communities of the Pueblo Kichwa Canelos de Pastaza, several measures were adopted to restore the biodiversity in the ancestral production system. The work was coordinated by 12 women in cooperation with a local institute, and 45 people participated in the training, a majority of them women. The local government (GAD) of Napo received training focused on climate change in order to help institutionalize their "climate plan" for an area of 12,484 km<sup>2</sup>.

**Outcome indicator 3 on safeguards:** On safeguards, the absence of a national REDD+ program has meant that REDD+ safeguards have not yet been implemented. Civil society organizations were involved in the development of a proposal for a Safeguards Information System (SIS). However, this is currently under revision by national authorities without civil society participation.

**Capacity building:** We have carried out comprehensive capacity building in Ecuador. Through the implementation of the project "Derechos, cambio climático y bosques", at least 174 key representatives of the target groups have increased their knowledge on climate change, forest protection, rights and safeguards. In addition, the Shuar Arutam and Kichwa Rukullacta peoples have received training through 54 workshops, with a high probability that many of their peoples have increased their level of knowledge. Through the project, relevant training materials were developed, and training for indigenous, women's and youth organizations' representatives was provided. The project also saw the provision of information on climate change, forest, the REDD+ processes and the PSB.

In cooperation with the "Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar" (UASB University), two cycles were completed in a *special course on rights, forests and climate change*. 35 indigenous students, most of them with local leadership positions, completed training. The course has proved a valuable way of giving indigenous peoples access to university level training on the program issues.

In addition, 20 Afroecuadorian, peasant and indigenous women from Sucumbíos in the northern Ecuadorean Amazon were trained on forests and climate change with a gender approach. The same women have replicated the trainings in a total of 305 workshops reaching 2,800 persons, and some of them also participated in both the UNFCCC COP20 and in the intersessional meetings in Bonn. The program has supported the Youth Alliance for the Forest with training (108 youth) since its inception and support for their campaign "Alert on the Forests".

A manual for indigenous radio communicators was developed and implemented with focus on program themes. The manual was broadcast on more than 33 radio stations, all of them members of "Coordinadora de Radio Popular Educativa del Ecuador" (CORAPE), the coordination of communal radio stations in Ecuador. The organization has around 40,000 listeners from different communities all over the country. The program maintains an updated web page, [www.derechosybosques.org](http://www.derechosybosques.org), and a Facebook page with more than 7,000 followers and daily updates.

The project outputs for benefit sharing, land tenure and capacity building have contributed towards the outcome indicator targets. However, at the outcome level, the achievement of targets depends on national policies as well as on international REDD+ funding, and there have not been significant advances on either of these during the program period. It is therefore difficult to achieve the outcome, even if the outputs have to a large extent been achieved.

Several of the results of the project are sustainable. The project has trained indigenous peoples' and civil society leaders who will be able to make continuous use of their knowledge. The knowledge on lessons learnt from benefit-sharing experiences in Ecuador will be shared by RFN with other partners, for instance in Peru. Indigenous peoples' collective decision-making bodies will be able to implement their sustainable management plans and we will endeavor to maintain the web page that has been established and where all relevant training materials, videos, etc. have been gathered. However, a REDD+ regime is not yet in place, and there is very strong conflict between the state and indigenous peoples as well as on mining and oil concessions on indigenous territories. Long-term sustainability of the results would imply that the indigenous peoples we have worked with are able to defend their land rights and their forest against external threats. This can only be guaranteed if we are able to obtain continued funding for our work with these partners in Ecuador.

## **INDONESIA**

Indonesia used to be an international REDD+ frontrunner, and by the time we formulated this program the prospects were high for substantial REDD+ activity resulting in transformative forest and governance reforms. The huge potential for emission reductions from the forestry and land use sector had attracted donors such as Norway, Australia, the UN, the World Bank and others. A moratorium on new forest concessions had been issued, a national REDD+ strategy had been finalized through an unprecedented participatory process, a REDD+ Agency was in the making, and a finance mechanism was being discussed. The momentum was considerable, and we believed that civil society could be an agent for change towards a transformative and sustainable REDD+ (hence the title of the program).

It was, however, clear from the beginning that strong actors with vested interests in maintaining the status quo in the forest sector would pose a challenge. Significant power battles took place at top level, with unpredictable dynamics. However, the doors had been opened for increased civil society participation and debate about indigenous peoples' issues. In 2013 and early 2014, RFN's partners were making the most out of the situation. Engagement was high with the national REDD+ Agency, and partners in the regions were involved in drafting provincial REDD+ strategies and revising spatial plans.

In 2014, a new president took office in Indonesia. Joko (Jokowi) Widodo was a progressive candidate, and the preferred choice by both the environmental and the indigenous movement. Jokowi set out to reform bureaucratic institutions, merging the ministry of environment and the ministry of forestry, and dismantling the REDD+ Agency in an attempt to streamline responsibilities and mandates. The latter soon proved disastrous for REDD+ progress, and effectively halted ongoing initiatives. Today, REDD+ is coordinated under the Ministry's Directorate General of Climate Change Control, which unfortunately seems unable to pursue reform. On the positive side, Jokowi has made strong statements in support of the indigenous peoples' agenda, and progressive pledges to reduce the destruction of the country's carbon-rich peatlands. Significant developments have also taken place within the private sector, with more and more companies adopting zero-deforestation policies. RFN has played a key role in pushing some of the major palm oil companies in this direction.

