

South Sudan REDD+ Country Needs Assessment



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Executive Summary

The Country Needs Assessment (CNA) for South Sudan for REDD+ is a key part of the country's REDD+ process and represents a critical gap analysis for informing Government and other stakeholders and guiding decision-making as South Sudan moves forward with REDD+.

The CNA was conducted during the period of November 2015 through May 2016 and represents the assessment of the financial, technical and institutional needs at the time of writing.

The assessment was conducted using key informant interviews, focus group discussions, stakeholder consultation during workshops, and a comprehensive literature review. Taking into consideration the unique circumstances that the Republic of South Sudan represents, the assessment questions loosely followed the UN-REDD Country Needs Assessment framework as presented by Kojwang and Ulloa (2012) but was not bound by it. The assessment results are presented in the form of a priority needs matrix for each of the focal areas: institutional, technical, and financial needs. Broadly, the results demonstrate that, although South Sudan has made some progress in the design of institutions, legislative and policy instruments, and capacity building, there are still some important areas which need to be addressed in order for South Sudan to move forward with the REDD+ process. These include the passing of legislative instruments such as the Forest Policy and Forest Bill, and the Environment Policy and Bill. These also include significant investment in both human resources and technical capacity in order to design, and operate a national forest monitoring system, including an MRV system, as envisaged in REDD+ national programmes. Finally, the financial capacity to implement these measures is also largely absent, representing a key area where support is needed.

In light of these key challenges identified by the assessment, attention should be made to the priority needs matrix within the report, which can be used to guide the Government of South Sudan in moving forward with the REDD+ process. It is further strongly recommended that the Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan use the CNA as the basis for establishing a strategy of how to achieve the four pillars of REDD+ Readiness including where to source financial assistance, technical support and capacity building, and achieving the alignment of governance mechanisms for REDD+.

Acronyms

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forests, and Other Land Uses
BRACED	Building Resilience Against Climate Extremes and Disasters
CAMP	Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan
CES	Central Equatoria State
CNA	Country Needs Assessment
COP	Conference of Parties (to the UNFCCC)
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DNA	Designated National Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
FRA	Forest Resource Assessment
FREL	Forest Reference Emission Level (used synonymously in this report with REL)
GFW	Global Forest Watch
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GOS	Government of Sudan
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INDC	Intended Nationally-determined Contribution
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LEDS	Low Emissions Development Strategy
LGAF	Land Governance Assessment Framework
MAFCRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Cooperatives, and Rural Development
MoEnv	Ministry of Environment
MRV	Measuring, Reporting, and Verification
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Actions
NBEG	Northern Bahr El Ghazal
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
ODI	Overseas Development Institute

REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation, and degradation, plus conservation of forest carbon stocks, enhancement of forest carbon stocks, and sustainable forest management
REL	Reference Emission Level (used synonymously in this report with FREL)
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
RVI	The Rift Valley Institute
SI	The Sudd Institute
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSLS	South Sudan Law Society
SSMD	South Sudan Meteorological Department
SSWS	South Sudan Wildlife Service
TGONU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UKAID	United Kingdom Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	The United Nations REDD+ Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	The World Bank
WES	Western Equatoria State
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WRI	World Resources Institute

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Part 1: South Sudan in Context



Introduction

Global Climate Change

Climate Change is undeniably the most pressing suite of challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. The impacts of climate change will be felt most severely in the developing world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where resilience to climate shocks is comparatively low (MEA, 2005). It is also likely that climate change will exacerbate existing tensions around natural resources and the management of water, agricultural land and forest (Burke et al., 2009). Emissions from land use change are a significant source of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an independent advisory body that reviews all scientific developments related to climate change and which advises the UNFCCC, encourages countries to use synergistic approaches to combatting climate change, emphasizing the need for strategies that include both adaptation to climate change as well as mitigation of climate change. In its fifth assessment report, the IPCC estimates that 24% of GHG emissions come from the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector, demonstrating the difficult conundrum that faces developing countries, eager to develop natural resources such as agricultural land whilst also honoring international commitments to mitigating climate change (IPCC, 2014). Chief among these sources of GHG emissions are the emissions from the conversion of forests to non-forested landscapes such as through the clearance of forests for agricultural lands.

Forests as Mitigation Assets

Forests play a key role in mitigating climate change, both as an avoidable source of GHG emissions, and as a sink to sequester carbon dioxide. Throughout the course of history, developing societies have leveraged forests extensively, creating more agricultural land, and creating economic mainstays for many countries. However, in light of global climate change, development realities are shifting to see forests for their important climate change mitigation services. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation, forest degradation and the role of conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) is an international mechanism to mitigate global climate change from the conversion of forests to other land uses. The impacts of climate change and the subsequent response from national authorities is arguably nowhere more starkly than in the choices for the development trajectory of the world's newest state, South Sudan.

South Sudan

Geographic Context

Located in the transitional zone between the arid, Sahelian belt and eastern Africa's highlands, South Sudan has a diverse landscape. Its total area of 619,745 km² has a population of approximately 12,340,000 (2015 estimates) (RSS, 2015). Between 87% and 95% of the population are dependent on land-based activities such as agriculture and pastoralism for their direct livelihoods (Warner et al., 2015; RSS, 2015). South Sudan is imbued with significant natural resources. These include water resources such as the Nile and other rivers, extensive oil reserves and large areas of forest.

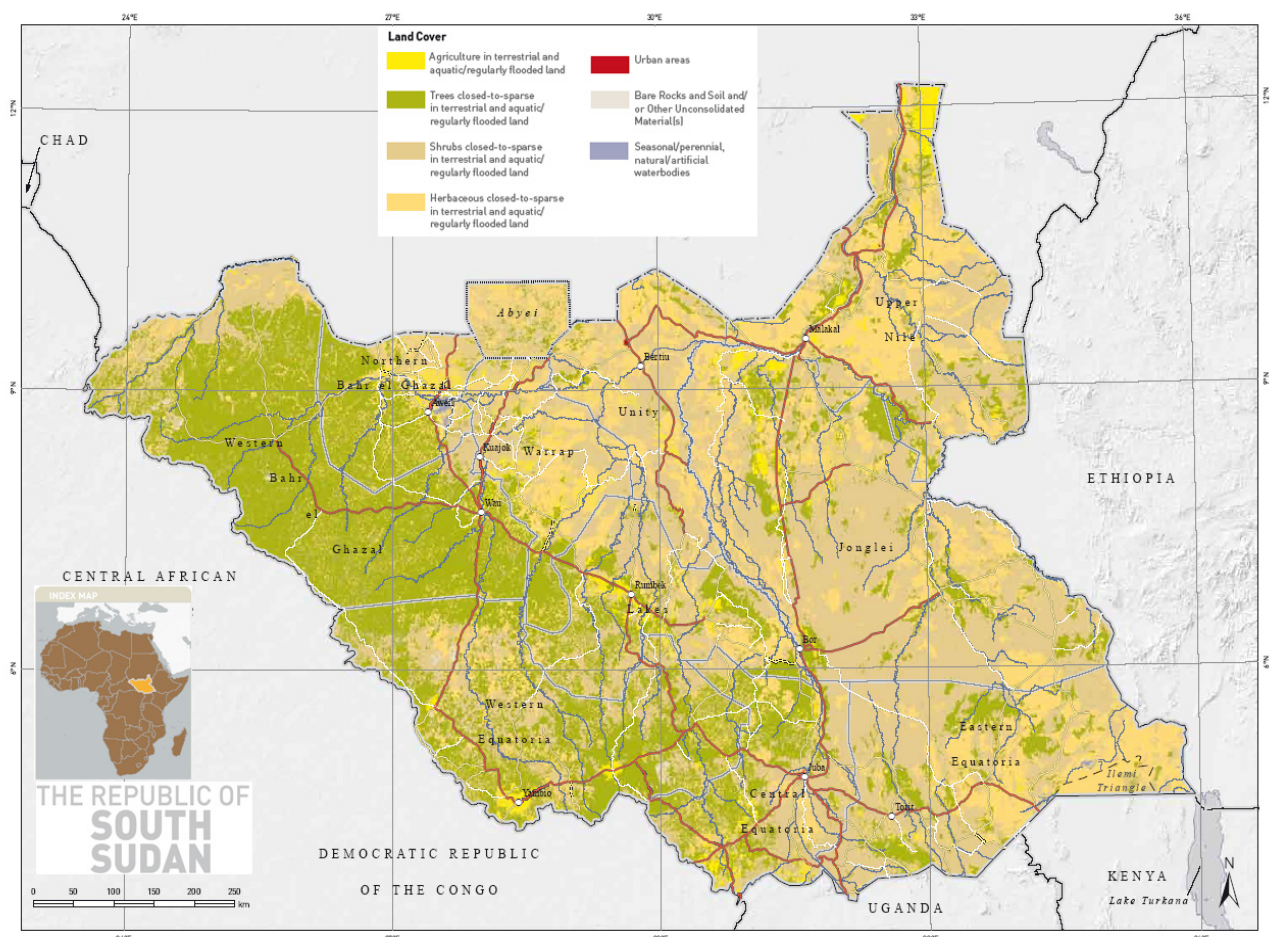


Figure 1: South Sudan by State and Land cover from the Global Land Cover Network (FAO, 2013).

South Sudan Forest Context

A large part of South Sudan's forest estate falls within the "green belt" and the Ironstone Plateau (Figure 2) in the southern areas of the country often referred to as the 'Equatorias'. However, forests are known to occur throughout South Sudan. Ecologically, forests in South

Sudan fall in the category of *mixed deciduous fire-swept forest* as described by Smith (1949), which form a belt across the southern portion of the country and are further divided into zones dependent on rainfall and soil types. Although some remnant of the Congo- basin forest (dominated by *Etandrophragma sp.*) exists in WES as one moves eastwards, the forest of the Equatorias are dominated by *Isoberlina doka* and associated species. These forests represent the confluence of the more moist Congolese forests and the drier Doka woodland belt that stretches from West Africa through the Central and Western Equatoria states and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, along the Sahelian border (Kingdon, 1989; Smith, 1949).

The forests of the Equatorias are an important buffer against the advance of the more arid Sahelian landscape further to the north (UNEP, 2007). These forests experience a bi-modal precipitation pattern with between 800mm to 1500mm falling annually from April through July, and again in October and November, increasing in volume as one moves westwards (UNEP, 2007).

South Sudan's forest estate is substantial, covering an estimated 29-30% of the land area of South Sudan (UNEP, 2007; FAO, 2015). The 2015 Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) found that 7,157,000 hectares of land qualified as forest, while a further, 32,582,000 hectares of land were wooded to varying degrees, representing 11.3% and 51.6% of the total land area respectively (FAO, 2015). Depending on which forest definition is used, more recent estimates based on remote-sensing indicate this coverage could be as much as 60% or more of South Sudan's land area using the national definition of 10% canopy, 0.5 ha and 5m height potential (WRI, 2016; FAO, 2015). The Global Forest Watch (GFW), a project of the World Resource Institute (WRI) and the University of Maryland, analyzed remote sensing data over the period of 2000-2014 and through this process estimated that southern Sudan's tree cover was roughly 43 million hectares as of the year 2000, using a 10% tree cover threshold as detailed in South Sudan's forest definition (FAO, 2015). This analysis also revealed that by the end of 2014, South Sudan had lost approximately 186, 459 hectares of tree cover¹. Using either estimate of tree cover, it is safe to say that a significant portion of the country is covered in by forests, woodlands, and tree resources and that the threat to forested lands is increasing.

South Sudan's forests can be divided into two major categories: Plantation Forests and Natural Forests.

¹ It is important to note that the GFW tracks tree cover change, not necessarily forest loss, and is therefore not sensitive to land designations such as planned plantation rotations. South Sudan currently does not have a national forest definition ratified in legal instruments thus making the differentiation of 'tree cover loss' and 'deforestation' difficult to ascertain.

Indigenous Forests

The indigenous forests of the South Sudan are characterized by a mixture of Congolese forest species (*Albizzia sp.* and *Entandrophragma sp.*) and fire climax species such as *Afzelia sp.*, *Angoecissus sp.*, *Balanites aegyptica*, *Brachystegia sp.*, *Combretum sp.*, *Dalbergia melanoxylon*, *Erythrina sp.*, *Isobertina doka*, *Khaya senegalensis*, *Pterocarpus sp.*, *Sclerocarya birrea*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Uapaca sp.*, *Vitellaria paradoxa*, and *Valchellia sp.* (formerly *Acacia*). These forests have a high level of biodiversity and generate important ecosystem goods and services including provisioning services, carbon sequestration, hydrological cycling, soil stabilization and socio-cultural services. These natural forests form the vast majority of South Sudan's forest estate. These forests are located mainly on the "Green belt" and Ironstone plateau of CES and WES but also extend significantly into NBEG (Figures 1 and 2).

In addition to the forests west of the Nile, Eastern Equatoria has a significant forested area. Of primary importance is the forest in the Imatong Mountains. As a gazetted forest reserve of 30,250 hectares, the forest block is relatively large and represents the only example of Afrotropical forest system in South Sudan (Friis & Vollesen, 2005; WCS, 2009). These forests are a mixture of both natural and plantation blocks. The plantation forests have the potential to play a significant role in the economic development of the area and of the wider South Sudan if managed properly. Perhaps more importantly, the Imatong forests are remarkable for both their high levels of endemism and the relatively intact status of the natural forest itself (Friis & Vollesen, 2005; Gorsevski et al., 2012; WCS, 2009). Although this assessment did not include a visit to the forests of the Imatong mountains, their importance as a biodiversity hotspot has been highlighted as a conservation priority elsewhere (Friis & Vollesen, 2005; Gorsevski et al., 2012). The subsequent need for forest protection in the area should be highlighted as an important step in conserving the ecosystem goods and services of the area (WCS, 2009; Gorsevski et al., 2012) under any REDD+ programme.

