

**MINUTES OF SECOND MEETING  
SUB-TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP  
ON ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS**

**19 April 2012, Flower Garden Hotel**

**Key speaker abbreviations: Mdme Pham Minh Thoa – Dr. Pham Manh Cuong, Mr. Steve Swan and Mr. Phil Franks**

Objectives:

1. Safeguards for National REDD+ design and implementation: Legality and Practicability are presented.
2. Three major international initiatives that can inform a national safeguards process introduced
3. Lessons learnt from ‘early starter’ countries’ national safeguard experiences shared
4. Options and Issues for Developing National Approaches to Safeguards presented
5. Follow-up actions to commence a national safeguards process identified and allocated

<b>Time</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Responsible people</b>
13.30 – 13.45	Introduction of meeting agenda	Chair
13.45 – 14.00	Safeguards for National REDD+ design and implementation: Legality and Practicability	VNFOREST
14.00 – 14.15	FCPF – Strategic Environmental & Social Assessment	World Bank
14.15 – 14.30	UN-REDD draft Social and Environmental Principles & Criteria	UN-REDD
14.30 – 14.45	REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards: Overview	CARE
14.45 – 15.00	REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards: Some Lessons	CARE
15.00 – 15.15	Comparative analysis of Cancun Safeguards, FCPF SESA, UN-REDD SEPC, and REDD+ SES	UNEP-WCMC
15.15 – 15.30	Options and Issues for Developing National Approaches to Safeguards	UNEP-WCMC
15.30 – 16.15	Discussion and agreement on harmonized approach to national ‘standards’ for REDD+ co-benefits	All
16.15 – 16.30	- Agreement and assignment on time-bound action points	All

Expected outputs:

- Tentative action points for next steps in national programmatic safeguards process
- Contents and plan for next meeting in June 2012

**Key Comments:**

- There are concerns about the linkages among various standards, including FLEGT. In fact, FLEGT and LACEY have their offices in VNFOREST which is managing Vietnam REDD+ Office. VNFOREST is responsible for facilitating collaboration between National REDD+ Program which is running quite smoothly even though there have not yet been a coordination mechanism in place. Given the importance of safeguards, MARD will look to establish a joint workforce to work on this issue.
- The assessment on the performance of the standards against the criteria, like any monitoring system is made every 2-3 years. This review together with a SG information system in place is needed in order to ensure the integration of these standards into national level according to assessment process which is described in the SES.
- In the case of REDD+ SES, it is a purely voluntary process in which countries using it want to demonstrate high performance against environmental and social criteria.
- The public consultation for REDD+ SES has been done through website at international level. At national level, however, country needs to develop its own indicators (80 of them and can be adaptable to individual country context) which then should be opened up for comments and consultations at both national and local levels to ensure the back-up with ground-level consultations.
- It does not necessarily need to develop all the principles and criteria right away. The existing standards are very flexible and open for negotiation, especially during their development. However, the coordination needs to include all developing parties during this process. A review on the relevant policies in VN and compare with the Cancun text is needed to determine where the gaps lie across different Decrees and Circulars – for example, certain policies are in place for indigenous groups in the Central Highlands. Other principles such as SESA-WB has been introduced long time ago, not just since the emergence of REDD+. It has been indicated that the process of safeguards development needs to be consistent with national REDD+ process. This means that it is not necessary to develop a complete set of safeguards or apply all the existing safeguards right away. The formalisation needs to ensure the indicators set is open and flexible for negotiation. The current draft UN-REDD has been identified as a guidance document that encourages REDD+ countries to apply rather than a compulsory document. Under the context of REDD+ that has not yet been accepted by UNFCCC, there is likely a high level of uncertainty. There should be an international formalization which will provide a foundation of national application. This can also be used as a framework to review the existing policies in country to determine any additional policies if necessary.
- REDD+ SG are designed to measure the reverse causality. However, experience from other programs suggests that providing alternatives to livelihoods can prevent deforestation and degradation due to poverty. This is exemplified in the case of fire monitoring which increased as a result of providing alternative livelihoods (tourism and agriculture) which needed to be protected against fire
- From the experience of REDD+ SES process in other countries, governance is the first phase of the SES process which relies on the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform. This often uses existing bodies (i.e. national REDD Working Group, Nepal; Kalimantan established group under Provincial REDD Working Group; Ecuador established a body that in fact created a new structure that was not there, and turned a lot of people to support REDD+ provided that the SG were upheld).

## **Discussion – reflecting upon what VN should do for a national social and environment SG process for REDD+?**

Three suggested options

1. Expand existing initiatives in country
2. Identify key elements of safeguards and develop national safeguards against these elements
3. Start from one existing set, expand for complete coverage, dependent on country needs

### **Main comments:**

- Safeguard is considered as a sensitive and complicated issue in the context of uncertainty of REDD+. There is no safeguards set that has been formally accepted by COP therefore there is a political risk associated with this issue. There is a great concern of the sustainability and it is highly recommended to use the existing system although it is normally easier to develop the completely new system. Though REDD emerged since 2005, the current progress is still being readiness preparation. Safeguards therefore shouldn't be fully developed before REDD+ is formally recognised. The part 2.2 in Annex 1 of Cancun safeguard should be used for initial safeguard action in Viet Nam.
- Viet Nam used to have national community forest management committee (organised by GIZ, VNFOREST etc.) which can be an important body in formulating SG for community forest management.
- There have been many existing initiatives in Viet Nam that can be considered as its response to safeguards such as the protection of rights of ethnic minority group and women. However these are not systematic. It therefore needs to combine Option 1 and 3 to start from a safeguard set and strengthen existing measures, develop and test new systems.
- VN is going through process of legal review in forestry sector and identifying gaps. In VN there is a need to review the policy systems further for not only REDD+ but also for FLEGT and this can serve for different purposes other processes rather than just look to respond to international requirements
- It is likely easier with a start from Option 3 as there is no structure in place for Option 1 and stick with a certain principle and use this as a framework to review and identify gaps as well as additional policies needed. For the out-of-date policies, a temporary standards system needs to be created for review/adjustment
- Option 1 seems most feasible because we can base on 7 points in the Annex 1 of Cancun which can be used as a foundation to compare and review the existing legal framework to identify out-dated or inappropriate policies.
- VNFOREST and SNV collaborating on the High Biodiversity Project sponsored by BMU that has a strong focus on biodiversity. This project could be used to develop ToR to be drafted and shared with STWG SG for comments in order to develop a roadmap for national policy review and development of safeguard system for Viet Nam. This can be used as technical inputs for subsequent meetings of the STWG-SG
- Potentially started with Option 1 that could lead to the beginning point for Option 3. There is a need to review the existing processes in the country, E.g PGA starting with regards to REDD+ to identify areas that pilot Provinces look to monitor.

- Vietnam ratified UNFCCC and REDD+ is being negotiated under UNFCCC, therefore VN will have to meet with at least the minimum requirement. Once REDD+ is officially accepted, VN aims to have in place a complete safeguard system or at least a safeguard information system for national implementation.

**Actions:**

- SNV to capture minutes and circulate minutes through REDD+ Network and papers from UNEP/WCMC together with PPPTs.
- SNV prepares first cut draft ToR on development a roadmap for national policy review and development of safeguards system for VN for internal sharing within Project Management. Following distribution for wider comments.
- STWG SG to consider to structurally identify more limited number of people to work on these issues – e.g. expert groups within bigger STWG to work on different themes.
- Next meeting first or second week of June 2012.

**Close and thank you.**