However, the momentum on REDD+ is about to be lost in Indonesia. The near stagnation in REDD+ initiatives since mid-2014, such as the implementation of the national strategy, the One Map Initiative, and the establishment of a finance mechanism, has made the full achievement of the outcome indicators difficult, especially when it comes to ensuring fair and equitable benefit sharing and the implementation of safeguards. The most prominent results of the program in Indonesia are related to land tenure. Below we will describe progress on the key indicators and on capacity building.

**Outcome indicator 1 on benefit sharing:** The establishment of a finance mechanism, a prerequisite for the implementation of benefit sharing, became entangled in legal and bureaucratic details, and months dragged into years without the necessary institutional setup in place to distribute REDD+ funds. Partners such as HuMa worked with the REDD+ Agency on how the financial mechanism could best ensure fair and equitable benefit sharing, but the team dissolved when the REDD+ Agency was dismantled in 2014.

RFN's partner Warsi developed and tested benefit-sharing models in five Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) areas in Jambi and West Sumatra. The project has facilitated alternative economic income activities such as agroforestry and an innovative "tree adoption" program to raise funds until REDD+ funds are accessible. Based on these experiences, Warsi produced a policy paper on benefit sharing that was presented to the government and shared with civil society in Indonesia. Warsi has also developed permanent sampling plots for calculating sequestered carbon in five village forest areas in Bujang Raba. Warsi's various models for Community Payment for Environmental Services (PES) projects were written up in a Project Implementation Note. The aim was to submit it to the REDD+ finance mechanism in order to kick-start the release of funds for community projects, but it is now pending the establishment of such a mechanism.

**Outcome indicator 2 on spatial planning and land tenure:** RFN and partners have achieved momentous results under this indicator. In May 2013, the Constitutional Court confirmed indigenous peoples' rights to traditional territories, after the indigenous peoples' alliance AMAN had challenged the Forestry Law based on it granting ownership over most of the country's forest to the state. As a result of this ruling (MK35), the state can no longer issue licenses for forest exploitation on indigenous territories. The MK35 decision highlights the importance of mapping and titling indigenous territories, outputs pursued by all partners under this program. Unfortunately, the MK35 decision has not yet been properly implemented. With HuMa as a front-runner, RFN's partners have worked to pilot the implementation of MK35 through local regulations. By the end of the program, a number of policies have been issued for the recognition and protection of indigenous territories.

AMAN also succeeded in having indigenous territories included in the One Map Initiative. The objective of the One Map Initiative is to achieve a unified map of land use and concessions that can improve transparency and accountability in Indonesia's forestry sector. The acceptance of indigenous territories in the One Map is a breakthrough as the government previously had no overview of indigenous territories and tended to see such communities as illegal squatters on state land. The One Map Initiative, however, has faced the same delay as other REDD+ activities, and its status is unclear.

In selected provinces, RFN's partners have influenced the revision of spatial plans. In Central Kalimantan, decision makers recognized CBFM in the revised spatial plan, in a plan which is much improved compared to the previous version, which prioritized large-scale commercial activities such as plantations and mining. Walhi Kalteng has further succeeded in drawing support from the provincial government for its agenda. While the project's initial scope was the participatory mapping of the territories of four communities, support from the government allowed scaling up to ten communities. In Jambi, Warsi has facilitated the establishment of CBFM schemes in a total of 77 villages.

**Outcome indicator 3 on safeguards:** In general, it is clear that RFN's partners have managed to place safeguards on the REDD+ agenda and ensured that national REDD+ policies in Indonesia reflect indigenous and local communities' rights. A key development early in the program period was the establishment of the REDD+ Agency, replacing the temporary REDD+ Task Force. The Agency's task was to assist the President in coordinating, synchronizing, planning, facilitating, managing, monitoring, and controlling REDD+ in Indonesia. The Agency was a key target of RFN partners' advocacy efforts, and a close dialogue was soon established. The Agency's list of priorities included tenure and indigenous peoples' rights, as well as law enforcement and license review, indicating that the Agency recognized improved forest governance and tenure security as a prerequisite for successful REDD+. The question remains how these elements will be pursued by the new regime, now that less priority is accorded REDD+.

At the provincial level, RFN's partners were involved in the formulation of REDD+ strategies in Jambi, Central Kalimantan, West Sumatra, Central Sulawesi, and West Papua and Papua. While the strategies varied in terms of quality, the partners' demands for participation and transparency were successful. In Central Kalimantan, the provincial government was forced to revise the Regional REDD+ Strategy after criticism by civil society. The initial strategy was designed by few without proper public consultation. The revision process included broad consultations in seven districts, and input from local communities and civil society resulted in a new strategy of higher quality.

AMAN's key message has been "No Rights, No REDD". Through effective advocacy, AMAN succeeded in having President Jokowi include measures to ensure the respect of indigenous peoples in his political priority agenda, such as a review of all bills related to natural resources, tenure and indigenous peoples to ensure that these respect the MK35. AMAN has, furthermore, drafted a Bill on the Recognition and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous People and is currently lobbying for its adoption. AMAN has developed and tested a manual for monitoring safeguards within indigenous communities. The manual refers to the Cancun safeguards that call for "full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities" in REDD+. However, the monitoring systems will not be effectively tested until REDD+ activities reach local levels.