Industrial Plantations

In stark contrast to the high diversity of the natural forests, the plantation forests are dominated by a single non-indigenous species of teak (*Tectona grandis*), which was first introduced by the Condominium administration as early as 1919 (Gafaar, 2011). Although other plantation species were also introduced such as *Cedrela toona*, *Cassia siamea* and *Eucalyptus sp.*, the major economic focus, both then and now, has been on commercial teak production. Currently, the spatial extent of concessionary teak forests in South Sudan is debatable. Deng (2014) found that respondents to his survey indicated that 'official papers' state that there are 30,250 hectares (302.5 km²) of plantation teak. However, Gafaar (2011) argued that remote sensing efforts thus far had only shown 7,460 ha (74.6 km²) of forest. During field interviews with key informants, the existence of such maps delineating forest

gazettement boundaries or spatial extent was also difficult to verify. Deng in 2014 encountered the same challenge, demonstrating a possible dearth of this information. However, UNEP and partners embarked on a resource mapping exercise in 2013; its outcome should help to shed light on the current situation. With preliminary results from Lainya and Torit counties demonstrating community perceptions of forest boundaries, this exercise could provide important information to support policy decisions (UNEP, 2014).

Ecosystem Goods and Services

The forests of South Sudan provide myriad ecosystem goods and services. Because of the high reliance of the population on rain-fed agriculture, pastoralism and similar livelihoods, hydrological cycling, influenced by forest cover, is of significance. Additionally, South Sudan's forests contribute significantly to the stability of the flow of the Nile River, with the Bahr el Ghazal, Sobat, Bahr al Arab and many other rivers joining the White Nile within South Sudan's geographical borders.

South Sudan's population also depends on many other forest goods and services, including fuelwood, and for non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as honey and "lulu oil" also known as Shea butter from *V. paradoxa*.

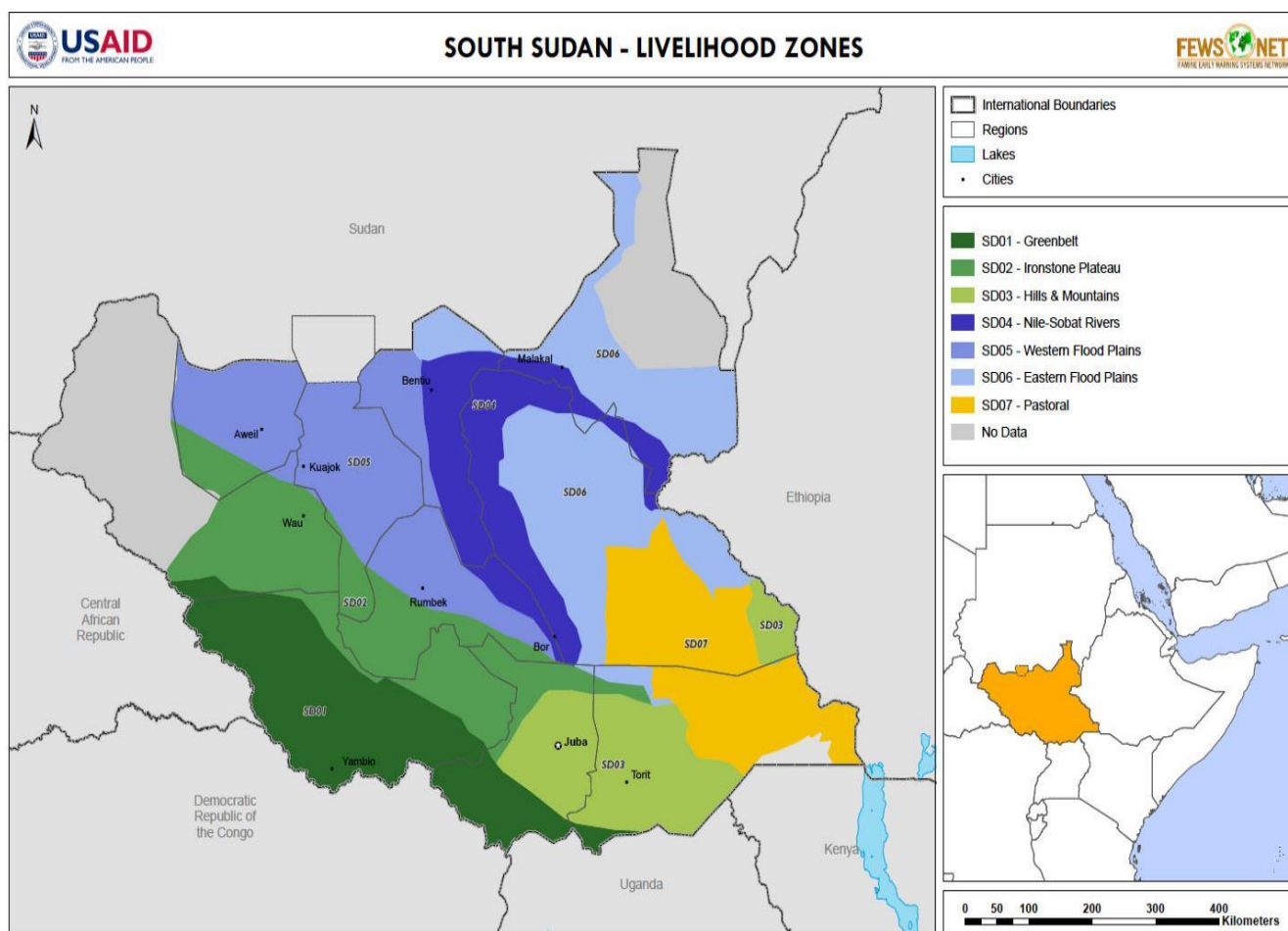


Figure 2: Livelihoods Map of South Sudan (Warner et al, 2015).

Political Context

The nation of South Sudan was born out of conflict. This conflict has taken many forms and was significantly influenced by control over natural resources. During the conflict with Sudan, both the SPLA and the Government of Sudan (GOS) used natural resources such as hardwoods to fund their respective campaigns (Adkins, 2015). Much of the conflict also focused directly on the control of the lucrative oilfields along the border of what is now, two nations.

In the aftermath of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, nascent legislation to manage natural resources has been slow to be formulated and implemented and ambiguity over control of natural resources continues to be a flashpoint for conflict (Schomerus & Allen, 2010).

Having successfully navigated a referendum on independence from Sudan in 2011, the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) embarked on the difficult task of developing a new state, including establishing management over diverse resources. With a system of vertical federalism in place, questions of resource control play a prominent role in the

establishment of institutions. This includes addressing issues of peace building among varied ethnic groups, institutional strengthening, and the development of infrastructure.

In the first four years of its existence, South Sudan has faced severe pressures associated with institutional failures, governance and corruption, and internecine conflict. Much of the conflict has been linked to control over natural resources, including, but not limited to oil resources, grazing, livestock and control of forest lands (Mbaku & Smith, 2011; Adkins, 2015).

The reliance on revenues generated from natural resources is no more evident than in the dependence of South Sudan's government on oil revenues, which accounted for 98% of South Sudan's government revenues (RSS, 2015). With the closure of the oil exports to Sudan in 2012, South Sudan's government expenditure plummeted, and at least in part, leading to a return to conflict in December of 2013. Although oil flows have since been restored, revenue generated from oil only comprises a small fraction of governments expenditure needs, especially in light of low international prices. Alternative sources of government income were, and continue to be almost non-existent.

The political upheaval that resulted from the return to conflict has culminated in a fragile peace agreement and the decision to adopt a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU) which will then govern the country for a period leading up to national elections, planned for 2019. The impacts of this solution are yet to be realized, although the management of natural resources in this context is anticipated to be challenging.

Socio-Economic Context

Socio-economically South Sudan is heavily dependent on land-based livelihoods including agriculture and pastoralism. Figure 2 demonstrates the livelihood zones of South Sudan. It is estimated that greater than 90% of the population depends on fuelwood (rural) and charcoal (urban) for their energy supplies (Adkins, 2015). The primary mode of food production is rain-fed agriculture and field preparation is conducted through swidden agricultural practices (aka "slash and burn"). Annual burning is also a key feature in South Sudan's landscapes, with the cultural belief that increased burning leads to increased quality in pasture. Additionally, cultural practices such as beekeeping, and wild food production offer important supplementary nutritional value from landscapes and infer significant value to forests and woodland (Arensen, 2015).

In rural areas, which dominate South Sudan, land is generally held under a community-based governance system regulating usage. Many South Sudanese do not participate in the formal economy, with an estimated 85% of the working population engaged in non-wage

work, chiefly in agriculture (78%) (World Bank, 2016). It is estimated that per capita GDP was roughly, \$1111 in 2014. However, this indicator belies the large disparities between rural/urban ways of life and the vast wealth gap. It is estimated that 58.5% of South Sudanese fall below the poverty line (World Bank, 2016) but anecdotal evidence suggests this is likely even higher.

Gender Context

Uniquely, South Sudan's population is approximately 52% male, and 48% female (CARE, n.d.). Gender roles in South Sudan can be best described as very "traditional". The prevailing socio-cultural conditions in South Sudan, especially in rural areas, marginalize women from active participation in any level of political activity or decision-making, reserving these roles for men (CARE, n.d.). This includes decision-making in the governance of natural resources. Women are generally restricted to fulfilling the roles of planting, child-rearing, cooking and collection of woodfuel. However these roles are changing and both the Transitional Constitution and the Bill of Rights, recognize the prominent role that women are playing in the creation of the new country. The constitution now mandates that a 25% women's representation threshold is observed in executive and legislative bodies and the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare has conducted a baseline survey in 2013 on the state and roles of women (and other groups such as children, and disabled persons) in the country. The Ministry's mandate is to "to promote gender equality, social justice, and safeguard the rights and welfare of women, children, persons with disability and other vulnerable groups" (MGCSW, 2016). Although these institutional reforms are an important foundation for gender representation in decision-making, the more traditional disaggregation of gender roles, particularly in relation to affairs of land, forests, pasture, and even education, inform the prevailing reality for most of South Sudan's citizens. In terms of REDD+, this is an important consideration, especially in light of the need for inclusiveness in decision-making around forest resources, as envisioned in the Cancun Safeguards.

South Sudan's Response to Climate Change

Climate change and the projected scarcities availability will undoubtedly have an impact on the country's development trajectory, especially in regard to management of natural resources (Warner et al., 2015; Renner, 2002). If governed properly, natural resources can serve the country well in securing a positive development trajectory. Conversely, pressures associated with climate change and the management of natural resources may also lead to severe problems, exacerbating existing tensions and fueling outright conflict. In light of climate change, the role of that natural resources have and will play in the development of South Sudan is a critical one.

Although the dominant narrative around natural resources and their management in South Sudan has been almost singularly focused on oil, forests and forest resources, are key assets. As part of South Sudan's response to climate change pressures and the need to secure diversified sources of revenue, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) embarked upon a path to investigate possible solutions and climate change mitigation strategies, including REDD+.

As a signal of South Sudan's desire to address climate change, the RSS ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the 17th of February 2014. The convention came into force that following May 18th, 2014. As a non-Annex 1 country, this has committed South Sudan to aspiring to a low emissions development strategy (LEDS), but also gives South Sudan the opportunity to access funding from both bilateral and multilateral initiatives aimed at addressing both adaptation to and mitigation of, climate change.

In light of the ratification of the UNFCCC, and in the lead up to the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC meeting in Paris in December of 2015, South Sudan published it's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), outlining the voluntary approaches that South Sudan intends to take to realizing the LEDS. The INDC explicitly highlights the role that forests will play in realizing the development trajectory in South Sudan. This is especially true in terms of forest conservation goals (Article 16), conservation of forest ecosystem services (Article 27), and agro-forestry and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. (Articles 30-31) as key priorities for the country.

REDD+ in South Sudan

Perhaps it is important to ask the question as to *why is South Sudan interested in REDD+?*

South Sudan's reliance on the land-based sectors for both food security, and for generating foreign exchange, relies heavily on the ability to leverage natural resources, namely oil resources, water and watershed, forests and agricultural production. Not only does this create a close relationship with the health of the land, this also forms a monetary dependence on the same resources. With the complexities of climate change becoming an ever-more present reality in South Sudan the ability to leverage a more diversified income stream is appealing to South Sudan. With oil revenues plummeting, impacted by both global markets and civil unrest, South Sudan is looking intensely at alternative forms of revenue generation, including forestry, and large-scale agriculture. REDD+ presents an opportunity for South Sudan to build on a low emissions development trajectory, potentially leveraging international payments and financing for avoiding emissions and sustainably managing forest resources, especially in the form of forest conservation. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), a World Bank fund for financing forest market mechanisms frames this argument in the following manner:

In addition to mitigating climate change, stopping deforestation and forest degradation, and supporting sustainable forest management, [REDD+] conserves water resources and prevents flooding, reduces run-off, controls soil erosion, reduces river siltation, protects fisheries and investments in hydropower facilities, preserves biodiversity and preserves cultures and traditions. With all that at stake it is clear what has to happen. With all the services that forests provide both to humanity and the natural world, there is now widespread understanding of a simple yet profound fact – that forests are more important left standing, than cut (FCPF, n.d)

Currently, South Sudan is well endowed with an expansive forest estate, that are relatively untouched. While the size of the forest estate is debatable, depending on various forest cover data sets, it is considered a significant global GHG sink, and an extremely important watershed system ultimately supplying the Nile with a significant proportion of its flow. However, the socio-economic, and political pressure facing South Sudan as a nation in general presents a challenging environment in which to argue forest conservation and climate change mitigation as a priority developmental objective. REDD+ presents an opportunity to enhance that argument, embracing a low-emissions development trajectory for the economy, coupled with a potential resource flow that supports sustainable management.

