

## Summary Narrative

In 1996, Government of Nepal enacted Environment Protection Act that provides a clear legal provision of IEE/ EIA and responsible agencies to enforce this law and its bylaw. Since then environmental and social safeguards have been taken into consideration in development proposals, plans, projects and activities through the Environment Assessment process. It is mandatory by Law that all information related to the assessment process has to be disclosed to public for transparency and wider participation of relevant stakeholders. Though there is no legal provision for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in existing Laws, SEA is the practice for long-term sector Plans and mega-projects in Nepal. Besides domestic efforts, Nepal is also actively participating in international dialogues to design safeguard standards, information contents, reporting channels and periods.

Nepal's REDD+ efforts started after approval of its Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) in July 2008. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) established a REDD Cell to prepare the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). Nepal's R-PP was approved in October 2010, aiming to *reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation through forest conservation and carbon enhancement, addressing the livelihoods concerns of poor and socially marginalized forest dependent people, and establishing effective policy, regulatory and institutional structures for sustainable development ....*

The REDD implementation Centre (RIC) is currently taking the lead in REDD+ readiness and demonstration activities. To avoid negative impacts and ensure positive benefits in terms of livelihood improvements and rights of forest dependent communities, the R-PP has recommended having Social and Environmental Safeguard Assessment (SESA) to design an Environmental Social Management Framework (ESMF). The R-PP also recommended using REDD+ SES to define and build support for a high level of social and environmental performance of REDD+ programs in Nepal.

Nepal's engagement in both SESA and REDD+ SES processes has improved national capacity and will continue in future as per the Doha decision. A multi-stakeholder led process has enhanced national capacity and shared ownership in designing a safeguard system considering our national circumstance and capability. Nepal also learnt that a REDD+ program demands good co-ordination among stakeholders at all levels. Due to the multi-layered nature of institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation there has been increased uncertainties in implementing the ESMF. Therefore, there is a need of strong political commitment for successful implementation of REDD safeguards. Consequently, the current national standard committee needs to be upgraded to a higher level.

The active participation of REDD+ CSO and IPs alliance in both processes has enhanced their understanding about national approach of defining safeguard principles, criteria and indicators. It has also added value in improving forest governance and aligning the REDD+ process to national forest policy and strategies. Involvement of CSO/IP networks in grassroots REDD+ capacity building has improved local level participation in the REDD process. This has very positive impacts at policy and political levels to extend scientific forest management (SFM) in all types of forests; which will contribute to enhancing co-benefits of forests beyond carbon. Nepal has also realized that political commitment is important to enhance inter-agency cooperation to comply with relevant international agreements regarding safeguards such as UNFCCC, UNCBD, CITES etc.

Nepal recently submitted her 5<sup>th</sup> communication report to CBD, which reiterates her commitment to meet Aichi targets of biodiversity conservation. This displays willingness and commitment to define and interpret safeguard



standards through a country-led process. Aforesaid facts reveal that there is scope to integrate safeguard information from various sources through existing institutions and mechanisms.

RIC is still facing challenges to secure consensus on many issues due to complex stakeholder landscape and diverse interests. Weak understanding on REDD+ safeguards has caused problems in interpretation and prioritization of indicators and its relevancy in our context and capability. There is need for further clarity from international agreements for better understanding of REDD+ safeguards at national level.

To design its SIS Government of Nepal is currently executing PLR assessment with financial and technical support of FCPF and UN-REDD at national and sub-national level. Nepal's experience in SESA and REDD+ SES process is also supportive to design appropriate institutional arrangements for REDD+ safeguard implementation, monitoring and communication. The ESMF report and upcoming REDD+SES monitoring plan will guide to develop needful operational guideline to define responsibility, process, and procedure to monitor safeguard implementation and prepare national summary report.

The on-going work at RIC on development of Forest Management Information System (FMIS) to support the MRV system will also help to prepare a data sharing protocol and information disclosure mechanism. Before Emission Reduction Program development for sub-national level, RIC is working to prepare an analytical report to suggest effective Grievance Redress Mechanism with financial support from FCPF.

RIC has commissioned consulting work to analyze existing Gaps in PLR and institutions to implement REDD+ strategy with financial and technical support of FCPF and UN-REDD. Other analytical work such as carbon tenure, benefit sharing, GRM and REDD+ implementation framework will also help in identifying new PLR, institutions and procedures required to implement Cancun Safeguards. At the moment, there is no clear picture of institutional set-up for SIS. However, the proposed institutions and mechanism to operate NFMIS could also be good guidance to establish effective institution to implement, monitor and report REDD+ safeguard systems in Nepal.

There are still ambiguities in UNFCCC decisions regarding REDD+ SIS. The Durban and Warsaw decisions are very generic and countries have to define scope of safeguard standards, indicators, summary report content, and reporting channels through national-led process and approach. There is huge challenge to improve coordination to integrate data and institutional responsibilities across REDD+ implementation institutions. Countries like Nepal which intends to pilot sub-national ERP along with national readiness do not have a clear picture of how safeguard systems designed for sub-national programmes could be nested in a national safeguard system. The following questions are relevant:

- ◆ Can UN-REDD to prepare a list of potential information required to provide a summary report on safeguards implementation as per Warsaw framework?
- ◆ Are there role models of how data sharing systems can be improved to produce a summary report?
- ◆ How can countries use their experience with SESA/ESMF and REDD+ SES processes in designing SIS?
- ◆ How can UN-REDD assist in capacity building for designing SIS in Asia Pacific Region?

For more information, please contact the contributor and the Nepal Team:

**Mr. Resham Dangi**

Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation

E-mail: [reshamdangi@gmail.com](mailto:reshamdangi@gmail.com)