**Capacity building:** REDD+ has increased the space for the participation of civil society, including for indigenous peoples in policy making and implementation. RFN's partners' utilization of this new room for maneuver evidences a high level of knowledge and strategy. The way in which YMP in Central Sulawesi has increased its standing and become a key partner for dialogue for the provincial government is worth highlighting. Warsi has for many years been a key political actor in southern Sumatra. During the course of this program, Warsi has increasingly engaged on the national scene as well and, in particular, developed a fruitful relationship with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. AMAN has mobilized on "No Rights, No REDD", and been able to employ REDD+ to place indigenous peoples' rights at the top of the political agenda. AMAN has grown impressively in terms of capacity, political leverage, and professionalism. RFN has contributed to the capacity building among partners through frequent dialogue and strategic discussions, global and national partner seminars, and information sharing. The fact that RFN is based in Oslo, and has a close dialogue with NICFI, makes us a valuable strategic partner for organizations in Indonesia. RFN has repeatedly made use of information from our partners in order to advise decision makers in Norway and internationally, and information on risks and opportunities at the international level is channeled to the partners, allowing them to utilize the momentum of events such as high-level political visits to convey their concerns and demands.

RFN's financial and strategic support during the course of this program has contributed greatly in making national civil society organizations able and willing to engage constructively with the government. This is a major result which is sustainable in the sense that it is difficult to reverse. Civil society will no longer accept closed doors when key political decisions are being made. The link between forest protection and indigenous peoples' rights has been established on an international level. Although this is still contested in Indonesia, it will be increasingly difficult to get away with policies and measures that directly undermine indigenous peoples' rights and well-being.

Results in terms of policy reforms are less sustainable. The past three years demonstrate how easily policies and regulations can be changed depending on political priorities and institutional set-ups. Again, this reinforces the importance of an engaged civil society which can hold its government accountable.

## **DR CONGO**

In the DRC, the program period has been characterized by a lack of funding for REDD+, and thus for fundamental reforms, especially on land use and land tenure, whose cross-cutting character are key to the implementation of the national REDD+ framework and the national REDD+ investment plan. The project made the most of this unfavorable context by mobilizing substantial resources on capacity building and supporting civil society in their efforts to put in place the organizational structure needed to strengthen their participation in REDD+ policy and decision-making processes. RFN and its partner network GTCR-R have thereby contributed to the program goal, but in the longer term.

At the outcome level, there have been no significant advances for benefit sharing and safeguards during the program period. While there has been no progress on the land tenure reform since its official launch in 2013, it is now back as one clear milestone of the Letter of Intent signed by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and the DRC in early 2016. Before these recent substantive results, the program has been confronted by the focus by multilateral institutions and the national authorities on developing pilot REDD+ projects, not national mechanisms. Their argument has been that these sub-regional projects will inform the national processes. This approach, however, ignores a key factor for the success of the latter, namely that the design and implementation of national reforms should be informed by the fact that the contexts in each province varies markedly. Fundamental national reforms have not been prioritized, and no substantial progress has been made on recognizing and securing the *rights* of local communities and indigenous peoples, the focus being rather on their *needs*.

**Outcome indicator 1 on benefit sharing:** A model for a benefit sharing has been developed by one civil society organization for the Maï-Ndombe program, but the document has not been validated. There is therefore no progress at the implementation level. GTCR (Groupe Travail Climat Redd until fall 2015, thereafter it became GTCR-Rénové) has participated in the working groups of the program and advocated towards the national REDD coordination (CNREDD) for the rights of local communities, women and indigenous peoples in the Emission Reduction Program in Maï-Ndombe.

**Outcome indicator 3 on safeguards:** GTCR has been engaged in the process of developing a safeguards framework for REDD+. It was civil society that initially demanded the inclusion of safeguards in the REDD+ process, and pushed for their development. GTCR has advocated, with some success, for the inclusion of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples in the development of a SIS. The process has been led by CNREDD. The safeguards state that REDD+ projects should respect human rights and the rights of the rural population, the right not to be involuntary relocated, and indigenous peoples' rights to access their cultural land. Nevertheless, during the program period, no national safeguard system has been put in place, and the SIS is not yet functional.

**Outcome indicator 2 on spatial planning and land tenure:** Land tenure and spatial planning reform processes at the national level have not shown progress during the program period because of the lack of funding for REDD+. The launch in September 2015 of CAFI raised new expectations. Both GTCR-R and RFN have used that opportunity to ensure that these reforms are harmonized, and their importance for securing that indigenous peoples' and forest-dependent peoples' rights are taken into account in the drafting of the CAFI Letter of Intent. The final version of the letter distances itself from the language of *needs* in favor of *rights*, provides for the obligation to respect and protect indigenous peoples' rights, and sets as clear milestones the identification of "*lands used and occupied by local communities and indigenous peoples*", the clarification and securing of local communities' tenure rights, and the support for local communities' requests for "*sustainable local and community forest management models*" and for "*securing [their] tenure land rights*".

GTCR has raised concerns with multilateral institutions and donors that the DRC has entered into the investment phase of REDD+ without having a national strategy for the implementation of fundamental reforms. In 2015, GTCR-R has advocated for progress on these reforms vis-à-vis FCPF, and for these to be integrated as premises for the national REDD+ investment plan which will be partly funded by CAFI. In the absence of reforms on land use and land tenure, local communities and indigenous peoples stand the risk of losing out, both in terms of rights and benefits from REDD+.

