

# UN-REDD PROGRAMME



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## Workshop report

*UN-REDD Programme Africa  
regional exchange on  
country approaches to  
safeguards, June 2015*

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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**Final Report:** November 2015

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in September 2008 to assist developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies, and builds on the convening power and expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is the specialist biodiversity assessment centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the world's foremost intergovernmental environmental organisation. The Centre has been in operation for over 30 years, combining scientific research with practical policy advice.

**Authors:** Elina Väänänen and Lisen Runsten

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## 1. Introduction

To meet the UNFCCC requirement of addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards, countries should aim to reduce any social and environmental risks and promote key benefits of REDD+ during the implementation of REDD+ activities. They further need to provide information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. On 17-19 June 2015, the *UN-REDD Programme Africa regional exchange on country approaches to safeguards* brought together 31 participants from 19 African countries, and three participants from Costa Rica, Mexico and Viet Nam. Eight out of the 34 participants were women. Taking place in Nairobi, Kenya, the exchange provided national focal points and safeguards experts, joined by representatives of civil society and indigenous populations, the opportunity to share experiences and jointly build capacities on country approaches to safeguards for REDD+.

The exchange was organised in three thematic days: country approaches to safeguards; addressing and respecting the safeguards through policies, laws and regulations; and safeguards information. It aimed to support participants in understanding and responding to UNFCCC decisions on safeguards for REDD+, while facilitating south-south exchange of experiences and lessons learned on developing country approaches to safeguards. Through a mix of presentations, sharing of country experiences and interactive sessions, the exchange aimed to foster sharing of lessons learned and best practices on the specific areas of safeguards-relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs), safeguards information systems (SIS) and summaries of information, both within and beyond the African region. The exchange further endeavoured to enable participants to identify specific actions and next steps in developing country approaches to safeguards, in the context of overall national REDD+ readiness processes and implementation.

Experiences shared in the workshop are captured in the appended input on ‘Country approaches to REDD+ Safeguards’. All the presentations given in the workshop are accessible via hyperlinks from the agenda (Section 3).

## 2. Workshop description

The regional exchange aimed to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Increased awareness by national REDD+ decision-makers of the social and environmental benefits and risks of different REDD+ actions, and the role of safeguards in addressing these.
2. Enhanced capacity amongst participants to:
  - Apply the Cancun safeguards during REDD+ implementation, guided by the UN-REDD Programme framework for supporting the development of country approaches to safeguards; and
  - Develop safeguard information systems and summaries of information that show how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected.
3. Increased linkages made between safeguards and other relevant pillars of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

The first day of the Africa regional exchange focused on the country approaches to safeguards framework. Following opening remarks by the representative of the host country, Kenya, and words

of welcome from the UN-REDD Programme, the first workshop session examined UNFCCC decisions and requirements relating to safeguards and explored the clarification of the individual Cancun safeguards in the national context. After an overview of the components of the country approach to safeguards, Mexico presented on its approach to safeguards.

An interactive session then used the ‘country approach to safeguards’ diagram to explore actions that countries have taken in relation to safeguards, as well as those that they are planning to take (See

Figure 1). In the afternoon, a report-back on the lessons shared at the Asia-Pacific expert consultation on safeguards was followed by Democratic Republic of Congo’s account of its framework and national standards for social and environmental safeguards. The civil society perspective on REDD+ safeguards launched a rich discussion in plenary. After a presentation on Uganda’s goal and scope for their country approach to safeguards, the day concluded with a plenary discussion on defining goal and scope.



Figure 1: Interactive exercise on developing a country approach to safeguards in the context of a National Strategy & Action Plan. Pink post-its illustrate accomplishments in relation to the Country Approach to Safeguards diagram, whereas yellow post-its represent planned actions.

Day 2 of the Africa regional exchange concentrated on addressing and respecting safeguards through policies, laws and regulations. In the morning, Republic of Congo shared experiences on identifying benefits and risks as part of the SESA process. Participants then undertook an interactive exercise on identifying benefits and risks of REDD+ policies and measures.

Viet Nam’s experiences of gap analysis of policies, laws and regulations and Zambia’s lessons from a legal preparedness study were then showcased. A World Café session ended the day with a range of discussions relating to work on safeguards, from integration of the SESA process in the country approach to safeguards to stakeholder engagement in PLR analysis.

