**REDD+SES International Review Mechanism: Draft**

13th December 2012

This draft is based on a paper prepared by Proforest Initiative for discussion by the REDD+ SES International Steering Committee, and on decisions and discussion by the committee in Oxford, UK, 30th October to 1st November 2012.

**1. Objectives of the REDD+SES International Review mechanism**

1. To provide an independent international review of:
2. The *process* *of developing* REDD+SES at country level (Steps 1-6 of the REDD+SES Guidelines);
3. The *country-specific interpretation* of REDD+ SES content (principles, criteria and indicators);
4. The country–led *process* *of assessing* country REDD+ programs against these standards (Steps 7-10 of the REDD+SES Guidelines).
5. To provide feedback, guidance and support to participating countries in relation to the REDD+SES process in their country.
6. To act as a control mechanism for claims made in relation to the use of the REDD+SES Initiative’s standards and guidelines ie. to clarify whether the REDD+ SES is being ‘fully applied’ and if not, the extent of any differences from the REDD+ SES content and process.

**2. Process for REDD+SES International Review**

The REDD+SES International Review mechanism will be comprised of four main review stages. See Diagram 1.

**2.1 Review of the process for country-specific interpretation**

The aim of this review is to provide feedback on the draft plan for the use of REDD+ SES (during Step 4) - which focuses on governance and interpretation phases of the REDD+ SES process- before it is finalized. The review highlights any significant variances from the guidelines in terms of process. The aim of the review is to provide suggestions for improvement based on the guidelines and on experiences in other countries.

This is a desk review carried out by the REDD+SES Secretariat (possibly using the support of external consultants) and is shared with the facilitation team and the Standards Committee in the country and with the International Steering Committee (ISC). Once the country’s plan for the use of REDD+ SES has been finalized, the REDD+ SES Secretariat will add a section on how any comments in the review have been addressed and the review is published along with the plan on the REDD+ SES website.

The review of the draft plan for the use of REDD+ SES is undertaken during Step 4 of the REDD+ SES process which focuses on the governance and interpretation phases of the REDD+ SES process. It is a desk review carried out by the REDD+SES Secretariat (possibly using the support of external consultants) and is shared with the facilitation team, the Standards Committee in the country and with the International Steering Committee (ISC). The review highlights any significant variances from the guidelines in terms of process. The aim of the review is to provide suggestions for improvement based on the guidelines and on experiences in other countries before the plan is finalised.

Following the review and once the country’s plan for the use of REDD+ SES has been finalized, the REDD+ SES Secretariat will add a section to the review document on how any comments have been addressed and the review is published along with the plan on the REDD+ SES website.

**2.2 Review of the content of country-specific interpretation**

This review is undertaken in two stages:

1. *Review of draft country-specific indicators*

This review provides feedback on the draft country-specific indicators (developed during Step 6), highlighting any differences compared with the REDD+ SES framework for indicators and explaining the intent behind the REDD+ SES indicators to justify the comments, as appropriate. The review is desk-based and undertaken by the REDD+ SES Secretariat (possibly using the support of external consultants). It is shared with the facilitation team, the Standards Committee in the country and the ISC but is not published on the REDD+SES website at this stage. It is usually done during the first public comment period so that the facilitation team, the Standards Committee and any working groups can take the feedback into consideration when preparing a new draft for the second public comment period. The facilitation team, in discussion with the country-level Standards Committee, may decide to publish the REDD+ SES Secretariat comments to explain any amendments to stakeholders.

1. *Review of final country-specific REDD+ SES principles, criteria and indicators*

Once the country-specific indicators are finalized (on completion of Step 6) there is a formal review of the country’s REDD+ SES content (principles, criteria and indicators). This review is desk-based and undertaken by the REDD+ SES Secretariat (possibly with support from external consultants and members of the ISC). The review identifies any differences compared with the international REDD+ SES principles and criteria (REDD+ SES guidelines stipulate that principles and criteria should not be changed), as well as any substantial differences compared with the framework for indicators. The report indicates if the REDD+ SES has been ‘fully applied’ in terms of consistency of country-level principles, criteria and indicators with the international REDD+ SES, and if not, what differences exist. The ISC reviews and approves the review of final country specific REDD+ SES principles, criteria and indicators before publication on the REDD+ SES website.