GTCR has been critical of the local consultations related to the Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD) in FCPF's Carbon Fund. GTCR has raised the question of serious shortcomings (including in meetings with the World Bank) about the limited time allocated for consultations and weaknesses of the methodology in terms of participation, among other things. GTCR demanded more extensive consultations and clear commitments to ensure the participation of women, indigenous peoples and youth. As a consequence, further consultations were organized in 2015. GTCR put forward a critical review of the memorandum of understanding relating to the Maï-Ndombe project, developed by the

CNREDD. The memorandum was an attempt to regulate the cooperation between the government, civil society and the private sector, and their respective communication on the ERPD. GTCR concluded that the MoU could not be signed, due to e.g. limitations to their freedom of speech. After this refusal, their role and participation in the process has been discussed between GTCR and CNREDD and clarified, particularly when it comes to civil society's role in the project. GTCR-R is now included in the Maï-Ndombe provincial coordination. GTCR has advocated for the effective participation of civil society, including indigenous peoples, in governing bodies such as the National REDD+ Steering Committee. They have managed to increase their representation in this committee and others, and are e.g. one of five stakeholders in the Technical group on consultations.

GTCR has contributed to the improvement of the country plan within the framework of UN-REDD's Community-based REDD+ (CBR+). They insisted that CBR+ should concern the local communities and not the local administrations, and be implemented by civil society. The member organizations of GTCR have consulted and worked with awareness-raising in local communities and amongst indigenous peoples on the content and the methodology of CBR+.

**Capacity building:** The program's work on capacity building has been significant in DRC, with important results for the future involvement and influence of civil society in REDD+. GTCR was established in 2009, and in 2013 around 300 organizations were members of the network. Because of conflicts owing to the hastened and ill-funded establishment of GTCR, the network split in 2010 and operated as two separate platforms until 2013. At that time, the two platforms decided to commission an evaluation that ended up in a road map for the restructuration of GTCR. The road map aimed at reuniting the network, putting in place a structure and other organizational conditions for civil society to efficiently take part and influence the development of REDD+ in the DRC. The process of restructuration of the GTCR was financed by the United Nations Development Programme and RFN, and coordinated by an interim GTCR committee based in Kinshasa.

The process of restructuring civil society included broad consultations in all the country's provinces (that is, from before the establishment of the 26 new provinces), including mapping of competences within member organizations, and identification of potential members. A key point was the involvement in all stages of the process of indigenous peoples' groups, women and youth at both the national and provincial level. In September 2015, a general assembly established the new structure GTCR-Rénové, with a national steering board and a strong membership in the provinces, also reflected in the board. During the fall of 2015, a total of 540 civil society organizations endorsed the act of commitment of the reunited and restructured network. The national steering committee then took on preparatory works for the establishment of a professional national coordination (to be recruited in 2016), but also coordinated advocacy work to influence the development of the national REDD+ investment plan. GTCR-R consequently worked for the inclusion of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, first in the investment plan, and thereafter CAFI Letter of Intent.

The restructuration process also favored the advent of a women's and a youth environmental network, *Coalition des Femmes Leaders pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable* (CFLEDD), and *Forum des Jeunes pour le Climat* (FOJEC), both members of the GTCR-R.

One important prerequisite for a sustainable national and multilateral REDD+ that benefits local communities and indigenous peoples is an active and representative civil society. In the DRC, civil society has now laid down important structural and organizational foundations that will allow it to participate more efficiently in the REDD+ process, and inform the national level and international institutions on the realities on the ground. By increasing its representativeness in the provinces, by better using the competences present in the network, by establishing more efficient communication systems and strategies, by prioritizing its strategic choices, and by professionalizing its internal organization and external action – all aspects considered in the restructuring process – civil society has effected important measures for the sustainability of its renewed structure (GTCR-R) and the action of the latter, for synergies between experiences from the ground and advocacy work at the local, provincial and national level, and eventually for its increased influence on REDD+ policies.



## GLOBAL POLICY

RFN and partners have engaged in extensive advocacy work in order to influence multilateral REDD+ policies. During the program period, REDD+ policies in the UNFCCC as well as multilateral funding agencies have been significantly developed. Despite some progress, however, most policies are still characterized by significant shortcomings regarding tenure and safeguards.

**Outcome indicator 2 on spatial planning and land tenure:** There is a growing consensus that forest tenure rights and governance must be addressed in any climate change mitigation efforts involving forests. RFN has contributed significantly to strengthening this perception. RRI and RFN gathered 70 representatives of governments, multilateral institutions, indigenous peoples, NGOs and scientists for a two-day, high-level meeting in Oslo about the links between tenure rights, forest protection and climate. Despite this growing awareness and commitment, progress on the ground has remained slow in many countries. Therefore, we used the high-level meeting to understand bottlenecks, identify key factors for progress, and learn from experience in order to prioritize investments and supportive actions.

Despite an increasing understanding of these linkages, however, land tenure is not sufficiently dealt with by key multilateral REDD+ institutions. The shortcomings in the World Bank FCPF's Methodological Framework (MF) is an example. With other civil society groups, RFN highlighted a number of shortcomings in the MF's approach to land tenure and worked closely with government representatives and other CSOs to make these shortcomings known. Our concerns were unfortunately not reflected in the final MF. However, the strong reaction from civil society has made it clear that the FCPF Carbon Fund should not be seen as "best practice" for dealing with land tenure issues in REDD+ and implementation on safeguards.