The third day of the regional exchange was dedicated to safeguards information, including Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) and summaries of information. After a presentation examining SIS objectives and institutional arrangements, attention turned to the practical experience of Costa Rica in designing such a system. Following an introduction to SIS functions, participants discussed SIS design from the point of view of information systems, information types and the role of stakeholder participation. REDD+ SES then presented on the initiative’s experiences on SIS development. An interactive session on populating the SIS explored potential information types and sources in the

context of specific safeguards. A presentation on summaries of information launched the participants into a break-out group discussion on the audience and content of a summary of information. The final plenary of the exchange addressed countries' next steps and priorities for future work on safeguards, before the closing remarks.

Participants filled in workshop evaluation forms and added a sticker to a visual assessment of their own state of knowledge, both at the beginning and end of the workshop. The results are summarised in section 4.



*Figure 2: Participants discuss the benefits and risks of REDD+ policies and measures*



*Figure 3: Participants discussing design of a safeguard information system*

### 3. Workshop agenda

Please note that the agenda includes hyperlinks to relevant resources.

#### Day 1: Country approaches to safeguards - Wednesday 17 June

<i>Morning</i>	
Registration	
Opening remarks	Joram Kagombe, Kenya
Welcome and workshop objectives	Tim Christophersen, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Session 1: Setting the scene: UNFCCC context</b>	Chair: Thais Narciso, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">UNFCCC decisions and requirements on safeguards</a>	Emelyne Cheney, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Interactive exercise:</b> <a href="#">Exploring the Cancun safeguards</a>	
<b>Feedback to plenary</b>	
<b>Session 2: Understanding country approaches to safeguards</b>	Chair: Robert Chimambo, Zambia Climate Change Network/Chalimbana River Head-waters Trust
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">What are the key components of a Country Approach to Safeguards?</a>	Lera Miles, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Mexico – Overview of the country approach to safeguards</a>	Francisco Moreno, Mexico
<b>Interactive exercise:</b> Developing a country approach to safeguards in the context of a National Strategy & Action Plan	
<i>Afternoon</i>	
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">Video and report-back from the Asia-Pacific Expert Consultation on Safeguards and SIS</a>	Steve Swan, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Democratic Republic of Congo - National coordination between different safeguards initiatives</a>	Raphaël Kasongo, Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">A civil society perspective on country approaches to safeguards (private sector initiatives)</a>	Emanuel Mutamba, Agro-ecological Alliance/ Green Living Movement, Zambia
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Uganda – Goals and Scope of the safeguards approach</a>	Xavier Mugumya, Uganda
<b>Plenary discussion:</b> <a href="#">Defining safeguards goals and scope</a>	
<b>Break out report back and agenda for tomorrow</b>	Chair

**Day 2: Addressing and respecting safeguards through Policies, Laws and Regulations – Thursday 18 June**

<i>Morning</i>	
<b>Session 1: Identifying potential benefits and risks</b>	Chair: Elsie Attafuaah, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Brief plenary:</b> Participants thoughts on the content of day 1, and wishlist for day 2-3	Wahida Shah, UN-REDD UN-REDD Programme
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Republic of Congo – Identifying benefits and risks - experiences from SESA</a>	Henriette Tsoh-Ikouna, Republic of Congo
<b>Interactive exercise:</b> <a href="#">Identifying benefits and risks of REDD+ actions/PAMs (Drawing from BeRT Module 2)</a>	
<b>Report back</b>	
<b>Session 2: Identifying policies, laws and regulations</b>	Chair: Elsie Attafuaah, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Viet Nam – Gap analysis of policies, laws and regulations</a>	Nguyen Trong Hung, Viet Nam
<i>Afternoon</i>	
<b>Session 3: Addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards</b>	Chair: Deuteronomy Kasaro, Zambia
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Zambia– Lessons from analysing policies, laws and regulations</a>	Deuteronomy Kasaro, Zambia
<b>World Cafe on addressing and respecting safeguards – 4 tables per language group</b>	
First parallel discussion	
Second parallel discussion	
<b>Report back – ‘radio bulletin’ style</b>	
<b>Wrap up of Day 2 and agenda for tomorrow</b>	Steve Swan, UN-REDD

