

**Submission by Botswana on methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries**

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Botswana welcomes the opportunity to share its views on methodological guidance for activities relating to REDD+.

Botswana looks forward to being able to benefit from the UNFCCC REDD+ activities in the future. Relatively, Botswana's forests cover a small land area but are immensely important for the preservation of biological diversity and also in their contribution to carbon dioxide sequestration. It is in this respect, therefore that Botswana looks forward to ensure a meaningful agreement on guidance for the activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+).

The 15th Conference of Parties of UNFCCC adopted a decision on "Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries". At COP16 in Cancun, Parties agreed to continue their consideration of the draft text for a decision on REDD-plus and the necessary provisions for the implementation of activities relating to REDD-plus.

**Definition of the scale of REDD-plus project activities to allow REDD-plus project to be implemented along natural ecosystems:**

Botswana believes that reference emission level (REL) and reference level (RL) are cost effective implemented at project level and that the scale of such projects should be allowed to traverse national boundaries and along ecosystems. In this way the REDD-plus activities will also be sensitive to conservation of both flora and fauna species that reside within the project area.

Botswana also believes that allowing the scale to traverse many countries would minimize transaction costs – as resources including institutional capacities, would be shared between countries. In practice, most national borders are along ecosystems and this means a number of countries have forests ecosystems. In reality – some countries end up with smaller forests. Implementation of REDD-plus at the ecosystem / project scale will therefore ensure the ecosystem is considered as a whole and as a result the risk associated with leakage – illegal logging and other will be minimized.

**Key principles for RELs and RLs**

The COP decisions call on Parties to establish a reference emission level (REL) and reference level (RL). In implementing REDD-plus at an ecosystem scale and therefore beyond national boundaries, Botswana proposes that the development of methodological guidelines for the definition and the assessment of the RELs and RLs could be reached at ecosystem/project level and not just at national and sub-national levels. Botswana believes that key principles of for implementing REDD-plus on *Environmental integrity; Accuracy; Comprehensiveness; Transparency; Comparability; Consistency* and *Feasibility* will be enhanced by implementing REDD-plus using an ecosystem approach and thus allowing REDD-plus projects, where countries wish to.

Botswana believes that in order to participate in and/or implement any future REDD-plus activities, many developing countries will require capacity building, technical assistance and financial support for a number of enabling activities. We recognise and wish to apply the existing framework within the regional economic groups to contribute to a successful implementation of REDD-plus. These include, for example, putting in place, at a regional level, the necessary institutions and strengthening of national monitoring systems to improve their data collection systems, and their estimation and reporting of emissions. In this way the REDD-plus project activities would also acknowledge the importance of protecting forests and their sustainable use for biodiversity conservation and combating desertification and land degradation.

**Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of the effectiveness of REDD-plus project activities:**

This approach recognizes that REDD countries should share the costs of their own emission reductions/removals in a manner that is consistent with their respective capabilities and with the national benefits associated with those reductions/removals.

The Marrakech Accords' definition offers flexibility for countries that are designing a monitoring plan because the use of remote sensing data allows the application of different thresholds for minimum tree crown cover and area.

Botswana notes that Parties that wish to participate in REDD must establish a system of measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) for Greenhouse Gas (GHGs) emissions, including GHGs from deforestation, sustainable forest management and forest degradation.

Implementation of the REDD-plus project actions at ecosystem level services will enhance a regional and global monitoring programme for deforestation; forest degradation; conservation; sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

To enable Parties to benefit from REDD+ potential, Botswana supports the idea of a common regional framework on how to implement REDD+ on similar forest ecosystems, including those whose distributions straddle political boundaries. This will contribute to strengthening capacities on various aspects including on how to design REDD+ policies and programmes.

Botswana believes that a regional REDD+ programme based on a common framework will enable Parties to address issues of illegal trade in forest products and the major issue of 'leakage' where forest protection or sustainable forest management in one country, in response leads to illegal activity or unsustainable practices exported elsewhere. A regional REDD+ approach also provides an opportunity for countries to work together on Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of forest stocks.

**Botswana calls for the inclusion of a regional dimension in issues related to REDD+, in particular with respect to modalities related to forest reference levels, forest reference emission levels and MRV, and suggests that the issue of REDD+ on a regional level be part of the meeting of technical experts as stated in the L14 document (FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L14) to be held before SBSTA 35.**