One important barrier to progress on the issue of tenure has been that donors and REDD+ countries see land tenure as highly politicized, and thus too complicated to sort out before payment for performance can start. Furthermore, donors frequently exhibit a rather narrow focus on carbon, placing much less emphasis on addressing enabling conditions. This was one reason why RFN and other CSOs were not successful in making land tenure reforms a more important part of the methodological framework in the Carbon Fund.

**Outcome indicator 3 on safeguards:** On a global policy level, we have advocated that UNFCCC agreed safeguards should be included in policies, standards and guidelines of multilateral REDD+ initiatives. During the program period, it became clear that the UNFCCC agreed Cancun safeguards were not universally seen to be the minimum standard that all REDD+ activities should respect, as anticipated in the baseline for indicator 3. Instead, as the discussion on the Methodological Framework of FCPF's Carbon Fund and the Green Climate Fund demonstrated, the UNFCCC decisions on safeguards are not necessarily seen as the starting point. As a result, RFN at the global level has devoted significant resources to defending the reference to UNFCCC safeguards as a minimum. The political space in multilateral fora to press for stronger and more operational safeguard requirements has been limited.

In the process of establishing the FCPF Methodological Framework (MF), we built broad civil society alliances and kept a close dialogue with Norwegian government representatives in the governing body of the fund. As a result, we ensured recognition that the Fund should adhere to the REDD+ safeguards of the 2010 Cancun decision. RFN also worked to improve the framework of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In 2014, the Board of the GCF adopted a framework for REDD+ Results-based Payments. The first draft GCF decision was far from consistent with the UNFCCC REDD+ framework, with a weak connection to the Cancun safeguards. As a result of RFN and allies' advocacy vis-à-vis the members of the Board, the framework was amended to include further requirements in line with UNFCCC safeguards.

**Outcome indicator 1 on benefit sharing:** Following a discussion with the partners of this program, it was obvious that developing benefit-sharing models (indicator 1) was highly dependent on national circumstances, and that it was not possible to develop meaningful global models or guidelines for this

topic. Issues of benefit sharing were therefore primarily addressed in relation to national-level REDD+ processes.

**Capacity building:** The global policy component of the program has been key for increased participation and capacity building among key stakeholders in REDD+. In our work related to all three indicators, RFN has been advocating for and facilitating the active participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in multilateral REDD+ initiatives, and bringing RFN's partner organizations in the program countries (as well as some non-program countries) to the macro level processes that form the international framework for REDD+. This has proven to be decisive for improving national REDD+ strategies' attention to the rights and concerns of indigenous peoples, as well as for contextualizing discussions about global policy frameworks such as the FCPF's MF. Furthermore, the sustainability of any gains achieved in multilateral policy areas such as the FCPF or GCF (described above) depend on the policy's operationalization at the national level.

Over the course of this program there has been a continued increase in the awareness of the need to involve civil society and indigenous peoples in the international processes in order to build inclusive and legitimate processes. RFN's facilitation of active participation of grassroots organizations from REDD+ countries has contributed in no small part to this development. Important examples of the outputs of this work during the program period include the following:

- Both in connection with the adoption of the DRC's Emissions Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN) and the Readiness Package in the FCPF, RFN, GTCR and global CSO partners provided detailed analysis and critique. This resulted in the Carbon Fund board asking the DRC to come back in the development of ER-PD regarding several observations made by RFN and partners about land tenure, drivers, benefit sharing and engagement of indigenous peoples and civil society.
- In its first round of project approvals, the GCF considered a wetland conservation project in the Peruvian Amazon for which the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples and local communities had not been obtained. Through close dialogue with the GCF co-chair, RFN and partners succeeded in the board setting conditions for the approval of the project to conduct further consultations and to obtain clear written consent from indigenous peoples' organizations.
- RFN advocacy contributed to indigenous peoples being included as decision-makers in the UN-REDD Program's 2016-2020 governance arrangements, and in a consultative group connected to the evaluation committee of the FCPF.
- RFN provided inputs to Norway regarding the National REDD+ Program presented by Myanmar at UN-REDD - 15th Policy Board Meeting. Some of our suggestions such as fostering the engagement of CSOs and Ethnic Minorities in the REDD+ process were included in the final report of the meeting.
- RFN provided funding and assistance to the Peruvian indigenous peoples' organization AIDASEP and the NGO Derechos, Ambiente y Recursos (DAR) to influence the development of the Peruvian Investment Plan to be approved under the Forest Investment Program (FIP). The results include the establishment of a national coordination mechanism for indigenous peoples engaging in REDD and the inclusion of a program for titling indigenous lands in Peru's FIP Investment Plan, which was approved by the FIP's governing body in November 2013.
- RFN sent inputs to the UN-REDD program for the elaboration of the document "Putting REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information Systems Into Practice". Many of our comments regarding indigenous peoples' rights and implementation of Cancun safeguards were included in the policy brief.

Networking, exchange activities and ad-hoc funding of selected, strategically important civil society organizations have contributed to improving indigenous peoples and civil society in rainforest countries' knowledge and capacity. Some examples of this capacity building are:

- RFN has provided grants to a Colombian organization of civil society and indigenous peoples to organize a two-day regional workshop. The workshop was instrumental in building the capacity of indigenous Amazonian leaders and organizations on issues relating to community rights, deforestation and climate change.