**2.3 Review of the country-level assessment process**

This review provides feedback on the draft assessment plan (during Step 7) that defines the process for compiling, analyzing reviewing and disseminating the assessment report. The review highlights any differences compared with the REDD+ SES guidelines. The review is desk-based and undertaken by the REDD+ SES Secretariat (possibly using the support of external consultants). It is shared with the facilitation team, the Standards Committee in the country and the ISC. Once the country’s assessment plan has been finalized, the REDD+ SES Secretariat will add a section on how any comments in the review have been addressed and the review is published along with the final assessment plan on the REDD+ SES website. The aim is to improve the assessment process before implementation.

**2.4. Review of the process for using REDD+ SES at country level**

This final stage provides a formal review of the full process followed in the country in relation to governance, interpretation and assessment, i.e. the full ten step REDD+ SES process. This is undertaken once the assessment report has been published and a report has been produced of the process used for the assessment (on completion of Step 10). This review includes a country visit and consultations with stakeholders. It is undertaken by a small team (eg. 2 to 3 people) which may be made up of members of the ISC or consultants approved by the ISC. The team should include people with expertise on relevant social and environmental issues and knowledge of the country context, and, ideally, should also include experience of REDD+ SES in another country. The REDD+ SES secretariat organizes the review following terms of reference approved by the ISC and provides technical support to the review team. The review identifies any differences from the REDD+ SES guidelines. The report indicates if the REDD+ SES process has been ‘fully applied’, and if not, what differences exist. The draft report is shared with the facilitation team and the Standards Committee at country level who are provided with an opportunity to comment. The ISC reviews and approves the report, taking into account the comments received from stakeholders in the country. The report of the review is published on the REDD+ SES website.

This final stage of review is voluntary and financed by the country concerned. The REDD+ SES secretariat may be able to assist with funding.

**Diagram 1. Stages of review in relation to the process for using REDD+ SES at country level**

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**Further issues to address and issues for feedback from the ISC members**

1. This document proposes that the reviews should be sent from the REDD+ SES Secretariat to the facilitation team and also to the country-level Standards Committee (for example to the chair or focal point). This will ensure that all formal communication about reviews goes to both bodies. The day-to-day technical support and other communications would usually just be between the REDD+ SES Secretariat and the facilitation team, unless the country-level Standards Committee requests more direct involvement.
2. This document proposes that the review undertaken by country visit after the assessment is completed (Step 10) should cover the full REDD+ SES process (Steps 1-10) and not just the assessment stage (Steps 7-10)? It seems to be a good opportunity to cover the full process but this was not discussed in detail at the ISC meeting.
3. Governance: should a committee or sub-committee of the REDD+SES International Steering Committee be charged with overseeing the International Peer Review Process (eg. International Review Panel, Committee or Working Group)? This group would need:
   1. ToRs for the committee/sub-committee;
   2. Transparent decision-making mechanisms;

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| Requires meaningful and independent decision-making; ie. must be free of conflict of interests to ensure impartiality to comment on the way a country has used the guidelines and/or their performance against those guidelines. |

1. For all reviews, the following aspects need to be further clarified.
   1. Mechanisms/tools to comment on significant variations from guidelines and framework for indicators and/or to comment on assessment reports;
   2. Mechanism for countries to respond to committee comments;
   3. Mechanisms to put final review findings in public domain.
2. For desk reviews: A pool of technical experts (consultants) will be needed to carry out preliminary reviews of process of development of country-level standards and/or process of assessment.
3. Mechanism for approval of technical experts, including minimum requirements and criteria.
4. For country visit reviews: A system of appointing participants for teams to make Country Review Visits will be needed, and for reporting back to the International Peer Review Committee and country.

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| Costs would be high [external funding essential or would country pay?]  Would need to be sure the visit was meaningful and added value to the reports  Potential benefits: Meaningful opportunity to engage with principal actors and suggest improvements to process. Opportunity to increase capacity in country (both recipient and members of team).  To what extent would comment on/engagement in content and assessment issues be inevitable? |

1. A Grievance / Conflict Resolution mechanism