South Sudan's interest in REDD+ began soon after the 2011 referendum and the birth of the new nation. Recognizing the significant role that forest resources play in South Sudan's informal economy and livelihoods, the Republic of South Sudan engaged the UN-REDD Programme and has been a partner country since 2011.

Parallel to these efforts, several international non-governmental organizations and private sector entities have investigated the potential of REDD+ in South Sudan from a project-based approach for financing conservation efforts. This has included survey work conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in the Imatong Mountains (2009). Through the course of this survey work, the high biodiversity and highly threatened habitat was identified as an area that any future REDD+ national programme should consider for a potential pilot area. The findings of the WCS survey also suggested the creation of a more formal level of protection as a national park (WCS, 2009; Gorsevski et al., 2011).

In 2013, UN-REDD supported the RSS through a targeted support project administered by UNDP, to undertake stakeholder mapping for REDD+, which was completed in 2015.

In 2014, the national Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Cooperatives and Rural Development (MAFCRD) submitted a letter of request to UN-REDD Programme seeking assistance in an assessment of South Sudan's needs to move forward with REDD+ readiness activities. The request highlighted four broad areas that South Sudan would benefit from through conducting the CNA, namely:

- Assess South Sudan's challenges and opportunities to engage in, and complete REDD+ readiness, tailored to national circumstances;
- Assist South Sudan in identifying potential funding opportunities, including through the UN REDD Programme;
- Create a prioritized needs framework for South Sudan's REDD+ process and
- Assess opportunities to connect South Sudan to wider international knowledge networks, particularly in countries with REDD+ readiness and implementation experience.

In addition to these developments, there are a number of parallel efforts already in development in the country, which will likely play an important role in REDD+ moving forward. These include the development of the National Adaptation Program of Actions

(NAPA) developed by the RSS in collaboration with UNEP. The objective of the NAPA document is to establish priority activities that will address the negative impacts of climate change expected in South Sudan (NAPA, 2015). While this is not a REDD+ focused initiative, being primarily adaptation focused, it is complementary and depending on what policies and measures (activities) are eventually selected by South Sudan in a national REDD+ strategy, some activities may serve overlapping objectives. There are also discussions underway as to how FAO could possibly support the development of national forest monitoring capacities in the country. Although stalled by the return to conflict, FAO is in the process of re-vitalizing these efforts and intend to discuss with the RSS and other stakeholders modalities of support, possibly including guidance on the development of a MRV system (FAO, 2016).

In addition to addressing the needs identified in the CNA request letter, the CNA is also meant to augment parallel efforts such as those of NGOs, UNDP and FAO, and assist the RSS in charting a way forward for REDD+ in South Sudan by assessing technical capacities, financial resources and legal and policy elements for supporting REDD+

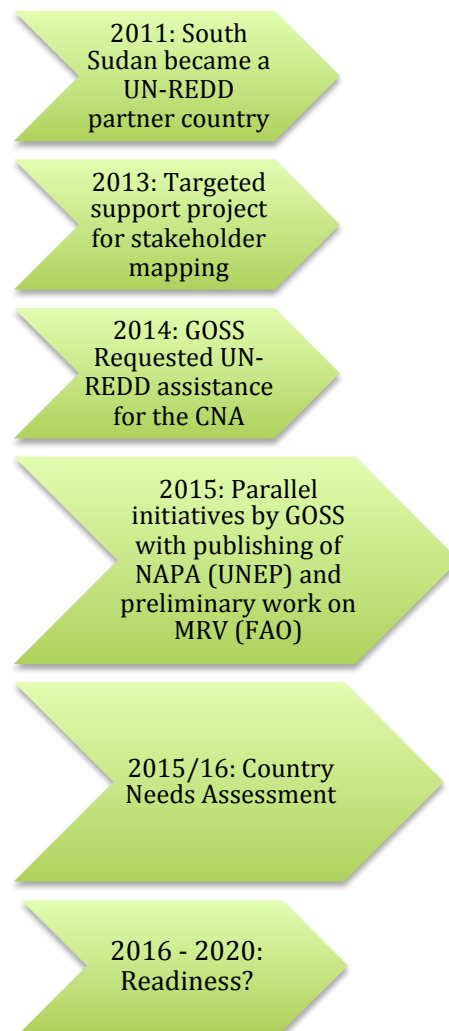


Figure 3: Timeline of UN-REDD involvement in South Sudan²

² Note that this does not infer that other REDD+ initiatives, studies of potential nor investigation of potential projects have not occurred, only that UN-REDD may not have been involved in those efforts. An example is the WCS investigation of REDD+ in the Imatong Mountains in 2009.

Part 2: The Assessment



Introduction

The assessment below broadly utilizes the main methodological emphasis of the UN-REDD/FCPF-endorsed Country Needs Assessment Framework, as developed by Kojwang and Ulloa (2012). This assessment sought to understand South Sudan's potential to move to REDD+ Readiness through the lens of technical, institutional, and financial indicators, based on examining many, but not all of the areas listed in the UN-REDD/FCPF Framework. This is mainly due to the fact that many of the detailed areas of assessment listed below are not yet applicable to the South Sudan contextual realities.

Generally, the assessment followed the broad areas of REDD+ Readiness as described below by Kojwang and Ulloa (2012) through the lens of **Institutional** (including legal), **Technical**, and **Financial** needs. Each of these areas of the assessment is presented as a separate section in **Part 2** of this report. The table below shows the UN-REDD/FCPF assessment tool and how it was mapped onto the South Sudan CNA exercise, including which areas were actually examined.

Table 1: Comparison of UN-REDD/FCPF Assessment framework and South Sudan CNA

Kojwang and Ulloa (2012)	South Sudan CNA	Areas examined
National REDD+ Governance	Institutional Arrangements and Legislative Assessment	Examined current institutional arrangements. Examined the status of legislative tools (policies, bills, regulatory instruments etc.) Examined the INDC and the aspirations of RSS on climate action.
REDD+ strategy or action plan Social and environmental safeguards	Institutional Arrangements and Legislative Assessment	Looked at the ability to capitalize on existing structures within the RSS and supporting civil society institutions for accountability to Cancun Safeguards. Examined the role of gender and particularly the presence of women in decision-making around forests use and resources.
Setting forest reference emission level and/or forest reference levels.	Technical Capacity/Financial Needs	Examined prior donor technical inputs Examined current technical status within RSS and other relevant institutions. Compared this with relevant

		technical needs as articulated in UNFCCC decisions such as the Warsaw Framework and emerging best practices elsewhere in the region.
Transition to a development framework with REDD+ (green economy)	Financial Needs Assessment	Examined the INDC and the aspirations of RSS on climate action. Examined donor priorities amongst bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes. Interviewed private sector entities and examined programming objectives of several NGOs.

Summary of Interviews

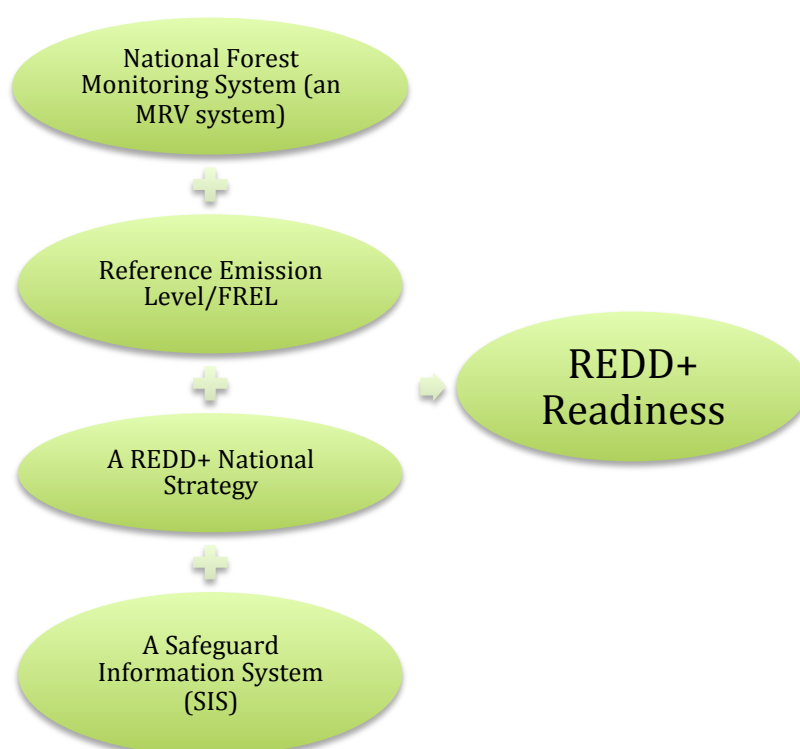
A list of the interviews conducted is included in Appendix 1.

Institutional Arrangements Review and Assessment

Background

A key factor of the success of emerging REDD+ initiatives is the status of the enabling environment in the institutional and legislative arrangements. It is helpful to review the elements of REDD+ Readiness at this juncture to understand what the assessment is essentially looking for. Kojwang and Ulloa (2012) designed a framework for assessment to be used to gauge the progress of the REDD+ process across many different country contexts. Many of the areas that they have assessed are used in this assessment. However, the early nature of REDD+ combined with the contextual reality of South Sudan, means that much of the framework was not applicable yet. Although the major emphases of this assessment align with Kojwang and Ulloa's 2012 framework, this assessment is primarily looking more generally at the institutional, financial and technical capacity of the country, in order to ascertain what is needed to advance South Sudan's REDD+ to the Readiness. This includes assessing what steps are needed to position the country on a path to achieve the following deliverables, as stipulated in Decision 1/CP.16 and aligning these steps with developments in REDD+ such as those in Warsaw Framework (COP 19):

Table 2: Elements of REDD+ Readiness



Obviously, no country is a blank slate, and contextual realities are perhaps the most important consideration in the REDD+ process as is captured in the reference to national

circumstances in many of the UNFCCC's documents. These contextual realities are influenced by, and in turn influence the design of the institutional and legislative context on which a REDD+ program and its associated components must be built. Legislative instruments and the institutional support networks form a critical part of the "enabling environment". The primary purpose of the assessment of the legal and institutional capacity review is to establish whether or not a robust foundation for REDD+ exists in South Sudan on which to build REDD+ Readiness. This foundation would need to be supported by both legislative instruments as well as a broad network of institutional stakeholders. By examining these we can better answer a critical question for integrating REDD+ into an existing context: *What contextual realities exist and how can REDD+ components be integrated onto this system in a way that adds value and is widely accepted?*

These enabling environments can serve to support REDD+ actions from both the ground-based activities and at the national policy level (Bernard et al., 2014) and may include *de facto* arrangements and *de jure* arrangements, as well as formal and informal institutions tasked with everything from accountability to enforcement.

Additionally, due to the pervasive challenges associated with climate change and the encompassing nature of REDD+, varied and robust networks of stakeholders, with differing interests, are inevitably a part of REDD+ initiatives. As demonstrated elsewhere in natural resource management questions, for example by Ostrom (1990) and Olsson et al., (2004), this can be an important strength as robust networks can serve to create sustainability in structures. Additionally, where clarity of legislative processes and frameworks creates an environment of legal preparedness, and a functional foundation on which to scale REDD+ activities to national levels.

Background for Institutional Arrangements

The first aspect assessed were the institutions themselves. These included institutions at central government, civil-society, international NGOs, and donors. The assessment was conducted using the main emphases common to Kojwang and Ulloa's (2012) assessment tool. Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with key informants, and sought to answer the following broad logical progression:

Table 3: Logic flow for Key Informant Interviews



Background for Legal Instruments

The second aspect that was assessed was the current legislative landscape (policies, acts of parliament and subsidiary regulation), and whether or not they provided any suitable opportunities for REDD+ to be integrated into the regulatory environment that they create. This was conducted similarly, through key informant interviews, but also through a literature review of existing relevant legislation, including policy, legal and regulatory instruments.

The Assessment of Institutional Arrangements

Because REDD+ focuses on influencing land use decisions, the assessment of institutions focused primarily on institutions that inform, relate to, govern, advise and otherwise interact with land, and the natural resources associated with it.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Rural Development (MAFCRD)

The MAFCRD represents an essential institution in integrating REDD+ activities into South Sudan's development trajectory. As the REDD+ Focal Point in the country, the Undersecretary, Hon. Jaden Emilio, is the force behind the existing momentum for REDD+ in the country. The Ministry's mandate is to promote not only agriculture but to integrate extension services throughout the country and, as the name implies, support rural development systems. This broad, and somewhat collective mandate, could be seen as a potential opportunity to integrate principles associated with REDD+, such as avoiding deforestation through land use policies that promote agricultural efficiencies and intensification. However, similar to many other RSS institutions, the MAFCRD needs capacity support, both technical and financial, and investment in both physical infrastructure and staff capacity building.

Importantly, the fact that the Directorate of Forestry, based in Juba, has been domiciled in the national Ministry since its inception, means that much of the tacit and institutional knowledge needed for integrating climate change mitigation measures into programming and policy formulation already exists therein, and should be supported aggressively, including through the harmonization of emerging forestry and environmental legislation into the policy tools such as that Comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan (CAMP) discussed below and the draft Forests Policy. Since May of 2016, the Directorate of Forestry has been in transition to the newly styled Ministry of Environment and Forests under the transitional government. However, its personnel including the Undersecretary have stayed the same for the time being.