- In Guyana, the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) with support of RFN organized a workshop for 36 indigenous leaders from 5 regions, to share information and gather input regarding the implementation of the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy and REDD+ program.
- In March 2014, RFN co-organized a high-level meeting and a partner seminar in Padang, Indonesia together with the Indonesian partner organizations HuMa and Warsi. A total of 120 participants from civil society, indigenous peoples, Indonesian decision makers and representatives of the Indonesian media participated. Through a combination of presentations, debates and a field visit the participants gained a greater understanding of how recognition and protection of tenure rights for indigenous peoples and local communities in REDD+ initiatives can be implemented.
- In May 2015, RFN had a partner meeting after the high-level meeting about tenure. The partner meeting discussed follow up from the tenure meeting and gender. The meeting was important in order to raise awareness on gender issues and share experiences from the project work on how to include women.
- In November 2015, a South-South exchange between Warsi in Indonesia and four organisations in the DRC - all members of *Résau Ressources Naturelles* (RRN) - took place. The exchange resulted in knowledge-sharing and capacity building that linked experiences with participatory mapping to advocacy work at the local and national level for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights.

2.5 *Are there any internal and/ or external factors that have affected the project in any significant way?*

*a) Please specify deviations from plans.*

**ECUADOR:** Expected results on the application of safeguards in REDD+ projects in Ecuador was based on the assumption that Ecuador would receive international funding for REDD+ (incl. possibly through an agreement with Norway), and as a result develop a Safeguards Information System (SIS). No such agreement has been signed, despite concrete negotiations between Ecuador, Germany and Norway. The trilateral negotiations were frozen at the end of 2014 due to strains on relations between Ecuador and Germany, and have only recently been reopened (2016). No SIS has been implemented yet. In 2013, Ecuadorean civil society representatives participated actively in the process to develop a proposal for the SIS, but have not participated in a more recent update carried out by the Environment Ministry in Ecuador. The REDD+ Roundtable between authorities and civil society ceased functioning late 2014 and only in 2016, after the end of this reporting period, have authorities signaled a will to re-establish such a roundtable. As a result of this situation, our partners in Ecuador have not been able to achieve expected results of monitoring of safeguard application in REDD+. The funds that could not be used on the planned activities were reallocated to other results.

**INDONESIA:** Leading up to and following the general elections in May and the presidential election in July 2014, the media, decision makers and civil society were all submerged in political campaigning, and it was difficult to find space to discuss REDD+. Uncertainty following the merger of the Environment and Forestry Ministry and the disbandment of the REDD+ Agency required a reorganization of our partners' activities. Individuals in decision making positions changed as a result of the legislative and presidential elections at national and local level, and new contacts had to be established and issues re-phrased to fit the agendas of the new leaders. Milestones around which RFN had planned this program period, such as the establishment of a REDD+ finance mechanism, have not been achieved. Without a mechanism to channel funds for regional initiatives, it is difficult to ensure the implementation of safeguards and benefit sharing in project implementation.

**The DRC:** GTCR and RFN used a lot of their capacity on the restructuring process during the program period, which eventually led to less resources being mobilized for other planned results. Recruiting consultants, preparing workshops, and conducting fieldwork throughout the country have been time-consuming and challenging, and the timetable for the roadmap turned out to be too ambitious. Due to the restructuring, GTCR has not been able to contribute to mapping of land and resource rights.

**GLOBAL POLICY:** RFN initially had the ambition to contribute to the development of global guidance for REDD+ benefit sharing as a part of this program. Following a REDD+ partner seminar in May 2013,

where benefit-sharing was discussed thoroughly, the conclusion of RFN and our partners was that benefit-sharing models depend heavily on national context, and thus that it would not be meaningful to develop a global template or guidelines on this topic.

***b) Please provide a short assessment of the risks occurred***

In the original program proposal, political will and high-level commitment to REDD+ was stated as a key assumption for the program, but not considered a significant risk. This turned out to be an underestimation. In all program countries a combination of missing political will, or at least an ambiguity, and lack of administrative capacity obstructed the achievement of the program goal. None of the program countries have rejected REDD+ and stepped back from previous, positive commitments. The lack of political will can rather be seen through a missing dedication to forest protection when compared to other, conflicting government priorities, like expansion of agriculture and extractive industries into forest areas.

The lack of political will and commitment to REDD+ in the program countries represents a problem that to some degree has persisted throughout the program period, but is also linked to the modest commitment from donors and a lack of well-functioning international finance for REDD+. Indonesia has to a higher degree had a serious policy commitment to REDD+ than the other countries, but the presidential election and consequent reorganization of the government led to serious disruption of REDD+ implementation. In the DRC, the key REDD+ official bodies (the CNREDD and the National REDD Committee) have been partly non-functional in the program period, and combined with the lack of international funding this has led to little progress at the national level. In Ecuador, there was significant progress towards trilateral REDD+ cooperation with Germany and Norway in 2014, but this stalled as a result of diplomatic challenges in the relation between Germany and Ecuador.