**Day 3: Safeguards information – Friday 19 June**

<i>Morning</i>	
<b>Session 1: Designing Safeguards Information Systems (SIS)</b>	Chair: John Fonweban, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Look back at day 2</b> (reflections from participants)	Steve Swan, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">SIS objectives and institutional arrangements</a>	
<b>Country experiences:</b> <a href="#">Costa Rica – SIS objectives and design</a>	Natalia Diaz Zamora, Costa Rica
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">SIS functions in brief – and intro to exercise</a>	Lisen Runsten, UN-REDD Programme



<b>Interactive exercise:</b> <a href="#">Design of an SIS: information systems, information types and the role of participation</a>  (15 min report-back in plenary)	
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">REDD+SES: country experience on SIS</a>	Phil Franks, REDD+SES
<b>Interactive exercise:</b> <a href="#">Populating the SIS: Information types and sources in the context of specific safeguards</a>  Report-back	
<b><i>Afternoon</i></b>	
<b>Session 2: Summary of Information and next steps for country approaches to safeguards</b>	Chair: Joram Kagumbe
<b>Presentation:</b> <a href="#">Summary of Information – and intro to exercise</a>	Elina Väänänen, UN-REDD Programme
<b>Breakout groups:</b> <a href="#">Summary of information – audience and content</a>	
<b>Report-back from Summary of Info breakouts</b>  <b>Wrap-up:</b> Countries' next steps and priorities for future work on safeguards	Chair
<b>Closing remarks</b>	Mette Wilkie, UN-REDD Programme

#### 4. Participants' entry and exit self-assessment and workshop evaluation

A self-evaluation of participants' knowledge on key thematic areas at entry and exit to the workshop illustrated an overall increase in participants' understanding following the exchange, as visible in Figure 4 below.