The Natural Resource Management Group

The Natural Resource Management Group is an important cross-institutional group, which originally grew out of the sectoral working groups prior to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. The group originally prioritized research directions, and informally shaped policy decisions, which heavily influenced the original mandates of many of the ministries in the RSS. The NRMG was originally composed of an Executive Committee with the Undersecretaries of seven ministries and one commission: MAFCRD, the MoEnv, the Ministry of Interior and Wildlife Conservation, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Resources, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Dams, the

Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining, and the Land Commission³. The Technical Committee forms the other part of the NRMG, which examines technical aspects of decisions and guidance and is comprised of the Director Generals of each of the technical units within the ministries (i.e. the DG of Forestry, within the MAFCRD). In the post-CPA period, through to the most recent conflict, the NRMG was very active in coordinating land uses, especially large-scale concessions, attempting to mitigate conflicting land uses. However, their existence has never been formalized as an institution, and thus was not supported by budgetary allocations. USAID supported them for a period but with the renewed civil conflict, USAID's strategic emphasis shifted towards humanitarian and disaster relief. Despite the obvious importance of this institutional arrangement, currently they are inactive due to a lack of funding. With funding and a formalized mandate, the NRMG may present an important cross-institutional body in which to vest governmental REDD+ strategic activities such as policy reforms, and the development of a National REDD+ Strategy.

The Ministry of Environment (MoEnv)

The Ministry of Environment's core mandate in South Sudan is to raise the profile of environmental management and integration of environmental processes into the country's planning and development trajectory. It is the national focal point for South Sudan to the UNFCCC, and is also the national focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Currently the Directorate of Forestry is located in the MAFCRD. However, with the new political dispensation in the wake of the recent peace agreement, there is also an opportunity to further consolidate environmental conservation matters under a single ministry with the transfer of the RSS Directorate of Forestry, from MAFCRD to the newly envisioned Ministry of Environment and Forestry. This transition is currently in process (Thwol Onak, 2016) and will be fully institutionalized with the advent of the Transitional Government of National Unity and the new ministry will be renamed the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Emilio Togun, 2016; Bartel, 2016).

With the consolidation of climate change programming under the MoEnv, REDD+ institutional arrangements (e.g. a REDD+ secretariat) may potentially be domiciled within the MoEnv. Environmental matters in general have not been a key strategic focus of the emerging structures in South Sudan, with more powerful and influential ministries such as the Ministry of Petroleum, and the Ministry of the Interior taking precedence over environmental issues. However, the growing realization of the role

³ The names of many of these ministries have changed over time, and this does not represent a static list.

of environmental matters and how they impact the country's development trajectory is a key opportunity for the MoEnv as it gains momentum. The Ministry is currently arranged with six directorates, including a Climate Change and Carbon Trading directorate, and in the near term, the Directorate of Forestry will also be added. A key challenge the MoEnv face is that it is understaffed, and underfinanced. This has recently been addressed by the hiring of more than 100 new staff, but a significant capacity gap still exists and is being remedied through an internal capacity needs assessment across all directorates (Bartel, 2016).

The MoEnv has the difficult task of mainstreaming climate change themes into the operations of government. The Directorate of Climate Change was only recently operationalized due to a lack of financial resources (Bartel, 2016; Tiitmamer, 2015). Additionally, the Ministry of Environment has tabled several important pieces of legislation, which will be explored further below. These include the National Environmental Policy, and the National Environmental Bill, both of which explicitly acknowledge REDD+ as a primary mechanism of forest conservation and management for South Sudan.

The South Sudan Meteorological Department

The South Sudan Meteorological Department, which currently falls under the Ministry of Transport, Roads and Bridges, could potentially be an important strategic partner for the MoEnv in providing relevant climate data for a MRV system. However, the SSMD suffers from an extensive lack of capacity. For example, with 43 data reporting stations located across the country, only 3 (7%) are currently operating, due to their destruction during the civil conflict and general lack of capacity to operate them (Tiitmamer, 2015).

This lack of capacity is being addressed by moving the SSMD to the MoEnv. The two ministries are currently working to align the structures of the directorates. Additionally, in 2012, IGAD supplied the RSS with weather station equipment through its IGAD Climate Prediction and Adaptation Centre. Although these units are yet to be deployed they will be an important decision support tool and will aid in MRV activities. A significant level of physical infrastructure and capacity building will be needed for this.

The Ministry of Interior and Wildlife Conservation/Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism

The Ministry of Interior and Wildlife Conservation (2013-2016) is an interesting conglomeration of seemingly disparate mandates. For the period of its existences

(2013 – 2016) the Ministry effectively operated as two separate ministries. The Directorate of Wildlife manages wildlife issues and this mandate is implemented by the South Sudan (National) Wildlife Service (SSWS) as per the Wildlife Service Act (2011). The SSWS, which represents the key enforcement agency for natural resource management issues in the country, has been shifted between ministries repeatedly and this has effectively slowed implementation of its existing mandate, and further integration of emerging thematic areas such as climate change. Under the transitional government, this mandate now falls under the newly styled Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, which has yet to be fully operationalized⁴.

However, the protected areas network (Figure 4) represents a significant part of South Sudan's woodland estate and total land area and the SSWS's management of these means that they represent a key REDD+ stakeholder and a the protected areas network represents a platform for emissions reductions pilot activities.

⁴ Prior to the establishment of the transitional government the official name of the wildlife ministry was the "Ministry of Interior and Wildlife Conservation" (2013 to 2016). The name "Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism" was only used during the period 2008 to 2013. In 2014, there was an order to change the MIWC to "Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife Conservation" but this was never implemented. Now, under the transitional government it will be known as "Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism".

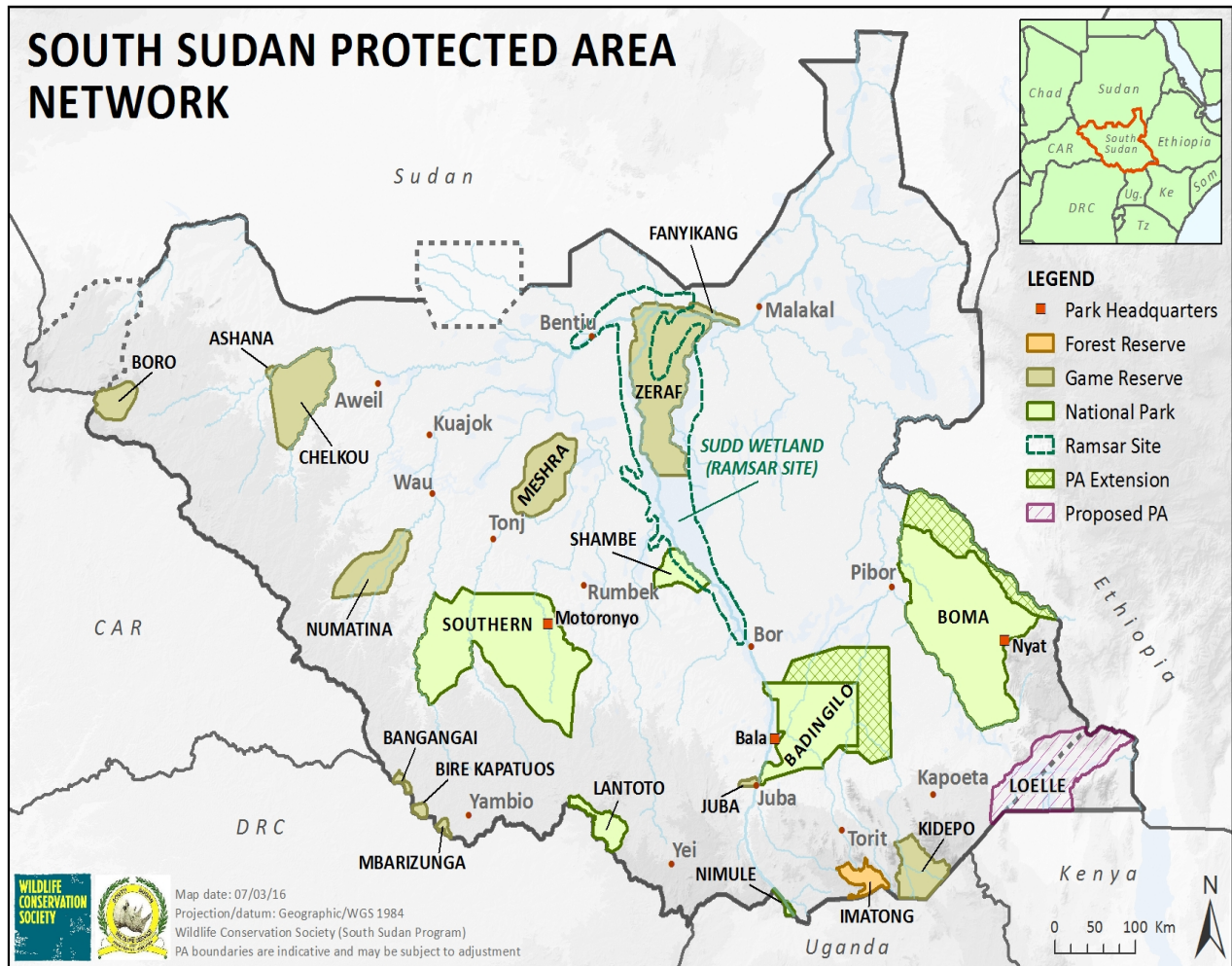


Figure 4: The protected areas network of South Sudan (WCS, 2016).

The Ministry of Petroleum and Mining

The Ministry of Petroleum and Mining is one of the most influential ministries within the RSS structure. As the ministry is in charge of South Sudan's primary natural resource based foreign exchange earning potential, the Ministry represents a key stakeholder in any effective land use policy or direction. The land use sector in South Sudan is ultimately influenced directly through the fossil fuel industry and the decisions at the Ministry level. Additionally, other extractive industries such as gold-mining and other land uses have similar impacts on land use decisions, and the associated emissions of those decisions. However, the Ministry does not contain a climate change unit, or even tacit acknowledgement of climate change impacts, neither in their establishing act, nor in their operational mandate. Therefore, the

Ministry of Petroleum and Mining represents a key stakeholder to bring on board if effective REDD+ activities are to be implemented and sustained.

The Ministry of Energy

The Ministry of Energy represents a key stakeholder in any emissions reduction programme. However, the Ministry of Energy currently doesn't have any mention of climate change in its guiding mandate nor are its impacts on resources, nor the potential impacts on energy availability in future scenarios catered for in its forecasts (Lo-liyong, 2016). This presents a significant challenge for aligning climate change considerations and in particular REDD+ activities, with probable energy intensification in the medium and long-term development of the country. Bringing the Ministry of Energy on board in any future planning for REDD+ will need to be a national priority.

South Sudan Law Society

The South Sudan Law Society is an independent civil-society organization that examines legal provisions and regulatory impacts. In their recent Land Governance Assessment Report (Deng, 2014), they evaluated the status of large-scale land-based initiatives throughout the country, pointing out areas where there is a need for clarity and transparency, and areas where legal gaps may exist. Institutions such as the SSLS may form a critical stakeholder for assisting in the design of aspects of REDD+ such as FPIC and providing a system for information on Safeguards.

The Sudd Institute

The Sudd Institute is a civil-society organization that provides targeted research and commentary on various issues in South Sudan, including environment, climate change and natural resource management. In addition to evaluating policies and providing insight to local de facto arrangements regarding resource governance at grass root level, the Sudd Institute is a part of a consortium of actors known as the BRACED Consortium (Building Resilience Against Climate Extremes and Disasters), focusing on climate change adaptation and mitigation in South Sudan, funded by UKAID. Similar to the SSLS, the Sudd Institute is an important stakeholder from civil society and may be a key organization in the design of safeguards and FPIC activities due to their extensive work on land rights, tenure, and civil society engagement and their apparent neutrality in contrast to formal government structures. This may include an advocacy role, particularly in relation to gender representation in decision-making.

Chiefs, Local Leaders and the Rift Valley Institute

The Rift Valley Institute (RVI) is currently conducting broad and comprehensive consultations with traditional authorities, mainly chiefs, across South Sudan. This important initiative will include questions regarding the state of the environment,

observed impacts of climate change and ultimately, resource governance. The RVI team will consolidate responses. The inclusion of chiefs and local traditional leadership structures involved the information and decision-making regarding climate change initiatives such as REDD+, presents an opportunity for harnessing inclusivity in the design of REDD+ structures in the country. This inclusion will be essential for real, measurable REDD+ measures and activities on the ground.

More broadly the Rift Valley Institute is also an important stakeholder in discussions about historical legal precedents, emerging local resource conflict issues and traditional resource governance. The RVI team consists of several experts in each of these areas and will be an important consultative partner in the design of activities.

The Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation has the mandate to support the administration and management of South Sudan's protected area network, in partnership with the SSWS. This includes much of the country's national park estate and includes law enforcement activities as well. This amounts to a sizeable landscape at 51,312 km². WCS additionally works outside of the formally protected areas in a landscape-based approach with operations and programming over a much larger area than the protected areas alone. Much of this landscape provides critical ecosystem services to the country and the broader region, including hydrological cycling and GHG sequestration. Specifically, areas such as Southern National Park and Lantoto National Park constitute large tracts of forest and woodland and are critical to the well being of millions of people.

The WCS presents a very strategic partner and their long-standing conservation experience in South Sudan presents an opportunity to provide a landscape for piloting REDD+ activities, a key aspect of REDD+ Readiness and Implementation, and activities, which have already been approved through their existing mandate with the SSWS.

