**REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards Initiative (REDD+ SES)**

**International Steering Committee – Terms of Reference and Rules**

**Version 4: 10th December, 2012**

The purpose of this document is to define the remit, scope and composition of the REDD+SES International Standards Committee (ISC). It is intended to contribute to the transparent governance of the REDD+ SES Initiative, to be a publicly available document which outlines the way the ISC operates.

# Purpose and Role of the ISC

* 1. **Overall Purpose**

The International Steering Committee (ISC) is responsible for the governance of the whole initiative, ensuring that it adheres to best practice for the development and use of international social and environmental standards and acts in accordance with the goals of the initiative.

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| **Goals of the REDD+ SES Initiative**  To support the development and implementation of effective social and environmental standards for government-led (national or sub-national) REDD+ programs which make a substantial contribution to human rights, poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation goals while avoiding social or environmental harm. |

* 1. **Specific Responsibilities**

1.2.1 **The ISC oversees the process of international standards development**. This includes the following functions:

* Provide strategic guidance on the content and process of standards development to achieve the aims of the initiative.
* Approve each version of the Standards before publication: drafts for public consultation and final documents.
* Approve responses to comments received during public consultations.

1.2.2 **The ISC oversees the process of using the international standards at country level.[[1]](#footnote-2)** This includes:

* Development and implementation of a process for the use of the REDD+ SES at country level, including:
  + Country level governance
  + Interpretation of the REDD+ SES at country level
  + The in-country assessment process, ie: monitoring, reviewing and reporting.
* Development and implementation of an international review mechanism of the process for using the standard at country level.

1.2.3 **The ISC provides general oversight and support to the REDD+SES Initiative**. This includes:

* Reviewing the consistency of overall implementation of the REDD+ SES across countries
* Promoting and supporting the use of REDD+ SES
* Supporting fundraising activities.
  1. **Relationship with the Secretariat**
* The ISC shall be convened and supported by the REDD+ SES Secretariat (currently led by the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and CARE). The Secretariat shall be responsible for producing the draft standards and accompanying documents, reporting to and acting on decisions of the ISC, facilitating communication and consultation with other stakeholders and supporting the use of the standards in different countries.
* The Secretariat shall be responsible for the day-to-day running of the REDD+ SES Initiative, under the guidance of the ISC.

# Composition of the Committee

* 1. **Overall intention of composition**

The standards committee represents a balance of interests and geographic regions. The Committee is composed of Members who belong to constituencies and regions. The Committee reflects a balance between geographic regions, between government, civil society (including Indigenous Peoples and local communities), and private sector perspectives and development/human rights and environmental/conservation perspectives. The majority of Committee Members should be from countries where REDD+ is/will be implemented, recognising that developing country governments and civil society should lead the adoption of the standards. It should reflect a balance between government and civil society (including Indigenous Peoples and local communities), and private sector perspectives, and also a balance between development/human rights and environmental/conservation perspectives (*see Table 1*).

* Countries are categorised by region. The ISC covers 3 “REDD+ regions”: Africa; Asia&Pacific; Latin America-Caribbean (i.e. regions with REDD+ implementing countries) and one category of ‘Non-REDD+ implementing countries/Global Organizations’.
* Participation should be balanced between regions, if possible.
* The Committee shall contain no more than 25 Members.
  1. **Representation**

With the exception of governmental representatives, committee membership is as individuals rather than organisations: members represent a viewpoint of a constituency based on their individual experience. However, Members should currently be actively involved in the constituency they represent.

Members must have formal approval of the organisation for which they work to be a Member of the ISC, but do not necessarily represent them.

If a Member is no longer working within their constituency, they are considered to have automatically resigned from the committee and a replacement shall be sought. If a Member changes jobs, but remains working within the same constituency, the ISC Members may decide to invite this person to continue serving on the ISC (subject to approval of their new organization).

* 1. **Alternates**
* Each Committee Member must nominate one Alternate.
* Committee Members should seek for their Alternate to be of a similar seniority and level of experience to themselves. Alternates may work for a different organisation within the same constituency or the same organisation as the Committee Member.
* The Committee Member should make every effort to attend ISC meetings, but where this is impossible their Alternate may attend meetings, vote and take part in decision making and discussions on behalf of the Committee member.
* The Committee Member must inform the Secretariat in writing that they will be represented by their Alternate prior to the start of a meeting.

*Table 1. Constituency composition of the ISC*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | *Breakdown by REDD+ Region* | | |  |  |
|  | **Constituency** | **REDD+ Implementing Regions** | *Africa* | *Asia and Pacific* | *Latin America-Caribbean* | **Non-REDD+ Implementing Countries/Global Organisations** | **Total** |
| 1 | **Governments** | **6** | 2 | 2 | 2 | **2** | **8** |
| 2 | **Indigenous peoples organisations** | **3** | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | **3** |
| 3 | **Community associations** | **3** | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | **3** |
| 4 | **Social NGOs** | **2** | Rotate participation between regions | | | **2** | **4** |
| 5 | **Environmental NGOs** | **2** | Rotate participation between regions | | | **2** | **4** |
| 6 | **Private Sector** | **1** | Rotate participation between regions | | | **2** | **3** |
|  | **Total** | **17** |  |  |  | **8** | **25** |

* 1. **Individual Committee Member commitments**

The members of the ISC commit to:

* Work constructively with other Committee Members and the Secretariat in order to achieve the objectives and serve the best interests of the Initiative and develop commonly acceptable solutions to all issues presented and addressed.
* Respect the views of other Committee Members and the right of each member to share their expertise and opinions with the group.
* Set aside time to participate in at least one face-to-face 3-day meeting per year, and two to three phone conferences per year.
* Set aside time to review draft standards, or processes as required (up to approximately five days per year).