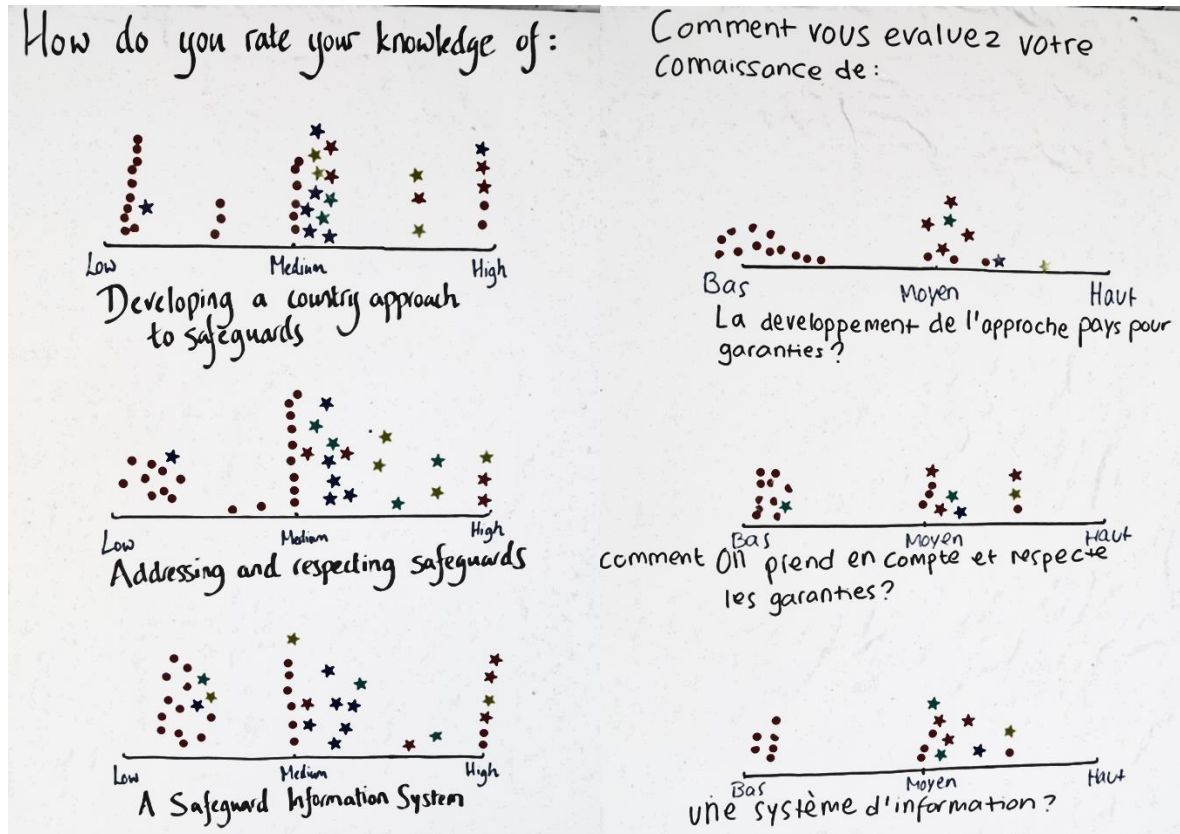


Figure 4: Entry and exit self-evaluation of the level of knowledge on developing country approaches to safeguards, addressing and respecting the safeguards and safeguard information system. Round stickers mark pre-workshop self-evaluation, while star-shaped stickers illustrate post-workshop perceptions.

The workshop evaluation singled out the clarification of the Cancun safeguards in the national context and the identification of benefits and risks of REDD+ actions as areas that were seen both useful and well understood. The utility of the country approach to safeguards (and the associated diagram) was highlighted by 33 percent of participants. Several also mentioned links to the national strategy and action plan process as an area that was clarified through the workshop.

The SIS and the summary of information were perceived as areas where further learning was needed by 40 percent of the participants. One participant commented on the “lack of concrete examples on how [safeguard information systems] have been put in place at the country level”, while another asked “would it be possible to have a completed module of a country's SIS?” Some also highlighted the lack of detail on analysing PLRs and addressing gaps in implementation of existing PLRs, reflecting the necessity to curtail the coverage of PLRs in the agenda due to time restrictions. Others mentioned setting goals and scope of a safeguards approach as a topic requiring further explanation.

Eighty-five percent of workshop participants highlighted the opportunity to learn from other countries' experiences particularly valuable. The “diversity of experience” was seen as enriching, as countries that gave presentations are at different stages of their safeguards work. The experiences

from Costa Rica, Congo, Viet Nam and Mexico were highlighted by several participants, as “useful examples for advancing our process”.

Interactive exercises and small group discussion were seen as particularly helpful by participants, as they were seen to allow for country exchange. Time allocation for interactive exercises and plenary sessions was however identified as an area for improvement by 40 percent of the participants. Some suggested making exercises more focused to allow for better time-keeping, others recommended reducing the number of interactive exercises in favour of more time in plenary or independent work.

Participants found the workshop provided relevant tools and guidance for further development of country approaches to safeguards. One participant wrote: “My country has done a lot of good work on addressing safeguards, but the respecting aspect is yet to be done. This workshop has provided a lot of useful guidance on the way forward.” Another welcomed the “opportunity to evaluate our level. We are going back with a lot to do”. The value of building a network was referred to by many: “We now have a network to exchange information and ask for help.” A [dedicated discussion topic](#) on the unredd.net discussion forum aims to continue this exchange online.

## 5. List of participants

Country	Participants
Cameroon	Daniel Seba
CAR	Maxime Thierry Dongbada-Tambano
Chad	Mahamat Hassane Idriss
Côte d'Ivoire	Alloua Kadjo Leyahi Quecmonde
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Raphaël Kasongo
Equatorial Guinea	Pablo Esono Esono Nchama
Gabon	Jacques Mouloungou
Ghana	Roselyn Adjei
Kenya	Jane Wamboi Joram Kagombe Maurice Otieno
Madagascar	Andriantsoavina Haribenja Ramaroseheno
Malawi	Teddie Kamoto Yoel Kirschner
Nigeria	Ndoma Akpet Tijjani Ahmed Zakirai Allen Turner (Chief Technical Advisor)
South Sudan	Kenyi Bullen Bagu
Sudan (the)	Sawsan Abdalla Ali
Tanzania	Gerald Kamwenda
The Republic of Congo	Henriette Tsoh-Ikouna Divine Niemet Ngampika
Uganda	Xavier Mugumya Stephen Mugabi
Zambia	Deuteronomy Kasaro Moses Kaumba
Zimbabwe	Memory Zirobwa
Costa Rica	Natalia Díaz Zamora
Mexico	Francisco Moreno
Viet Nam	Nguyen Trong Hung