Fauna and Flora International

Fauna and Flora International is a long-standing and highly respected community conservation organization. They have been operating in South Sudan for more than a decade and work directly with indigenous forest communities, mainly in Western Equatoria to protect forests and forest biodiversity. They have extensive experience in participatory community forest management, law enforcement and training and forest monitoring. Several prominent studies in East Africa demonstrate the efficacy of community forest management in REDD+ (Merger et al., 2012) and add significant relevance to FFI's approaches in this region. FFI's approach also implicitly addresses

many of the measures in the Cancun safeguards associated with REDD+ including but not limited to indigenous forest community participation in decision-making for forest management. The implicit recognition of the roles forests play in daily provisioning of forest communities is an inherent part of FFI's daily operations and represents a bottom-up approach. As such, with extensive connections and networks amongst forest users and user-groups, FFI represents an important group of stakeholders and will be a very relevant voice in REDD+ activities in South Sudan.

The BRACED Consortium

The BRACED Consortium is a DFID-funded project implemented by a consortium of Concern Worldwide, ACTED, FAO and the Sudd Institute. 'BRACED' stands for Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters and the consortium is implementing multiple streams of climate change adaptation projects that seek the "Improvement in the well-being of extremely poor and marginalized people in South Sudan ...that is sustained through shocks (especially drought and floods) and the predicted changes in climate" (Da Silva & Kaba, 2016). BRACED works directly with communities, focusing on improving farming techniques, access to climate smart agriculture training, microfinance, and natural resource management governance training among other programming streams. While FAO is a partner of the consortium, FAO provides data driven decision making inputs and training tools for BRACED activities. In particular, REDD+ could be integrated into the Natural Resource Management governance training for payam and local community members, helping to enforce mitigation measures, and reduce emissions from land conversion through better agricultural practices. Additionally, the BRACED consortium partners may fill an advocacy role, particularly in relation to gender representation in decision-making around natural resources, essential for REDD+.

The BRACED consortium, together with WCS, FFI, NPA and local level authorities represent a realistic and experienced group of partners on which to build a potential REDD+ National Strategy.

Norwegian People's Aid

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) have a long history of involvement in South Sudan, a robust network of community based leaders and have worked on climate change issues in South Sudan previously. For example, NPA, in partnership with UNEP conducted pilot activities on community-based natural resource mapping in 2013 in Lainya and Ifwoto Counties of South Sudan. This important exercise built capacity for community based forest resources assessment and may hold some lessons learned for piloting REDD+ activities, knowledge and engagement as South Sudan rolls out the

REDD+ process. Additionally, NPA has also been identified as a key stakeholder during the recently conducted stakeholder mapping exercise for REDD+ conducted by UNDP.

Other Development Partners

Development partners already play a crucial role in assistance to the RSS and to other implementing agencies in South Sudan. Without external support REDD+ is unlikely to extend beyond many of the ideas that have been developed in the early stages. In particular, the EU, USAID, UKAID, CIDA and the Government of Norway represent significant development partners with the ability to support the REDD+ process. The reality of South Sudan's current conflict has meant that much of the bilateral aid has been channeled towards addressing the humanitarian emergency (Tiitmamer, 2015). However, there are opportunities in the pipeline, which should be leveraged. USAID, for example, has just announced a significant cooperative agreement for climate change and biodiversity conservation in South Sudan. Depending on implementation modalities, this could entail significant landscape management planning and conservation of forests, which would be very relevant to REDD+ (USAID, 2016). Additionally, in the post-Paris atmosphere, Canada, Norway and the UK have all made significant commitments to support both technical and institutional initiatives, including those supporting REDD+.

UN Agencies

The UN agencies, especially those that comprise the UN-REDD Programme, will undoubtedly play a critical role in supporting the ongoing REDD+ process. As mentioned, targeted support has already been provided for several foundational elements of the process. UNDP has recently completed an institutional and stakeholder mapping exercise on which this assessment has built. Additionally, moving forward FAO is investigating ways to support modalities for the development of guidance in support of an eventual MRV system. Absent from the current structure however, is the presence of a focal point for the coordination of REDD+ issues among the three agencies. Recruitment of a programme officer would undeniably facilitate much more advocacy, coordination and momentum for REDD+ processes in the country.

More broadly, the UN agencies (for example UN Women) may fulfill significant advocacy roles, especially in light of the need for the promotion of gender representation in natural resource management decision-making.

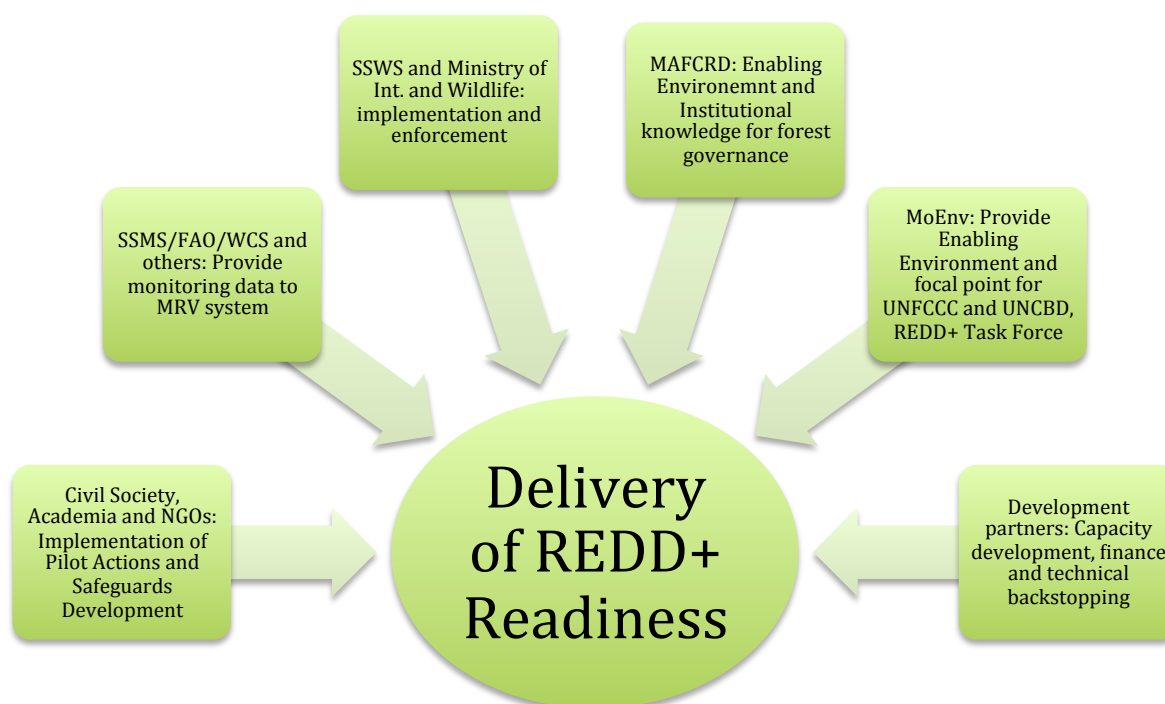


Figure 5: Interrelationships in the delivery of REDD+ Readiness

Underlying all of these institutions is the legislative landscape and policy environment. In theory this should effectively act as a foundation to legitimize REDD+ activities and create the enabling environment, empowering stakeholders to act within a legal context that is supportive for REDD+. The following section examines key legislative instruments including policies, bills, acts and regulatory instruments that may be able to support REDD+ in South Sudan

The Assessment of Legislative Instruments

The Transitional Constitution (2011)

The Transitional Constitution enshrines environmental conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in both the duties of the citizen (Part 2 Ch. 2 and Part 3, Ch. 1) and those of the state (Part 10, Ch. 1). It commits the local government to ensuring that it consults local communities on issues of management of natural resources (Part 11, Ch. 2) and also commits specific industries to such as the petroleum industry to ensuring a policy that is overtly positive for the environment and safeguards against overexploitation at a cost to the environment. Additionally, the

constitution sets forth a tenure system consisting of public, community, and private land (Article 170), linking each of these explicitly to natural resource rights.

Although neither climate change adaptation and mitigation are mentioned in the constitution, provisions are made for the safeguarding of environmental functions (Part 3, Ch. 1), gender representation in decision making (Part 2) and the rights of indigenous communities (Part 2), all of which are similarly key aspects addressed in the Cancun Safeguards and essential for a national REDD+ programme. For example, Article 170, Clause 8 *“All levels of government shall institute a process to progressively develop and amend the relevant laws to incorporate customary rights and practices, and local heritage.”* This is consistent with the Cancun safeguards dealing with full and effective participation of local communities, and respect for local communities’ rights.

The Peace Agreement, 2015

The Peace agreement officially brought to an end the conflict that started in late 2013, and brokered a peace between the ruling SPLA government and the SPLA In Opposition or SPLA/IO. The two parties agreed to a transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU), which will rule until national elections are tentatively called for in 2019. Interestingly, the entirety of Chapter 4 of the agreement is dedicated to issues of natural resources, their control, ownership and management, including forest and forestland. This is important especially in regards to management for ensuring biodiversity and continuing ecosystem services, and in the management and benefit-sharing responsibilities, all of which are inherently important in a potential REDD+ programme. While it remains uncertain as to the actual manifestation of this TGONU, the peace agreement does seek to solidify the mandates of existing institutions within the ministries. However, much uncertainty remains at the time of this report, and mandates may still shift.

Forest Policy

The Forest Policy has existed in draft form since late 2011 with the most draft (2015) having been presented for a final reading in late 2015. While it essentially sets the conditions and direction for a more prescriptive Forest Act (currently in bill form), the Forest Policy has yet to be ratified into law as it is waiting presidential assent as of June 2016. This legal vacuum creates an environment, which defaults to colonial era regulatory arrangements (Deng, 2014) and *de facto* resource use rules at the ground level (Adkins, 2015). Although the Forest Policy is a broad document, it has been tailored to specifically highlight the role forests and forest conservation play in climate change mitigation, and sets forth a legal pathway for the launch of the semi-

autonomous South Sudan National Forest Corporation. Additionally, it seeks to create the conditions for several important pieces of forest governance that align well with the REDD+ Safeguards including clarity of tenure, involvement of forest dependent communities and transparency in benefit-sharing. Furthermore, the Forest Policy explicitly addresses the desire to pursue an emissions reductions programme through REDD+, harnessing the power of market mechanisms, and sustainably managing forests in South Sudan (Draft Forests Policy, page 25). This is also reiterated in the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submitted in late November 2015 to the UNFCCC.

The Forest Bill

Similarly, the Forest Bill has stagnated in Parliament due to several factors, primarily the emphasis on the attempts to form the Government of National Unity in the wake of a peace-agreement ending the most recent civil conflict that started in 2013. It is important to note that the Forest Bill seeks to operationalize the South Sudan National Forest Commission, a body to be tasked with the management responsibility for all forest resources in South Sudan. This would create a centralized apparatus for management and revenue generation and benefit-sharing. Importantly, the semi-autonomous nature of the SSNFC is envisaged to create a legal pathway for sustainable forest management, and for revenue sharing between central, state and community forest institutions. The establishment of such an institution would undoubtedly be a critical institution in which REDD+ could be domiciled or at least supported. However, a key challenge will be to address how and where the SSNFC will be governed and which Ministry it will ultimately report to (i.e. MAFCRD, or a newly fashioned Ministry of Environment and Forests).

Additionally, the Forest Bill does not contain a definition of forests for South Sudan which will be a key legal parameter for setting everything from baselines to designation of new forest lands as envisaged in the INDC. The only forest definition that was publically available was that mentioned in the 2015 Forest Resources Assessment conducted by FAO and cited as the national definition. This should be added before the Bill is passed.

Finally, the Forest Bill does not make mention climate change. There may be therefore, some potential to utilize this time period while the Bill has not passed, to ensure the Forest Bill aligns well with South Sudan's REDD+ aspirations, an opportunity not to be taken lightly.

National Environmental Policy and the National Environmental Bill

The National Environmental Policy and the Bill have been in draft since at least 2007. However, the Policy has been assented to by the Council of Ministers and is now in parliament awaiting approval. This is expected to happen in the very near future. Similar to the Forest Policy and Bill, the National Environmental Policy and Bill are critically important pieces of draft legislation, on which REDD+ processes could be anchored. These two pieces of draft legislation will set the trajectory for the Ministry of Environment's mandated activities, which explicitly include REDD+ activities and conservation as a potential land uses and the safeguarding of environmental goods and services, on which sustainable development goals can be achieved. They also call for the establishment of several key institutions such as a national environmental management authority and enforcement mechanisms, and the consolidation of environmental management issues in a single ministry, which could serve as a potential vehicle for coordinating REDD+ activities in the country.

The Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill (2015)

The Wildlife Bill (2015) represents the updated version of the mandate of the South Sudan Wildlife Service. This supersedes the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act (2003) which regulates wildlife matters. This new bill has been reviewed by the Ministry of Justice and will next be passed to the parliament. Importantly, the new bill integrates climate change as an explicit factor in impacting wildlife habitat and therefore wildlife. The bill calls for stricter penalties for environmental degradation and destruction. It empowers the wildlife service in a way that is unprecedented among other government agencies. Considering the human resources, and geographic reach of the SSWS, this bill is considered an important enabling legislative tool in enforcing conservation of forests and wildlife habitat.

Agriculture Sector Policy Framework

Agriculture in South Sudan is the most common driver of conversion of land and yet there is seemingly no concerted policy or Act addressing neither it nor its subsequent regulation. However, the MAFCRD, together with FAO, USAID (through the FARM Project), the EU and NGOs together with stakeholders have designed framework for the developing agriculture known as the Agriculture Sector Policy Framework, which details the overall trajectory that is desired in the agricultural sector. The framework primarily deals with livestock and agricultural expansion through a Comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan (CAMP), detailing agricultural emphases of both government and donor initiatives. As a framework for development it is not actually a policy and merely guides implementation through all stakeholders including international

organizations. It does not contain an enforcement mechanism nor regulatory instruments which represents a key gap. Relevant for REDD+, however, is that future iterations of the updated Agriculture Sector Policy Framework may present an opportunity for integrating climate-smart agriculture activities and policy instruments that prioritize agricultural intensification on existing lands, rather than expansion into forestlands. This opportunity for harmonization of agricultural programming with REDD+ objectives should be prioritized in national planning around agriculture.