Resistance from commercial actors was identified as a risk in the program proposal, and this has occurred in particular in Indonesia where reforms have been diluted as a result of lobbying from actors with a vested interest in the status quo. This is most likely a result of REDD+ and forest protection being relatively high on the agenda in Indonesia, and therefore business-as-usual-actors like the palm oil industry have felt pressured. Such resistance has not been seen to the same degree in the DRC and Ecuador, most likely due to less commitment for REDD+ from the governments' side. REDD+ has not led to significant, violent conflicts in the program countries, but the situation in Ecuador has been fragile and confrontational on a more aggregated level, especially related to the rights of indigenous peoples and expansion of extractive industries into their traditional territories.

Regarding the risk of a "narrow" REDD+, where a focus on carbon continues to dominate the discourse at the expense of enabling conditions such as land tenure and governance reform and implementation of safeguards, this has to some extent been the situation in the multilateral institutions, setting conditions for the implementation in the REDD+ countries. The work to ensure proper implementation of safeguards and spatial planning based on and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities have met obstacles, and is portrayed as complicating REDD+. Our work towards the FCPF and the Green Climate Fund illustrates this.

Internal risks have also occurred. The restructuring of our partner in the DRC has been time-consuming, but has led to a very robust basis for future civil society involvement in REDD+.

**2.6 *Cross cutting concerns. Please report on whether the project has had any effect (positive or negative) on***

***a) Corruption:*** No specific information from the project.

***b) Gender equality***

**ECUADOR:** Since 2010, CEPLAES worked actively to reach a higher participation among women in decision-making processes related to policy on climate change and forest. To achieve this, women have been targeted specifically in training concerning their rights, women's relation to forest, climate change and human rights. As a consequence, female representatives from the different villages and communities have developed better knowledge on how to express their opinions in assemblies as well as how to

participate more actively in decision making. These same women have contributed to exchange experiences with other cultures and communities and have also become generators of knowledge in their own communities. In addition, CEPLAES has elaborated specific material for workshops for women, used in the Training for Trainers. The women who participated replicated the training in more than 300 workshops reaching 2,800 participants. The program also secured Indigenous Womens' participation at the COP 20 and COP21 and supported a successful initiative by Kichwa women to restore their ancestral agroforestry systems.

**INDONESIA:** Gender awareness is fundamental to understanding the social relations and decision-making processes which determine access, use and management of natural resources. In order to explore ways of addressing gender within REDD+ in Indonesia, we found it necessary to conduct a baseline study to acquire more information and experience about the challenges on the ground. In this study, RFN's objective was to gain useful insights on how to build partners' capacity in working with gender and to integrate a gender perspective in the forest and climate agenda.

The baseline study was carried out in 2014 by Education for Social Transformation (SCN CREST), a leading research and consultancy institution with expertise on gender justice and environmental sustainability. The information gained from the study has been used as the basis for building awareness among RFN partners on gender issues, to strengthen the integration of the gender perspective in other projects and to raise awareness of the relevance of gender issues for forest management with partner organizations in Indonesia. This process has been co-funded by RFN's framework agreement with Norad, as it involves all of RFN's partners in Indonesia.

**DRC:** GTCR-R has had integration of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting priority in its road map, and it is now integrated in the statutes developed during the fall 2015. The interim committee facilitated the meetings for their gender commission.

The diagnostic reports of GTCR include statistics showing the participation of women, men and youth in the consultation process. The report furthermore highlights the fields in which women had specific competence, at the same time showing the domains where they are absent and where their competences are not known.

Despite having gender as a cross-cutting issue, this does not necessarily mean that it is straightforward in practice. The participation of women became a high-temperature issue when the criteria for selection of participants to the general assembly in September 2015 were discussed. The General Assembly (GA) was to decide upon the strategy and structure of GTCR. Finally, it was decided that at least one out of three participants from the provinces was to be a woman. Women in the provinces used the terms of references for selection to insist on their legitimate presence in the delegations going to Kinshasa. This helped increase the number of women at the GA.

GTCR's gender commission has during the project period decided to put in place the women's coalition CFLEDD. CFLEDD focused on the inclusion of women in the different REDD+ processes, and on the land tenure reform and the (lack of) rights to land for women.

**GLOBAL POLICY:** We had a partner meeting in May 2015, where gender was one of two topics discussed. Experiences from the DRC, Indonesia and Ecuador were presented and followed by group discussions. This was important in order to raise awareness and learn from each others' experiences.

### ***c) Respect for human rights***

A key element in the program, especially related to safeguards and land tenure, is to protect the rights of forest peoples, in line with international human rights commitments, in the program countries and in multilateral REDD+ initiatives. Thus, the program has respect for human rights as a core element.

In Ecuador, the Presidential Decree No. 16 (2013), which regulates civil society organizations, has been heavily criticized by RFN's partners for curbing their right to organization and participation in policy-

making processes. In Indonesia, RFN's partners HuMa, YMP and AMAN were deeply involved in the national inquiry on indigenous territorial rights in state forests carried out by the National Human Rights Commission. Regional public hearing sessions were held in several regions involving 40 different indigenous groups. RFN partners organized representatives of indigenous peoples to testify in the public hearings. The result of the inquiry is a massive catalogue of human rights violations.

In the DRC, GTCR-R advocated for the inclusion of indigenous peoples' rights, i.e. not only their needs, in the REDD+ Investment Plan and in the Letter of Intent. As a result of this advocacy work conducted with the support of RFN, the Investment Plan provides for a specific program on indigenous peoples, and the Letter of Intent underlines the cross-cutting character of indigenous peoples' rights by linking them to the land tenure reform and land-use planning. In the context of the DRC, these are substantial developments that should also be seen in relation to results achieved under RFN's 5-year program with Norad (2013-2017) on the work for the adoption of the DRC's first legislation on indigenous peoples' rights – listed on the agenda of the National Assembly in 2015.