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Participants</b>
CSO	Robert Chimambo, Climate Change Network/Chalimbana River Head-waters Trust (Zambia) Emmanuel Mutamba, Agro-ecological Alliance/ Green Living Movement (Zambia)
IP	Keddy Bosulu Mola, Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers de la RDC
REDD+ SES	Phil Franks
UNEP UN-REDD	Daniel Pouakouyou Steve Swan Emelyne Cheney Thais Narciso Tim Christophersen Mette Wilkie Mihaela Secrieru Lera Miles Lisen Runsten Elina Väänänen
UNDP UN-REDD	Wahida Shah Elsie Attafuah Ela Ionescu Fabien Monteils Judy Ndichu
FAO UN-REDD	Kristin DeValue John Fonweban
UNEP	Yunae Yi (Safeguard Advisor GSSU, Office for Operation, UNEP)

## 6. Appendix: Workshop input to the Global Review on Country approaches to REDD+ safeguards

### Key messages

1. Developing a country approach to the UNFCCC's Cancun safeguards for REDD+ is a non-linear and iterative process. The order in which countries have approached the different steps varies and often there is ongoing improvement.
2. When developing a national understanding of the Cancun safeguards, it can be helpful to focus on benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ actions first, rather than the safeguards alone. These benefits and risks can help to clarify the safeguards in accordance with national circumstances.
3. The immediate focus of addressing the safeguards may need to be existing policies, laws and regulations (PLRs), operational procedures and their implementation. PLRs can take years to revise or develop from scratch, but there is often much scope for improving the implementation of existing relevant PLRs.
4. Strengthening institutions should be central to the country approach to safeguards as effective institutions are essential for implementing the relevant PLRs (i.e. respecting safeguards). Strengthening institutions can also be cost- and time effective compared to PLR reform.
5. Several countries noted that they are designing their safeguard information system (SIS) to fulfill national objectives that go beyond UNFCCC requirements. In addition to the UNFCCC requirements, aligning their SIS with national agendas related to environment, forest management and sustainable development goals.

### Introduction: the Cancun safeguards

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), at its 16th meeting in 2010, adopted the Cancun Agreements<sup>i</sup>, which state that Parties who decide to implement REDD+ should promote and support seven safeguards when undertaking the five REDD+ activities. These “Cancun” safeguards are:

*a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;*

*b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;*

*c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;*

*d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70<sup>ii</sup> and 72<sup>iii</sup> of this decision;*

*e) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70<sup>ii</sup> of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits*

*f) Actions to address the risks of reversals; and*

*g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.*

Parties were also requested to establish a safeguard information system (SIS) to demonstrate how the seven safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the REDD+ activities and to provide a summary of information on this to the UNFCCC.

The COP at its 17th meeting (Decision 12/CP.17)<sup>iv</sup> decided that the SIS should “*provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis; be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time; ... be country-driven and implemented at the national level; and build upon existing systems, as appropriate*”. At its 19th meeting, the COP (Decision 12/CP.19)<sup>v</sup> decided that countries should start providing the summary of information “*after the start of the implementation of [REDD+] activities*” and at a frequency “*consistent with the provisions for submissions of national communications*” from non-Annex I Parties. Also at COP19, Parties decided (Decision 9/CP.19)<sup>vi</sup> that developing countries should provide the most recent summary of information on how all the safeguards have been addressed and respected before they can receive results-based payments.

As part of its support to countries, the UN-REDD Programme organized a regional exchange workshop for Africa on country approaches to REDD+ safeguards. The workshop was held 17-19 June 2015, in Nairobi, Kenya and attended by 31 participants from 19 African countries, as well as three participants from Costa Rica, Mexico and Viet Nam. The countries exchanged experiences on many issues. This brief summarises lessons that may assist other countries in understanding how to address and respect the Cancun safeguards, develop the SIS and produce a summary of information.

In addition to these collated experiences, country summaries from Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zambia were contributed to the Global Review.