Land Policy (2013)

The Land Policy sets for the broad trajectory of land and land use in South Sudan. While climate change and REDD+ do not feature at all in neither the Land Policy nor the Act which preceded it, broad principles of land ownership including three types of tenure, respect for the environment, the protection of ecosystem services, management of land, and the establishment of institutions tasked with overseeing land decisions and processes for the country are all envisioned in the Policy, as well as calling for several more definitive acts of legislation such as a Community Lands Act.

The Land Policy calls for the establishment of the South Sudan Land Commission (SSLC), which acts in an advisory and coordination role to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning especially on issues of land registration, defining community land and arbitration (Deng, 2014). The SSLC is nominally in charge of developing land laws and policies, conducting research on land matters, arbitration of land disputes; and advising various levels of government on land issues. In terms of REDD+, land tenure issues and clarity are key aspects of protecting indigenous and community rights. Coordinating REDD+ readiness with the SSLC should be a priority.

As the Land Act came prior to the policy, some tensions have arisen in trying to harmonize the provisions of each. For example, the definitions of community land and state land have yet to reflect the tenure provisions listed in the policy and the Transitional Constitution, with multiple claims from various levels of government. There is also tension between the state and the central governments over who has the power to allocate land in concessions. Land registration is currently conducted at the state level (Deng, 2014) but allocations are often made at village level and at national level. The SSLC is in theory supposed to help arbitrate any tensions that arise from this.

Land Act (2009)

The Land Act (2009) is a seminal piece of legislation in South Sudan and describes land tenure, rights, and responsibilities for those mandated with land management. It preceded the Land Policy by several years, and because of this, the Policy seeks to

clarify some parts of the Act that have caused overt conflict and underlying tensions. For example, the Act creates significant ambiguity around the process of how land is demarcated and alienated. The Policy addressed this through the creation of the Land Commission as mentioned above. Furthermore, the Land Act was supposed to strengthen institutions involved in governing land from community level through state level and to the central government, in the post-war period. However, in his 2014 assessment of the institutional and legal arrangements, including the Land Act, Deng says the following:

Most land governance institutions operate according to procedures developed in the colonial era, and *there is a wide divergence between law and practice* [emphasis added]. Bridging this gap has been one of the most difficult challenges of the postwar period. Institutional arrangements are also undermined by poor coordination among formal institutions at each level of government (horizontal overlap), between the three levels of government (vertical overlap) and between the formal and customary systems. (Deng, 2014, p.1)

While the Land Act does not address many of the more contentious issues of land ownership in South Sudan, such as the extent of traditional ethnic homelands and internecine conflict over land, it does describe three types of land tenure: public, private and community. Importantly, it also subscribes land rights to communities and recognizes customary rights to lands.

In reality however, the Land Act, suffers from ambiguity and poor implementation of its regulatory instruments. The ambiguity over what is and what is not community land is a potential flashpoint as the Land Act also prescribes that all land that is not private or community is defaulted to public land, under the central government's jurisdiction. This presents a significant challenge for REDD+ as clarity over land tenure and usage rights is a fundamental aspect of both results-based payments, as well as other aspects such as FPIC, and inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making.

International Obligations

South Sudan is a signatory of several major conventions and agreements. These include the UNCBD, the UNFCCC, the UNCCD, CITES, and the Nile Waters agreements, all of which require South Sudan to be able to perform certain levels of international reporting and have some obligations associated with them. For example the ratification of the UNFCCC requires South Sudan to publish periodic reports on emissions, and attempts to mitigate them, including Biennial Update Reports (BURs).

Currently, the responsibility for this lies with the MoENV. Similarly, the UNCBD reporting requirements responsibility also lies with the MoENV, while the UNCCD requirements lay with the MAFCRD.

The Nile Waters Agreements refer to several agreements regarding the regulation of flows of the Nile River, especially in relation to downstream users such as Sudan and Egypt. These obligations are inherited from Sudan independence era but represent very important international agreements, which may prove to bind South Sudan to measures that conserve the Nile watersheds, including many areas of forest. These agreements, and many others that are either still awaiting ratification, or yet to be agreed to represent international obligations, may influence the legal and policy framework for addressing forests and other land uses in the country. It will be essential in the emerging REDD+ arrangements to view REDD+ policies and decisions in light of these international obligations.

Analysis of Institutional Arrangements and Legislative Tools

After a significant period of direct observation, key informant interviews, expert opinion and literature review, this assessment found that South Sudan's nascent institutions are fragile, dynamic, and suffer from a general lack capacity to implement change. The recent political shifts, conflict, the transition to a TGONU, and the proposed '28-state solution' have left both ambiguity and flux within the system. For example many ministers are new and the composition of their respective ministries is subject to sudden and abrupt changes in mandates, reporting arrangements and resourcing. The review of the institutional arrangements and the legislative tools revealed that most indigenous institutions that would be involved in land governance decisions, legislative processes, including both policy development and enforcements, suffer from both specific institutional challenges as well as broader, often external challenges.

The assessment found that broadly, many government offices and ministries are characterized by the following:

➤ **Low Capacity**

- Lack of capacity for enforcement of regulatory mechanisms including, for example, a lack of vehicles, field offices, capability to prosecute etc.
- Lack of capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation in field sites and across large landscapes
- General understanding of core climate change concepts in key government decision-making roles.

➤ **Unclear/Competing legal mandates**

- Mandates that overlap and clash with other institutions and across devolved governance structures. For example, mandates that have allowed concessioning of forests by different government entities, especially between states and central government⁵.
- Mandates that lack clarity and mechanisms for cross-institutional coordination. For example in planning for both forest conservation, and agricultural expansion, overlapping land claims for forests and agriculture exist.

⁵ An example of this can be seen in the competing claims for concessions in Lainya County, where the Rubena Lado Teak Company and the Central Equatoria Teak Company both reportedly have concession agreements for the same forest areas.

- Lack of integration of climate change measures in mandates. For example the lack of mention of climate change in the Forest Bill.
- **Corruption and Interference from elites**
 - Land-grabbing by elites, and exacerbation of internecine conflicts has created extensive insecurity and ambiguity over land rights.
 - Looting of public coffers by officials.
- **Hierarchical prioritization and influence**
 - Environmental management and climate change issues are low on the development priority list, both from the RSS and the development partners. This is exemplified by both donor priorities and by the apparent prioritization of the development of fossil fuels industries over the development of more sustainable forestry approaches.
- **Civil conflict**
 - Overt civil conflict and general insecurity may continue.
- **Lack of Gender Representation**
 - Despite a constitutional mandate, very few women are represented in decision-making regarding natural resources, especially forests.

However, even with all of these prevailing external challenges, it is important to note that some institutions such as the MoEnv and the MAFCRD, are attempting to forge ahead admirably and laying the groundwork for effective cooperation, collaboration and integration of REDD+ initiatives in the country, and present willing partners for collaboration.

A review of the relevant literature reveals that generally, other assessments have found the legal instruments for governing land and land use decisions, especially around forests, to be quite weak or even absent. For example, the recently concluded *UNDP REDD+ Stakeholder Mapping Exercise* (2015) found similar lack of capacity and stalled legal processes were a key challenge. The Sudd Institute's *Assessment of Policy and Institutional Responses to Climate Change and Environmental Disaster Risks in South Sudan* (Tiitmamer, 2015) found that many institutions, particularly ministries lack the policy tools and financial resources needed to address even basic challenges.

Deng (2014) used the World Bank's Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) as a tool for assess whether the legal and institutional support for land and land use decisions

was being implemented according to the legal framework. The assessment focused on all forms of land use, but featured forestlands prominently. Overall, South Sudan scored very poorly on both enforcement of rights, enforcement of legal mandates, and on provision of legal information and clarity of tenure. This presents a challenge for REDD+ readiness. Further, weak legal frameworks can be a significant impediment to REDD+, especially when questions of legitimacy of REDD+ activities, cost and benefit sharing, and land use arise.

Additionally there is a significant need for harmonizing key legislative and policy tools during their development. This was not only cited as a major issue by Deng (2014) but has been noted in other land-based sectors, such as the definitions used for protected areas, including their usages. For example, incongruences between the Environmental Protection and Management Bill (2014) and the updated Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill (2015) offer only a murky understanding of the designations of land. For example the Environmental Protection and Management bill legislates for the establishment of “environmentally sensitive areas” which seems to infer utilization, which clashes with protected area designations under the emerging Wildlife bill. Furthermore, the INDC (2015) calls for the establishment of new forest protected areas, but does not define this term, nor is it defined in the Forest Policy.

However, it is important to note though, that although forest management decisions may be happening in an effective legal vacuum (i.e. with both environmental and forest policies and bills yet to be passed through parliament) that does not mean that decisions are not being made according to pre-existing *de jure* arrangements at national and state level and informal *de facto* arrangements between resource users at the community level (Adkins, 2015). For example, de facto arrangements on access to forests and forest resource uses at the community level have allowed some extraction of forest products such as charcoal and mahogany. Additionally, effective forest management is happening in some areas such as practiced by the Equatorial Teak Company in Western Equatoria, based on concessions that existed in the pre-Independence era.

From the current assessment, there is a critical need for improvement of institutional capacity across many of the actors assessed. There is a need to codify ministerial mandates, through legal and policy instruments that limit re-shuffling and interference from vested interests. This would consist largely of donor partners taking an advocacy role and establishing partnerships for financial assistance to allow the ministries and the responsible directorates to pursue both their policy objectives and the enforcement of the subsequent mandates, such as that of forest protection.

It remains important to emphasize that, even in the absence of many natural resource policies, forest management and decision making over natural resources is happening (e.g. through the MAFCRD, the SSWS, WCS, NPA and FFI programs), and is becoming a growing priority within government and non-government institutions alike. Additionally, the UNDP report largely identified the same key institutions that this report identified that would need to be engaged to catalyze the REDD+ process, including for example, UNEP, the Sudd Institute, NPA and WCS⁶. This is largely attributable to the role these institutions have played prior to the conflict (such as through the REDD+ Task Force, the NRMG and other processes) and to the dedicated personnel within the natural resource management sector. It is further aided by the discourse around natural resources as exemplified by the relevant acts in parliament and the emphasis in the recent peace agreement. While a return to open civil conflict over resources does continue to present a relevant risk, throughout this assessment, the institutions listed above have demonstrated long-standing commitment and have essentially already laid much of the foundation for effective REDD+ interventions.

Specifically, the REDD+ Task Force, the Natural Resources Management Group, the MAFCRD, the Ministry of Environment, UNEP, UNDP and FAO, and the civil society actors such as the BRACED consortium, WCS and FFI, represent a cadre of *capable* and *wiling* actors on which to build a national program. Furthermore, coordination between other actors could facilitate crosscutting enforcement opportunities. For example, the SSWS has the capacity in the field to conserve habitat and is actively doing so, even if the Directorate of Forestry is unable to enforce their mandate. Carefully designed collaboration on such mandates could yield very positive REDD+ oriented results in some areas.

This group of stakeholders should be further augmented by the inclusion of representatives from community-based organizations and representatives of forest communities. These elements are both prominent aspects promoted by the Cancun Safeguards, and experience

⁶ The UNDP report can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1T3dHfX>

demonstrates that their inclusion in REDD+ activities is often the key to sustaining the impact or “permanence” over time (Bernard et al., 2014; Merger et al., 2012).

At the national level, a key priority should be the revitalization of the REDD+ Task force. This body previously served as the primary mechanism for pushing the REDD+ process forward. However, after the 2013 conflict began, the momentum was lost. There are several critical additions, including funding, that should be made in order to solidify and catalyze the role of the Task Force. These proposed structures are included Appendix 2.

The REDD+ Task Force, once empowered can be the vehicle for pushing REDD+ activities forward. It should be strategically with the NRMG and should also be domiciled under the auspices of an institution such as that envisioned in the SSNFC. Critically, the REDD+ Task force should be invested in, with the establishment of a parallel structure such as REDD+ Secretariat, whose ToR could broadly include the responsibilities to coordinate the task force, document decisions, and follow-up on deliverables such as the technical inputs into the REDD+ readiness process. The secretariat should be comprised of NRMG members, donor partners, UN-REDD partners, and several members of the REDD+ Task force.

Similarly, there is a need among UN-REDD partner agencies, to navigate, coordinate and catalyze structures and activities and promote REDD+ activities within the government, amongst donor partners, civil society and community-based structures. Currently, very little is known or understood about UN-REDD initiatives, nor the broader goal regarding REDD+. Neither is there much coordination between the three agencies involved in the UN-REDD Programme.