The members of the ISC are encouraged to:

* Voice the views of their constituencies as well as their own individual experience and expertise.
* Establish and use mechanisms to communicate with interested stakeholders in their constituency. Using effective communication methods and as resources allow, this aims to ensure that a wider range of views are being represented across the geographical regions and sectors of their constituency, strengthening the Initiative network and engaging Initiative stakeholders.
* Interact with their constituency and others to actively initiate discussions and feedback on the deliberations of the ISC.
* Promote and support the work of the REDD+ SES Initiative through their professional activities.

# Facilitation of the work of the Committee

* The Secretariat organises and facilitates the work of the Committee.
* The Committee may decide to define a role of co-chairs in the future.

# Term of Office and Election of Committee Members

**4.1 Term of Office**

* The Term of Office for a Committee Member is 3 years, with the term beginning at the start of the first day of the month after they are elected (or the next ISC meeting, whichever is sooner) and finishing 36 months later.
* A Committee Member is considered to have automatically resigned at the end of their Term of Office.
* A Committee Member is considered to have automatically resigned if they or their nominated Alternate fail to attend two consecutive ISC meetings (including both face to face meetings and conference calls).
* A Committee Member may repeat their Term of Office for another 3-year period, after which there must be a period of at least one term before they can return to Office as a Committee Member.
* A Committee Member may resign from the ISC at any time during their term, although Members are encouraged to complete their full term. Such resignation shall become effective upon receipt and acknowledgement of a written notification of resignation by the Secretariat.
* The timing of the terms for the Committee Members shall be staggered such that approximately one third of the current committee are renewed each year.

**4.2 Election of Committee Members**

* Election of new Committee Members shall take place in advance of ISC meetings through electronic voting by the current Committee Members.
* A new Member can be self-nominated, or nominated by a current Member, the Secretariat, or any REDD+ stakeholder through writing to the Secretariat.
* Candidates shall fill in a simple template describing their suitability for the role, which shall be shared with the Committee Members before the election.
* The Secretariat shall organize:
  + dissemination of Membership opportunity,
  + a process for submitting nominations (including the requirement for candidates to fill in a simple template describing their suitability for the role, to be shared with the Committee Members before the election)
  + electronic voting.

# ISC Meetings

* 1. **Meeting protocol**
* The ISC shall meet at least once each year in person.
* Meetings shall be called if and when necessary, as determined by the Secretariat in consultation with Committee Members, and dependent on available budget. Additionally, meetings may also be conducted via email and telephone/multi-media conference calls.
* The agenda and supporting documentation for meetings shall be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with Committee Members, and approved by the Committee at the beginning of each meeting.
* The Secretariat shall disseminate the draft documentation to the Committee at least ten working days prior to the meeting.
* Minutes shall be taken during the meeting by a person appointed by the Secretariat. The Committee shall be informed at the start of the meeting who shall be taking minutes.
  1. **Observers**
* Representatives of other countries and organisations may be invited by the Secretariat to observe ISC meetings, providing there is no objection by Committee Members.
* With the agreement of the Committee Members present at a meeting, observers may participate in the discussions and deliberations of the ISC.
* Observers are not allowed to participate in the decision making of the ISC.

# Decision making process

**6.1 Consensus**

* The ISC shall make decisions by consensus – defined as “*General agreement, without sustained opposition on substantial issues, by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments*” (definition taken from : ISO/IEC Guide 2: 2004 Standardisation and related activities, general vocabulary)
* Decision-making may also take place at meetings outside of the annual face-to-face meeting. These can be at additional face-to-face meetings or at meetings held remotely by internet/telephone based communication.

**6.2 Quorum**

* No decisions may be passed (other than administrative) without quorum being present.
* Quorum shall be defined as the presence of least 51% of the Committee Members.

# Sub–Committees

**7.1 Sub-Committees**

* The ISC may create sub-committees to support the development or implementation of any of their responsibilities.
* Sub-committees may be made up of members of the ISC, but may also include external experts or stakeholders as required.
* The ISC shall approve terms of reference for each sub-committee defining, inter alia, the objectives, scope, expected outputs, time frame, process for appointing members of the sub-committee and the process for reporting back to the ISC.

# Transparency and public information

**7.1 Publicly available information**

* The ISC and Secretariat shall ensure that as much information as possible relating to ISC meetings and decisions, and development of the REDD+ SES, are made available publicly. This should include:
  + Dates of ISC meetings (past and upcoming), and a summary version of the final minutes of the ISC meetings.
  + Announcement and results of Members elections;
  + Use of REDD+ SES at country level - progress and updates;
  + Complaints and responses;
  + Any REDD+ SES process or technical documents, such as these Terms of Reference.

# Language

**8.1 Working language**

* The working language of REDD+ SES ISC is English.
* All key documents about the standards and processes shall be translated as needed into other languages.
* The English versions of all official documents represent the REDD+ SES approved version: all translation queries shall be checked against that version.

# Amendments/modifications

**9.1 Amendments and modifications**

* These Terms of Reference are set in consultation and agreement with the ISC, and can be modified by the ISC during any ISC meeting.

1. ‘Country level’ refers to the level of the jurisdiction leading the REDD+ program, which could be national, state, provincial or other level. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)