### Country approaches to safeguards

Country approaches to safeguards will aim to respond to international REDD+ safeguard requirements in a way that is harmonious with national policy goals. This typically involves building on existing governance arrangements, with three core elements:

1. **Policies, laws and regulations** (PLRs) which define, *on paper*, what needs to be done in order to support implementation of REDD+ actions in a manner consistent with Cancun (and other) safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being *addressed*;
2. **Institutional arrangements** - the mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant PLRs are actually implemented *in practice*, i.e. how safeguards are being *respected*;
3. **Information systems and sources**, which collect and make available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

**Emerging perspectives:**

- There are several reasons for addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards through a country approach that can, among other things, help to:
  - Ensure that there is more equitable distribution of the benefits and costs of REDD+;
  - Design national REDD+ strategies/action plans (NS/APs) that will be more sustainable by taking into account wider socio-economic issues and environmental concerns that are likely to be important in tackling the underlying drivers of deforestation;
  - Attract financing for REDD+ actions because safeguards can reduce risk, a key factor in investment decisions; and
  - Meet the requirements of the different international organizations funding (or likely to fund) REDD+ payments for results
- REDD+ safeguards should complement national policies already in place. A REDD+ safeguards approach could play a role in filling gaps in broader national policies; for example, the formalisation of community participation in natural resource decision-making.
- Developing a country approach to safeguards is a non-linear and iterative process. The order in which countries have approached the different steps varies. For example, some countries start assessing implementation capacity before a comprehensive PLR analysis is completed. Many countries also expect the goals of a country approach to safeguards to be updated over time.
- A multi-stakeholder coordinating body, with government leadership, can make or inform decisions throughout the country approach process.

**Identifying benefits and risks**

In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, REDD+ implementation has the potential to deliver additional social and environmental benefits (also called “co-benefits”, “multiple benefits” or “non-carbon benefits” of REDD+). There are also potential risks to communities and to the environment. These benefits and risks will vary depending on the REDD+ actions that a country implements to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as where and how they are implemented. Identifying benefits and risks during the planning phase of REDD+ actions could be a key step both for developing a country approach to safeguards, and a national strategy or action plan.

**Emerging perspectives:**

- When developing a country approach to safeguards, it can be helpful to focus on benefits and risks first, rather than considering the Cancun safeguards alone. When these benefits and risks are compared to the safeguards, how they fit and the relevance of the individual safeguards to the national circumstances will often be apparent.
- Benefit and risk assessments can help to ensure that national safeguards frameworks are anchored in the NS/AP. A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), required by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), offers one way of analyzing the risks and benefits of REDD+ actions.



- When assessing benefits and risks, start with the concrete REDD+ actions that the country is considering as part of its NS/AP. The process of identifying benefits and risks of these actions leads to insight into whether they are appropriate and may generate ideas for additional, alternative or complementary policies and measures to implement REDD+.
- Many policies and measures relevant for REDD+ are not novel but have been tried before. Consequently, environmental and social risks and benefits may already be known and perhaps already incorporated in national safeguards frameworks.

### Addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards

What ‘addressing’ and ‘respecting’ the Cancun safeguards entails has not been defined under the UNFCCC, and countries can thus form their own interpretations.

‘Addressing safeguards’ is increasingly understood as ensuring that a coherent body of policies, laws, regulations (PLRs), and associated institutional arrangements, are in place to deal with the potential benefits and risks associated with REDD+ actions, and in doing so, enabling the application of the Cancun safeguards in the country context and to meet country safeguard goals.

Similarly, there is a growing consensus around a working definition of ‘respecting safeguards’ as involving the effective application of PLRs, through the associated institutional arrangements, to ensure they are implemented in practice *and* (most importantly) effect real and positive outcomes on the ground.

### Emerging perspectives:

- The Cancun safeguards, being a broad text, need to be clarified in the light of national circumstances to enable the relevance of existing PLRs to be assessed. If desired, the country’s interpretation of the Cancun safeguards can then be expressed in terms of existing PLRs.
- When deciding how to address the safeguards, a first step should be to identify ways to improve the implementation of these existing PLRs and procedures. PLRs can take years to revise or develop from new, and REDD+ safeguards alone may not provide sufficient justification for governments to revise or develop new legislation.
- Laws governing different sectors can, at times, be contradictory. Cross-sectoral collaboration is likely to be necessary to find ways of implementing such a legal framework in line with the goals for the NS/AP for REDD+.
- Strengthening institutions should be central to country approaches to safeguards, as effective institutions are essential for implementing the relevant PLRs (i.e. *respecting* safeguards). Strengthening institutions can also be cost- and time-effective compared to PLR reform.

## Developing safeguard information systems

A safeguard information system can be viewed as a combination of *existing* systems and sources of information, together with any new systems or information to fill gaps as needed, on how all of the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+.