Table 4: Summary Box of Institutional Arrangements and Legislative Instruments Assessment

Priority Needs Matrix – Institutional/Legal			
Focal Area	Capacity Gap	Action	Priority
<i>Legal and Policy</i>	Absent and stalled policies and bills	Advocate for (and provide financial support for) relevant Ministries in order to raise profile, and establish legitimated mandates, including for the completion of legislative processes to anchor REDD+. Example: completion of the Forest Bill, and	High

		harmonization of the legal instruments.	
<i>Legal and Policy</i>	Lack of ability to implement activities, including Monitoring, Evaluation and Enforcement	Enabling conditions and tools, including direct financial support to field-based visits, recruitment and training of rangers in forest law, timber and charcoal regulation, conservation objectives etc.	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of capacity on key climate change concepts, REDD+ concepts, and Lack of decision support tools/data	Create an attachment program for staff at ministry, state government, and local government, to upgrade existing knowledge of key concepts, further information/training. This should include both <i>in situ</i> training and possibly through REDD+ university courses	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Stalled NRMG	Empower the NRMG by funding a mechanism for institutionalizing the NRMG as a policy and coordination unit for natural resources decisions.	Medium
<i>Institutional</i>	Stalled REDD+ Task Force and need for revamped scope of actions	Revisit the ToR of the REDD+ task force and propose a workable structure for catalyzing REDD+ processes. This could be done through creating a REDD+ Secretariat or similar structure	High

<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of REDD+ emphasis in UN-REDD program partner country offices	Establish a post of a focal point within a development partner agency offices, in order to push REDD+ forward, keep it on the agenda and liaise with other donors etc.	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of gender representation in forest governance and policy/decision-making	Work with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to increase substantive women's representation in forest governance at all levels	Medium
<i>Institutional</i>	Need for capacity building in local government structures including at village and payam level.	Work with the partners operating at village and payam levels to integrate REDD+ knowledge and themes into existing programming. For example, through emphasis of conservation farming techniques and watershed management in rural areas.	Medium

Technical Capacity Assessment

Introduction to Technical Capacity Assessment

The assessment of the technical needs was conducted simultaneously and utilized the same group of technical stakeholders, with the singular addition of a team from the FAO

Representation in South Sudan. The technical capacity assessment focused on whether or not South Sudan contained the technical capacity to deliver on two key elements of REDD+ Readiness: the **National Forest Monitoring System (including the MRV system)** and the **Reference Emission Level/Forest Reference Emission Level**. Additionally, the **system for providing information on safeguards** is linked to technical capacity, in that feedback mechanisms are often technical in nature, for example, through the mapping of management and tenure arrangements.

In order to deliver on the technical components of REDD+, a country must be able to know what they have, in terms of forest resources, and what is happening to forests over time. This is the core of any National Forest Monitoring System, especially in terms of an MRV system. Ascertaining the ability of South Sudan to deliver on these key elements of REDD+ Readiness involves examining the 1) technical personnel within the country, 2) available forest inventory data, 3) the support currently available by experts to this process, and 4) the capacity for ongoing delivery in the form of a national MRV system.

Analysis of the Technical Capacity Assessment

Methods and Opportunities

The technical capacity assessment was conducted by interviewing key informants about the technical capacity within the country, including investigating former donor-funded initiatives. This was augmented further by a literature review of institutional reports regarding initiatives that had existed before the most recent outbreak of civil conflict. The assessment revealed that the core capacities needed to deliver on the technical aspects of REDD+ readiness largely absent in South Sudan. There are a few notable exceptions:

- There is a core of GIS and Remote Sensing experts, trained under previous efforts by the Government of Norway, prior to the 2013 return to conflict, and these experts are located within the MAFCRD. Although they are currently not operating due to a lack of funding, this cadre of expertise should be revitalized and built upon.
- There is some expertise on sampling and data collection contained within the unit formed for conducting the field activities of the 2015 Forest Resource Assessment. This capacity should be expanded significantly.
- There is some capacity for land use mapping, remote sensing and land use change analysis within some of the international development partners within the country,

namely FAO and WCS. Although emissions accounting and quantification is not currently part of this analysis, some infrastructure for data collection and analysis exists.

- The provision by IGAD of climate monitoring equipment to the SSMD is an opportunity to enhance basic knowledge and data flows on climate change, which can influence the NFMS.

Gap Analysis

The following are major gaps observed during both the field missions. They constitute the greatest suite of challenges to the REDD+ process as they impact all four of the pillars associated with the REDD+ process.

- There is currently neither a national forest monitoring mechanism in place, nor comprehensive data sets on forest resources, such as a forest inventory, which is essential for setting a baseline or REL. Although some datasets do exist within FAO, WCS and Global Forest Watch, none of these datasets are owned and maintained by the RSS.
- The Forest Resource Assessment of 2015 is a step in the right direction, but it does not quantify emission reductions potential in any way due to a lack of national monitoring data and the lack of a forest inventory dataset. It relies heavily on international (Tier 1) defaults.
- The capacity to map, and analyze land use change, tenure arrangements, and other land parameters, is almost entirely absent.
- The capacity to quantify emissions from land use change, is not in place.
- The expertise to conduct significant ground-truthing and forest inventory activities is not currently available.
- The physical infrastructure to support a National Forest Monitoring System, and which to store MRV information for a programme at a scale of national coverage, does not currently exist.

Recommendations

The main goal of a national forest monitoring system (NFMS) is to be able to detect changes in forest cover at a national level, through the measuring, reporting and subsequent

verification of emission fluxes associated with land cover changes. This is built on being able to quantify forest resources and observe changes in those forest resources over time. As identified in the gap analysis above, these capacities currently are not in place in South Sudan. Additionally, being able to map tenure, management responsibility and related issues is a critical part of REDD+.

In order to facilitate the REDD+ Readiness phase of the REDD+ process, a significant capacity building programme needs to be initiated and this may extend over a significant amount of time. This will largely need to revolve around the development of the physical infrastructure, human capacity development and institutional commitment to a NFMS.

However, there are several intermediate steps that are equally as important to establishing a NFMS and providing a platform for the sustainable operation of the NFMS in the long term. Key among these should be the development of a national MRV Roadmap or similar document that may demonstrate exactly how the NFMS should be developed, and what forest types will be monitored. The Roadmap should contain a number of policy decisions supported by the technical rationale for each, which will inform the design of the MRV system (FAO, 2016). These will include how emissions baselines will be set (including the REL), how the decisions were reached, what level of reporting the country will aspire to at the UNFCCC (Tier 1, 2, or 3), how data will be collected at the field level, and how analysis conducted remotely. Depending on the extent of the capacity developed, the MRV Roadmap, will largely set the tone for how data-driven the NFMS's MRV system is.

The MRV Roadmap should be linked explicitly with the REDD+ Strategy document, which is also a key part of the REDD+ Readiness process. The REDD+ Strategy document, should outline the who, how, when, why and where the REDD+ programme will operate and how the MRV system will measure its success. It should articulate how the NFMS's outputs will inform the direction of REDD+ in South Sudan. It should also articulate the institutional arrangements such as where the NFMS will be operated from, how it will be funded, and how the national programme will adhere to safeguards etc.

Both of these documents will require technical expertise and stakeholder validation in their design and implementation. In order to obtain that technical expertise, technical support will need to be provided by development partners such as FAO. Although some assistance with MRV is currently predicted in the pipeline, which will support the delivery of the NFMS and the REL, it should be expedited in order to support the current level of good will and momentum.

Further to this, it is likely that South Sudan will wish to pursue a system, which will track all emissions from the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses (AFOLU) sector (RSS, 2015). This is inferred in the INDC and represents a similar policy and decision-making trajectory as other countries in the region such as Kenya and Ethiopia. For example, Kenya's System for Land-based Emissions Estimation in Kenya (SLEEK) can monitor and report on all changes in land use in a yearly time-step, providing not only an excellent platform for MRV in emissions fluxes, but also for supporting integrated land use planning across an entire country. With South Sudan's diverse landscapes, developing the fundamental technical capacity to develop a similar comprehensive AFOLU sector-reporting tool could open extensive opportunities for sustainable land use planning. Subsequently, this capacity could also help South Sudan to be able to access additional revenue-generating mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) through being able to provide MRV data to support results-based payments. Additional support should also be sought, especially through facilities such as the World Bank's FCPF. The UN-REDD Programme may be able to assist with these linkages.

As mentioned above, these measures are in addition to the need to re-establish the capacity building measures, such as those conducted through the Norwegian efforts prior to the conflict and to begin to build core, lasting, technical capacity. Without technical expertise, and a significant, long – term development commitment to a technical capacity building mechanism, it is unlikely that any of the measures implemented by external technical experts will be sustainable.

Table 5: Summary Box of Technical Capacity Assessment

Priority Needs Matrix – Technical Capacity			
Focal Area	Capacity Gap	Proposed Action	Priority
<i>Technical</i>	MRV Roadmap with policy decisions on MRV and technical rationale	Initiate stakeholder engagement process and technical expertise for the development of a MRV Roadmap	High
<i>Technical</i>	Technical capacity to monitor and analyze land cover change for an emissions reporting system is not currently <i>in situ</i> .	Develop a program, perhaps overseen by the REDD+ Secretariat, to develop skillsets needed for developing a MRV system.	High
<i>Technical</i>	Technical capacity to generate a REL/FREL	Same as above	Medium
<i>Technical</i>	Capacity to ground-truth findings and conduct Forest Inventory	Develop a data assessment and monitoring framework and equip the monitoring teams, building on teams that conducted the FRA.	High
<i>Technical</i>	Create a physical infrastructure to support an emerging NFMS, including tools, and monitoring equipment for a comprehensive AFOLU sector monitoring facility	After institutional arrangements have been solidified, target appropriate institution to house the monitoring unit.	Medium

Financial Capacity Assessment

Although REDD+ represents a significant incentive to protect forests in South Sudan, its implementation also comes with significant upfront costs. South Sudan's financial capacity to fund REDD+ process elements, such as those in the REDD+ Readiness phase, is greatly challenged by the lack of government allocations to line ministries and their programming. Although core budgeting covers the costs of government ministries are being dispersed, programmatic allocation is not happening due to constraints across all levels of government.

Programmatic activities are largely occurring in concert with the relevant ministries through donor-funded programming. The MAFCRD was able to conduct the FRA for example, with direct support from FAO. Similarly, much of SSWS's activities in the protected areas network are funded through USAID, via WCS, and from the Global Environment Facility. Equally, the Ministry of Environment is supported in many ways through capacity provided by UNEP and UNDP.

Shift in Focus of Funding

Much of the current development partner focus has been on providing humanitarian assistance in light of the recent conflict. For example, for FY 2014 and 2015 and through February 2016, USAID's total expenditure in South Sudan amounted to \$1,496,406,016 US of which less than 10% was targeted toward land-based activities such as agriculture, and within, most of that was targeted at food security (USAID, 2016). A pre-existing cooperative agreement to the WCS was the only support to habitat conservation-oriented activities in the country (WCS, 2016). Targeting climate change specifically, the BRACED Consortium funded by UKAID is implementing roughly \$ 30 million worth of climate change adaptation related activities. However, UKAID's overall emphasis places less than 16% of their roughly \$135,000,000 budget for South Sudan on agricultural reform and parallel support to government and CSO capacity building, both fundamental needs for REDD+ (UKAID, 2016). While this is undoubtedly necessary, lobbying to increase multilateral and bilateral support to sustainable natural resource management in South Sudan processes such as REDD+ process will be essential if the process is to move forward. These initiatives may hold some promise for aligning adaptation and mitigation actions such as REDD+, especially in areas where land use planning can include REDD+ activities.

Harnessing Renewed Commitments to Climate Change

In the short and medium term, this assessment found that the ability for the Republic of South Sudan to fund the REDD+ process, in order to deliver the needed elements of REDD+ Readiness, is unlikely. However, in light of the renewed commitments for consistent and reliable funding for climate change actions in COP 21 in Paris, it is hoped that these commitments may bring more opportunities, especially among multilateral funding mechanisms such as the Least Developed Countries Fund and the GCF (ODI, 2015). The opportunity for South Sudan in this respect is in communicating these financial needs to the wider development partner audience, quickly and efficiently. A strategy for achieving REDD+ readiness, based on the priorities identified in the CNA while framing REDD+ as a key to development of sustainable natural resource management and peace in the longer term (Adkins, 2015).

Table 6: Summary Box of Financial Capacity Assessment

Priority Needs Matrix – Financial Capacity			
Focal Area	Capacity Gap	Proposed Action	Priority
Financial	Lack of knowledge about modalities of how to access GCF, Least Developed Countries Fund, FCFP-Carbon Fund etc.	Begin to develop institutional capacity for applying to multilateral funding opportunities through on site training and attachment program	High
Financial	Financial support to collect field based data, and support enforcement activities in line with legal mandates	A comprehensive sustainable natural resource management including, REDD+ Readiness, support package should be considered paramount to success.	High
Financial	Financial support to technical delivery of REL, MRV and NFMS	Same as above	High
Financial	Coordination with bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms is slow and focus has shifted to humanitarian actions	Development partners should be approached to seek support for delivering the critical elements needed to advance REDD+.	High
Financial	Financial accountability mechanism to support delivery of REDD+ Readiness elements may not be in place.	Development partners should be approached to seek support for delivering the critical elements needed to advance REDD+. For example, GEF funding through UNEP, etc.	High

Financial	Financial support to collect field based data, and support enforcement activities in line with legal mandates	A comprehensive sustainable natural resource management including, REDD+ Readiness, support package should be considered paramount to success	High
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Recommendations

In addition to the specific recommendations listed in the priority needs matrix there are several prominent cross-cutting recommendations that merit extra attention:

- There is a need to clearly articulate a proposed “way forward” or strategy for the next steps of the REDD+ process (i.e. how to achieve the four pillars of REDD+ Readiness) in South Sudan including where to source financial assistance, how to address ambiguities in the governance of REDD+, and how to approach the technical capacity issues etc. This could be conducted through a joint inter-ministerial strategy paper or white paper/strategy document. This should use the CNA as the basis for its discussion and should be conducted as a first step by the REDD+ Task Force or similar expanded body.
- There is a priority need to establish a legal and policy framework through the finalization of bills on Forest (e.g. the Forest Bill,, the Environmental Policy and Bill). This is an opportunity not only to add in critical elements into the Forest Bill (such as a national forest definition) but also an opportunity to harmonize legislation with parallel legislative instruments such as the Agricultural and Energy policies and regulations and the Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill. The harmonization process is equally as important as the instruments themselves, in that, if competing mandates continue to dominate the discourse on natural resource management, the legitimacy of REDD+ activities may be permanently undermined.
- There is a need to re-vitalize development partner support of field-based monitoring operations by building the physical and human resources capacity of the government, in order to collect monitoring data and build capacity within the nascent structures. Without the capacity to enforce legislative instruments, it is unlikely that they will create meaningful action for forests.
- There is a distinct need to promote the use of existing structures that integrate the NRMG, with the Civil Society actors, NGOs, community representatives and donor partners in the revitalization of the REDD+ Task Force, expanding it from its former iteration, in observance of the representation of gender, indigenous people’s representation etc., in line with the Cancun Safeguards (Appendix 1, para 2 of decision 1/CP.16).