## **2.9 Lessons learned**

A key lesson learned is that REDD+ takes longer to establish and implement than expected in the project proposal. As described in section 2.4, the outcome is not fully achieved, and the risk assessment in section 2.5 describes key reasons for why this has happened. The political commitment to REDD+ among implementing countries and donors has not been sufficiently strong to avoid contradictory government policies and overcome implementation hurdles. This was underestimated in the project proposal, and tells us that any process that depends on a significant reorientation of government policies will take time and face significant challenges, although they are not insurmountable.

Drawing on this, we believe that capacity building of civil society in REDD+ countries is more important for lasting results than anticipated. It has been a key component of the program from the outset, but we see that a strong civil society with extensive knowledge and experience on REDD+ is key to achieving results beyond the program period. A strong civil society with a combination of experience from the ground and ability to influence policy processes nationally and internationally is decisive in order to develop REDD+ policies that are ecologically sustainable and benefit indigenous and other forest-dependent peoples, even if this is not fully achieved by the end of the program period. In the following section, we outline some more details from each of the program countries:

**ECUADOR:** Protection of the forest and the possibility of managing the territories is the main concern for those living there, as the forest is an important part of their culture. If the causes of deforestation are not addressed, the policies that aim to reduce it will have limited effect.

The local communities are the most capable of identify their own problems and the potential solutions. External interventions should, as far as possible, support the activities already initiated by the communities, and try to build a horizontal dialogue. There are many actors in the program in Ecuador, and even if they all live in the forest, they relate to it differently. Policies related to REDD +and Socio Bosque, should take the differences into account and not create systems that can lead to inequality.

The process of establishing a National REDD+ program in Ecuador has taken a much longer than initially expected. As this depends on both political will at the national level, international funding and the confluence between the international funders' and the national authorities' priorities, it is difficult to measure progress on outcome indicator level in such a short time frame as 3 years. The program has focused on capacity building of indigenous peoples and civil society organizations as a way of preparing for REDD+ but also compensating for the absence of other processes.

Our program partner in Ecuador has participated as a civil society representative in the National REDD+ Working Group, and evaluates this as important; however they note that there is uncertainty on whether the recommendations that civil society has made on collective rights and other issues will be included when the Ecuadorean REDD+ program is implemented.

Work on the program issues has been gradually developed, creating first a basis of trust with the indigenous peoples involved, then gradually building knowledge. The use of workshops and meetings has not only brought training on specific topics, but also created spaces for opening discussions and experience sharing on methodologies, traditional knowledge, lessons learnt, and finally improvements in life plans and benefit-sharing models. These are long-term processes which if continued would produce more results and strengthen the indigenous peoples as protectors of the forest.

**INDONESIA:** The key decision makers targeted in the program on a national level have all been replaced, forcing RFN's partners to find new allies and room for maneuver. Political will and top-level commitment to REDD+ is lacking. In such a situation, RFN and partners continue to push for the core themes of this program, albeit with slightly different approach. The lesson learned is that advocacy programs are particularly vulnerable to external change and need to be designed to allow for continuous adjustments, both in terms of strategy and expected outputs. In light of power shifts followed by new bureaucratic structures and new individuals in key positions, there is always risk of losing allies. A lesson learned is the importance of not becoming too dependent on a selected few, but dialoguing with several actors which can help move the agenda forward.

**DRC:** A strong civil society does not emerge by itself. It requires strategic and targeted efforts to build a platform and facilitate a broad and participatory involvement of civil society. This is especially the case in a country like the DRC where the government tends to make decisions without actively involving and facilitating for civil society's inputs from the ground. The restructuring process of GTCR was time-consuming and required extensive consultations on the provincial level, which in turn contributed to capacity building, highlighted the priorities in the provinces when working against deforestation, and built consensus for a strengthened civil society engagement in REDD+ processes.

**GLOBAL POLICY:** A key lesson learned is that battles won in one arena are not necessarily transferred to and taken for granted by other relevant institutions. An illustrative example is the UNFCCC established Cancun safeguards. Although other REDD+ institutions refer to UNFCCC, our work showed that institutions like the World Bank's FCPF and the Green Climate Fund did not automatically adopt the Cancun safeguards as their basic standard. Defending hard-fought victories has been more time-consuming than expected, although this work has been fairly successful. There has also been little political space to gain further details and achievements on the implementation of safeguards.

We see that where it is possible to get results, even if we wanted better results, it is when we work together with partners in REDD+ countries and use the international REDD+ framework in the national context. One example is the GTCR working with the DRC ER-PIN and the readiness package in FCPF. Another example is the FIP work in Peru (please see section 2.4 for more elaboration on this topic). Another lesson learned is that national context in some areas is so important that it is more challenging than expected to develop meaningful international guidance. This is particularly the case for benefit sharing, as described elsewhere in the report. In addition, we see that the baselines in the program document could have been more concrete, in order to monitor changes and results more clearly.

**3 Success story:** Examples from Indonesia, Ecuador and DRC were submitted in Mars.

**4 Project's accounts for the last year:** Attached.

*Lars Lovold*

June 1, 2016  
Date Signature

Attachments: 2