Required as a key piece of national REDD+ architecture (or ‘Warsaw pillar’) under the UNFCCC, an SIS should be consistent with UNFCCC guidance:

- provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;
- be country driven and implemented at the national level;
- be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;
- provide information; and
- build on existing systems as appropriate.

Key SIS design considerations might include:

1. **SIS objectives** – what are the different domestic and international information needs that the system will respond to?
2. **SIS functions** – what operations does the system need to perform to meet the objectives of the SIS?
3. **SIS institutional arrangements** – who will be responsible for performing the different functions and operating the information system?

### Emerging perspectives:

- Several countries noted that they are designing their SIS to fulfil national objectives that go beyond or are more specific than UNFCCC requirements, aligning their SIS with national agendas related to environment, forest management and sustainable development goals.
- A sometimes overlooked objective of the SIS is to fulfil the right of stakeholders to have access to information. For example, community representatives may wish to draw on the SIS information in communication with the people that they are representing. This requires clear, simple content in the SIS design and in its products. It may also be desirable for an SIS to allow stakeholders to provide feedback in order to improve the system and identify lessons learned.
- Ensuring effective participation when setting objectives of the SIS, as well as collecting and disseminating information during its operation, is important to:
  - Enhance the quality and credibility of information
  - Ensure that stakeholders’ concerns are being considered
  - Build trust and broad support for REDD+
  - Hold the government accountable
- In the past, some countries have developed safeguards frameworks with principles, criteria and indicators (PCIs) that were: (1) too numerous to be feasibly maintained; and (2) developed in isolation from NS/AP processes. It is recommended to focus on a manageable number of PCIs that provide useful information on the benefits and risks of greatest concern.
- In order to show how safeguards are being respected, information will often need to be aggregated from the sub-national to the national level, since outcomes will happen at the local level. The national level institution(s) responsible for SIS will need to devise an approach of aggregating information from multiple subnational sources.

- Attribution of outcomes to a particular REDD+ action can be difficult and expensive. Where the outcome itself cannot be measured, an earlier step in the chain of causation could be targeted (e.g. “area of conservation concern protected as a result of REDD+ actions”; “rather than reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss as a result of REDD+ actions”).
- Non-indicator based approaches could also be useful – for example asking stakeholders what they perceive to be the ‘most significant change’, positive or negative, that has occurred as a result of REDD+ implementation. This requires little sophisticated technology but may involve high transaction costs in reaching out to different stakeholder constituencies.

### Engaging grassroots stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as those groups that have a stake/interest/right in the forest and those that will be affected either negatively or positively by REDD+ activities. They include relevant government agencies, formal and informal forest users, private sector entities, indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.

#### Emerging perspectives:

- National forest governance structures often do not reach grassroots levels, but communities need access to these structures. This includes ensuring that safeguards information reaches, and is accessible to, forest-dependent local communities, indigenous peoples and other relevant stakeholders.
- Some participants proposed that the right to consultation and consent should apply equally to both indigenous peoples and local communities.
- When and how to approach stakeholders is critical. It is important to be clear about what to say, when to say it and to whom, before starting the engagement. Participation needs to happen at the right time, and provide the right level information appropriate for grassroots stakeholders’ levels of knowledge. Care should be taken not to generate unrealistic expectations of what REDD+ safeguards processes could deliver in terms of respecting indigenous peoples’ and local communities rights, and their levels of participation in such processes.
- Gender considerations and different use and access rights for men and women need to be reflected in the country safeguards approach under the NS/AP.
- Consider taking different approaches to involving different stakeholder groups. With grassroots-level stakeholders, it can be more appropriate to discuss benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ actions, rather than indicator design.

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<sup>i</sup> Decision 1/CP.16: Section C. Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

<sup>ii</sup> Paragraph 70: *Encourages* developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances:

(a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;

(b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;

(c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;

(d) Sustainable management of forests;

(e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks

<sup>iii</sup> Paragraph 72: *Also requests* developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of appendix I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities

<sup>iv</sup> Decision 12/CP.17: Guidance for systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected and modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels referred to in decision 1/CP.16.

<sup>v</sup> Decision 12/CP.19: The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected.

<sup>vi</sup> Decision 9/CP.19: Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.