- Create parallel REDD+ Secretariat under the MoEnv or a similar, legitimated ministry, accepted by all parties and stakeholders (Appendix 2). This action will solidify REDD+ as a core focus of government's and other stakeholders' actions on climate change.
- Liaise with the development partners and the international community to enhance support to the REDD+ process through the provision of a comprehensive support package to deliver the REDD+ Readiness elements, perhaps overseen by a newly appointed focal point in the development community, and in concert with the REDD+ Task Force. This could be integrated with complementary programs such as the NAPA, and supported by existing development partners/funding (i.e. GEF).
- Work with parallel ministries such as the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, and the UN agencies to increase gender representation in decision-making around forest governance.
- Lay the groundwork for collaboration and cooperation between ministries and departments to allow for piloting of REDD+ activities in the protected areas network.

The Four Pillars of REDD+ Readiness, Revisited

Revisiting the four pillars that were envisaged in the Cancun decisions, and further elaborated by the Warsaw Framework is essential at this time. Decision 1/CP.16 highlights four main pillars of national REDD+ arrangements, all of which South Sudan will need to address in order to proceed with REDD+. The following diagram illustrates these four pillars:



Figure 6: The Four Pillars of REDD+ Readiness

The results of this assessment demonstrate that South Sudan's progress towards meeting the requirements of the REDD+ process should be as a function of larger governance, institution building and contextual realities. At this point in time South Sudan does not have the capacity to meet the rigor associated with the design and implementation of the four pillars. While the assessment identified many critical gaps and challenges in general, and specifically in the legal and institutional arrangements, technical capacities and financial resources, the assessment also identified some key pathways and opportunities where South Sudan has made some progress. For example, while South Sudan does not currently have a Forest Act or Policy in place, this may create an opportunity to insert a forest definition into the Bill and robust forest governance and gender considerations. Likewise, while forest cover statistics and data, critical for the functioning of the NFMS and setting the REL, are largely absent, this may create an opportunity for state of the art technology transfer.

Conclusion

South Sudan's forest estate represents a key asset for its national development and will undoubtedly be leveraged as the country moves forward. This asset will undoubtedly be leveraged in the short to medium term, as the people of South Sudan look to broaden their revenue generating opportunities. How this asset is leveraged at this point, will depend very heavily on the ability of South Sudan to implement measures that provide sustainable natural resource management and a low-emission development pathway.

Furthermore, globally, South Sudan's landscape represents a key asset in climate change mitigation. South Sudan's potential to implement key REDD+ actions is very high. Whether or not South Sudan is able to take advantage of these opportunities relies heavily on the foundation for sustainable natural resource management that can be laid in these early years of its existence.

This assessment focused on the institutional and legal arrangements, the technical capacity, and the financial resources available to effectively lay this foundation. The assessment found that although some steps have been made, there is a profound need for concerted action on building the capacity of South Sudan to proceed in the REDD+ process. This support will likely need to come from external development partners. However, considering the global ramifications of climate change, and the mitigation potential within South Sudan, a simple cost-benefit analysis would demonstrate that the investment in REDD+ activities in South Sudan, particularly in forest and ecosystem conservation efforts, is advisable.

The critical next steps for the REDD+ process in South Sudan will need to be articulated by the Transitional Government of South Sudan. This includes decisions on how to develop the technical capacity, how to design the institutional arrangements for REDD+ and where to seek financial assistance for a national REDD+ programme. An example of a potential structure is included as Appendix 2.

In summary, the admirable steps that have been made by nascent institutions in South Sudan such as the MAFCRD, the SSWS and the MoEnv should be recognized. Additionally, these early steps merit further development assistance. Only, through this type of collaboration will South Sudan be able to achieve its development trajectory, while still maintaining healthy forests and landscapes, upon which the population so greatly depends.

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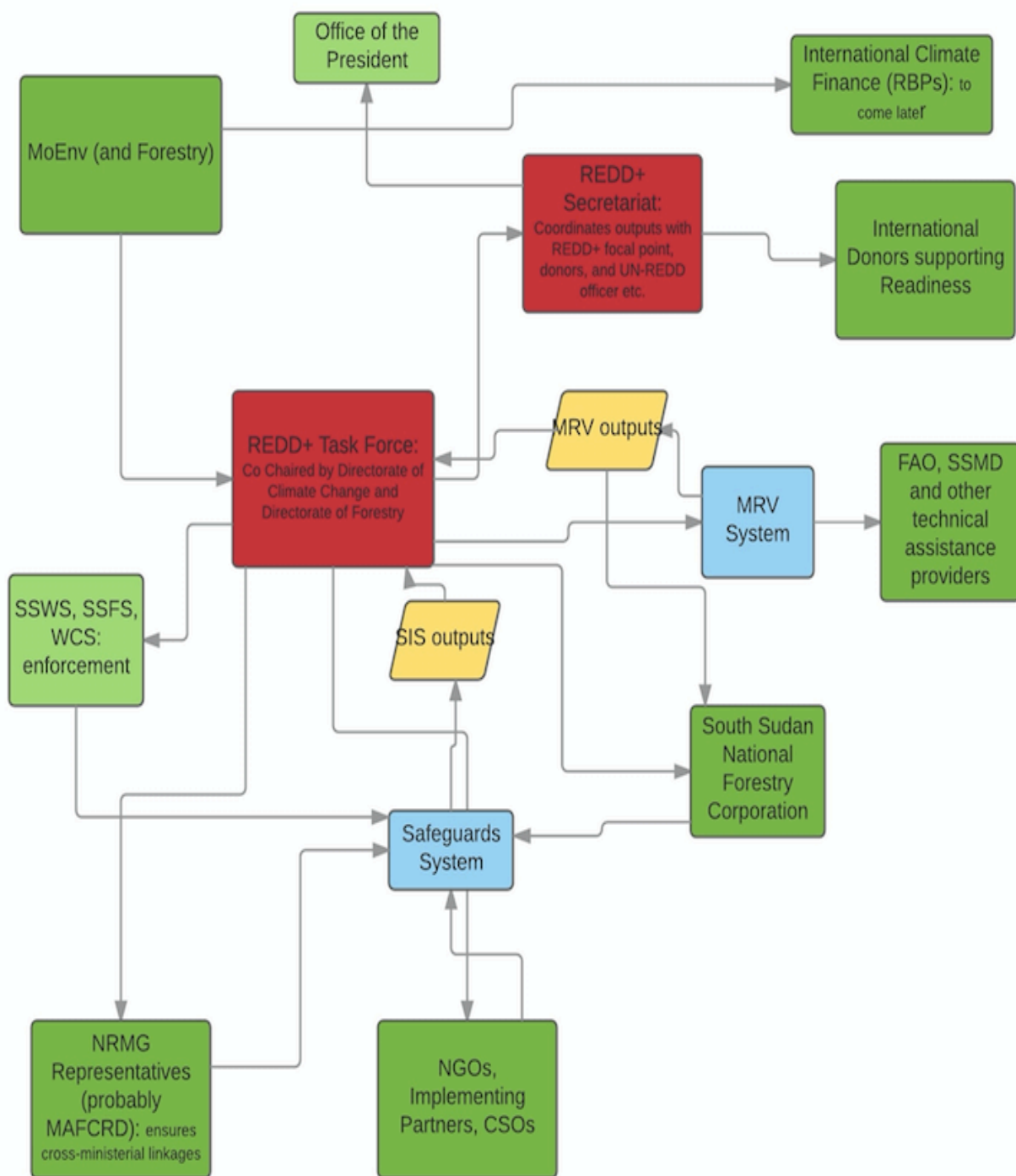
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Interviewees

Name	Institution
Census Kabang Lo-liyong	Azure Consulting
Timothy Onak Thwol	Directorate of Forestry
Jaden Emilio Togun	Undersecretary, MAFCRD
Mike Arensen	RVI
Dina Scippa	AECOM
Aaron Shapiro	AECOM
Chris Wulliman	AECOM
Nhial Tiitmamer	The Sudd Institute
Marketa Antoninova	WCS
Chris Hamley	WCS
Paul Elkan	WCS
Adrian Garside	FFI
Arshad Khan	UNEP
Martin Dramani	UNEP
Khamis Adieng Ding	SSWS
Joseph Bartel	Undersecretary, MoEnv
Innocent Kaba	BRACED/Concern Worldwide
Melquisedec Gomes Da Silva	BRACED/Concern Worldwide
David Hatch	USAID
Andreas Thulstrup	FAO/BRACED
Abdal Monium Osman	FAO - SS
James Wani	FAO - SS
Alexa Caesar	FAO - SS

Appendix 2: Proposed Institutional Arrangements



Appendix 3: Combined Priority Needs Matrix

Priority Needs Matrix

Focal Area	Capacity Gap	Proposed Action	Priority
<i>Legal and Policy</i>	Absent and stalled policies and bills	Advocate for (and provide financial support for) relevant Ministries in order to raise profile, and establish legitimated mandates, including for the completion of legislative processes to anchor REDD+. Example: completion of the Forest Bill, and harmonization of the legal instruments..	High
<i>Legal and Policy</i>	Lack of ability to implement activities, including Monitoring, Evaluation and Enforcement	Enabling conditions and tools, including direct financial support to field-based visits, recruitment and training of rangers in forest law, timber and charcoal regulation, conservation objectives etc.	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of capacity on key climate change concepts, REDD+ concepts, and Lack of decision support tools/data	Create an attachment program for staff at ministry, state government, and local government, to upgrade existing knowledge of key concepts, further information/training. This should include both <i>in situ</i> training and possibly through REDD+ university courses	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Stalled NRMG	Empower the NRMG by funding a mechanism for institutionalizing the NRMG as a policy	Medium

		and coordination unit for natural resources decisions.	
<i>Institutional</i>	Stalled REDD+ Task Force and need for revamped scope of actions	Revisit the ToR of the REDD+ task force and propose a revitalized structure for catalyzing REDD+ processes. This could be done through creating a REDD+ Secretariat or similar structure	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of REDD+ emphasis in UN-REDD program partner country offices	Establish a post of a Programme Officer or similar focal point with the UN-REDD program partner agency offices, in order to push REDD+ forward, keep it on the agenda and liaise with other donors etc.	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of Capacity for key document development such as the REDD+ strategy documents, and NFMS/MRV Roadmap	Establish a post of a Programme Officer or similar focal point with the UN-REDD program partner agency offices, in order to push REDD+ forward, keep it on the agenda and liaise with other donors etc.	High
<i>Institutional</i>	Need for capacity building in local government structures including at village and payam level.	Work with the partners operating at village and payam levels to integrate REDD+ knowledge and themes into existing programming. For example, through emphasis of conservation farming techniques and watershed management in rural	Medium

		areas.	
<i>Institutional</i>	Lack of gender representation in forest governance and policy/decision-making	Work with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to increase substantive women's representation in forest governance at all levels	Medium
<i>Technical</i>	MRV Roadmap with policy decisions on MRV and technical rationale	Initiate stakeholder engagement process and technical expertise for the development of a MRV Roadmap	High
<i>Technical</i>	Technical capacity to monitor and analyze land cover change for an emissions monitoring system is not currently <i>in situ</i> .	Develop a program, perhaps overseen by the REDD+ Secretariat, to develop skillsets needed for developing a MRV system.	Medium
<i>Technical</i>	Technical capacity to generate a REL/FREL	Same as above	Medium
<i>Technical</i>	Capacity to ground-truth findings and conduct Forest Inventory	Develop a data assessment and monitoring framework and equip the monitoring teams, building on teams that conducted the FRA.	High
<i>Technical</i>	Create a physical infrastructure to support an emerging NFMS, including tools, and monitoring equipment for a comprehensive AFOLU sector monitoring facility	After institutional arrangements have been solidified, target appropriate institution to house the monitoring unit.	Medium
<i>Financial</i>	Lack of knowledge about modalities of how to access GCF, Least Developed	Begin to develop institutional capacity for applying to multilateral funding	High

	Countries Fund, FCFP-Carbon Fund etc.	opportunities through on site training and attachment program	
<i>Financial</i>	Financial support to collect field based data, and support enforcement activities in line with legal mandates	A comprehensive sustainable natural resource management (including REDD+ Readiness) support package should be considered paramount to success	High
<i>Financial</i>	Financial support to technical delivery of REL, MRV and NFMS	Same as above	High
<i>Financial</i>	Coordination with bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms is slow and focus has shifted to humanitarian actions	Development partners should be approached to seek support for delivering the critical elements needed to advance REDD+. For example, GEF funding through UNEP, etc.	High
<i>Financial</i>	Financial accountability mechanism to support delivery of REDD+ Readiness elements may not be in place.	Development partners should be approached to seek support for delivering the critical elements needed to advance REDD+.	High