

Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Social and Environmental Standards in Ecuador, 2010-2011

REDD+ SES in Ecuador

In 2009 the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador (MAE) began working on the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES), which seek to assure additional social and environmental benefits, and mitigate potential risks, in the implementation of the mechanism Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+). The standards define guidelines for best practices within REDD+ policies and measures; evaluate the process of developing such policies and measures; evaluate the quality and impacts of the implementation of REDD+; and assist the early adopters of REDD+ in raising support for the program. The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance and CARE International provide the secretariat of the REDD+ SES initiative, with technical support from Proforest.

Development of the REDD+ SES

A first version of the standards was completed during March 2009-June 2010. In May 2009, representatives of the MAE and Conservation International (CI) participated in a workshop in Denmark to generate principles, criteria and indicators for the standards. In 2009, two workshops were held in Ecuador with representatives from civil society, indigenous nationalities and local communities for a process of consultation.

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During July 2010-December 2011, a pilot of the standards was implemented using the Socio Bosque Program (PSB) as a proxy for REDD+. A facilitating team was comprised of representatives from the MAE, CI-Ecuador and CARE Ecuador. In addition to assuring that the initiative complies with its objectives, the team supported the National Committee of the Standards (CNE) in interpreting and implementing the Standards in Ecuador. The CNE is comprised of 13 representative members: three from the government, five from civil society and five from local and indigenous communities. The facilitating team did not receive applications from the private or academic sectors, and therefore decided to invite a representative from each sector to compete for a position on the CNE. After holding a series of workshops with representatives of the government, civil society and indigenous nationalities, and submitting the standards to the MAE for its review, in June 2011 the CNE approved the first version of the national interpretation of the REDD+ SES indicators. These indicators are to be used to demonstrate that the REDD+ SES criteria have been met.

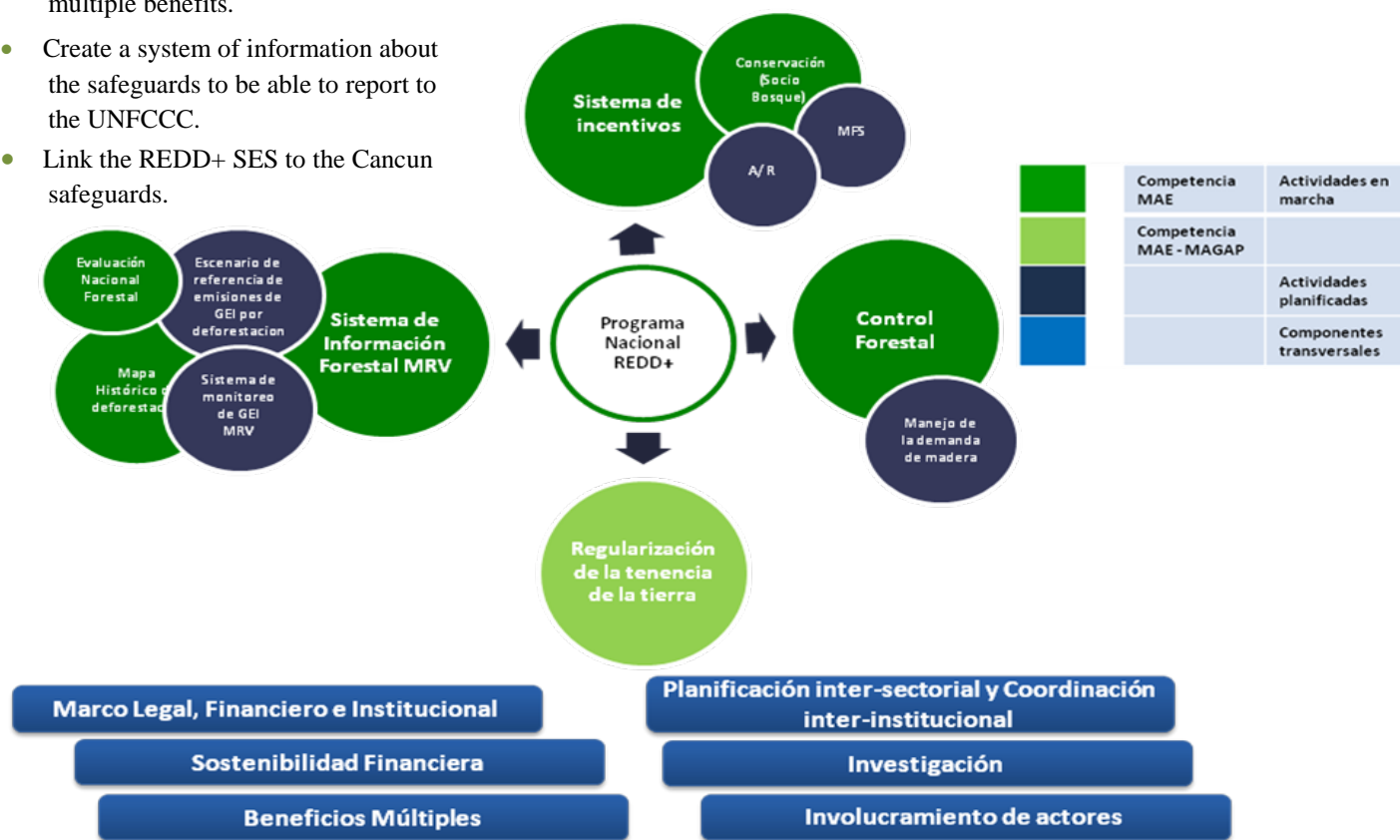
Implementation of the Socio Bosque Pilot

PSB is a MAE program aimed at maintaining biodiversity, lowering carbon emissions and reducing rural poverty through direct cash incentives—either to individual landowners or communities—for conservation of native forests and other priority ecosystems. Payment is contingent upon compliance with participants' agreements with the MAE, which last for 20 years. Each participant writes an investment plan, determining how the incentive payment will be used, and delivers a report of accounts, documenting execution of the plan.

From its creation in September 2008 until May 2011, Socio Bosque had benefited 67,307 people (17,422 families) through 1,208 conservation agreements in community-held collective lands. A total of 837,491 hectares (2,069,485 acres) of native forests and other priority ecosystems had been protected under the program.

Challenges for Ecuador

- Coordinate with the UN-REDD safeguards. An analysis is underway of the complementarity between the Standards and the social and environmental principles and criteria developed for UN-REDD to support Ecuador's compliance with the safeguards and ensure multiple benefits.
- Create a system of information about the safeguards to be able to report to the UNFCCC.
- Link the REDD+ SES to the Cancun safeguards.



Lessons Learned

At the National Level

- Tools must be adapted for capacity building and public consultation.
- The program must provide a transparent process that involves the different actors that might be affected.
- The facilitating team must meet regularly to coordinate its activities.
- It is important to identify and involve key actors from the beginning of the process to avoid repeating trainings.

About the Initiative

- The large number of indicators complicated monitoring for reasons of applicability, time, cost and work.
- The translation of the indicators was not always adequate, and the team frequently had to refer to the English version.
- Technical support is needed to identify available information at the national level in order to report on the indicators.
- Trainings about REDD+ and the REDD+ SES are necessary before starting the process of national interpretation. A methodology must be developed to determine the expectations of this process. Furthermore, the already extensive modifications to the indicators must be limited.
- "Work Rules" should be established when the CNE meets in order to ensure that the committee functions smoothly and transparently.