

Vietnam REDD+ Network

Sub-Working Technical Group

Environmental and Social Safeguards

Background

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD) first emerged as a potential response to tackling the > 17 % greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions arising from the global forestry sector in 2007. At this time, the notion of “co-benefits” was raised in the Bali Action Plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), along with the potential of REDD to complement the aims and objectives of other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Bali Action Plan also opened the way to broadening the scope of REDD to include “conservation of forest carbon stocks”, “sustainable management of forests”, and “enhancement of forest carbon stocks” (i.e. ‘REDD+’).

Recognising the environmental and social risks of REDD+, a series of safeguards were developed and adopted by the UNFCCC in 2010 (see 1/CP.16, reproduced here in Annex I). The Cancun safeguards present the aspirations for addressing the potentially negative environmental and social impacts of the international REDD+ mechanism. Although the development of safeguards is a positive move, their effectiveness will depend on how they are operationalised and the extent of support given through other policy measures at international and national levels. As a contribution to REDD+ readiness efforts in Vietnam, this Sub-Working Technical Group on Safeguards (STWG-SG), is established as a multi-stakeholder platform contributing co-ordinated technical assistance to in-country efforts to operationalize the Cancun safeguards and other relevant international and national policy commitments.

Objective

Co-ordinated technical assistance is delivered to the Government of Vietnam¹, and other relevant stakeholders, in operationalization of safeguards to promote social and environmental co-benefits from REDD+ at national, subnational and local levels

Results

Result 1: STWG-SG established and operationalized
2012 indicator – six STWG-SG meeting agendas and minutes

Result 2: options for operationalizing REDD+ safeguards in Vietnam identified
2012 indicator - options paper documenting existing and potential safeguard actions

Result 3: national REDD+ programme environmental & social ‘standards’ developed
2012 indicator – first coherent draft of national REDD+ ‘standards’

Result 4: national safeguard information system (SIS) developed
2012 indicator – first coherent draft of SIS framework document

¹ Particularly, but not limited to, the national REDD+ Office, Vietnam Administration of Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Tasks

- Sharing information on existing international and national safeguard policy commitments and emerging guidance on safeguard responses
- Co-ordinating activities among stakeholders implementing and supporting in-country safeguard, and other similar, processes in the forestry sector
- Building in-country² technical capacity on safeguard issues and co-benefit aspects of REDD+
- Providing quality technical assistance to all relevant stakeholders in the field of safeguard response actions (policy through to practice)
- Delivering key outputs as significant and necessary contributions to Vietnam's REDD+ safeguard response
- Sharing information and logistically coordinating with other STWGs

Composition

The STWG-SG will be chaired by Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) and co-chaired by SNV REDD+ programme. Membership to the STWG is open to all interested parties and stakeholders: public, private and civil society sectors. With the resources available to the STWG-SG, proactive efforts will be made to ensure the most representative stakeholder participation possible, particularly at subnational and local levels.

Deliverables

Annual work plans will be developed in the first quarter of each year by the STWG-SG under the guidance of the chair. Milestones in the work plan will indicate key deliverables for each year. See Annex II for a draft annual work plan for 2012.

Timeframe

These ToR are valid until 31 December 2012, and will be subject to review in the first quarter of 2013.

²Particularly relevant government agencies hitherto not substantively engaged in REDD+ readiness activities and processes, but with pertinent environmental and social mandates

Annex I - Guidance and safeguards for policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to [REDD+]³

1. [REDD+] Activities...should:
 - (a) Contribute to the achievement of the objective set out in Article 2 of the Convention;
 - (b) Contribute to the fulfillment of the commitments set out in Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention;
 - (c) Be country-driven and be considered options available to Parties;
 - (d) Be consistent with the objective of environmental integrity and take into account the multiple functions of forests and other ecosystems;
 - (e) Be undertaken in accordance with national development priorities, objectives and circumstances and capabilities and should respect sovereignty;
 - (f) Be consistent with Parties' national sustainable development needs and goals;
 - (g) Be implemented in the context of sustainable development and reducing poverty, while responding to climate change;
 - (h) Be consistent with the adaptation needs of the country;
 - (i) Be supported by adequate and predictable financial and technology support, including support for capacity-building;
 - (j) Be results-based;
 - (k) Promote sustainable management of forests;

2. When undertaking [REDD+] activities..., the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:
 - (a) Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
 - (b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
 - (c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - (d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular, indigenous peoples and local communities, in [REDD+] actions...;
 - (e) Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that [REDD+] actions...are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;
 - (f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;
 - (g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

³United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2010), Conference of the Parties Decision 1/CP.16: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

Annex II – Sub-Working Technical Group on Social & Environmental Safeguards: draft annual work plan – 2012

Activity	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Milestones
Result 1: STWG-SG established and operationalized													
1.1 Drafting/ circulating ToR and work plan		1											1. ToR and annual work plan circulated to REDD+ network
1.2 Agreeing on ToR and work plan		2											2. ToR and annual work plan agreed upon during 1 st STWG-SG meeting
1.3 Convening regular STWG-SG meetings													STWG-SG meetings convened every other month
1.4 Drafting 2013 AWP and longer-term plans												3	3. 2013 AWP agreed during final STWG-SG meeting of 2012
Result 2: options for operationalizing REDD+ safeguards in Vietnam identified													
2.1 Presenting options for safeguard responses		4											4. Conceptual framework of safeguard options presented in 1 st meeting
2.2 Drafting ToR for national options paper				5									5. ToR for options paper agreed by 2 nd STWG-SG meeting
2.3 National options paper study						6							6. Draft options paper presented at 3 rd STWG-SG meeting
2.4 Identifying additional safeguard actions						7							7. Additional actions selected at 3 rd STWG-SG meeting
Result 3: national REDD+ programme environmental & social 'standards' developed													
3.1 Comparative analysis of different 'standards'				8									8. Draft comparative analysis results presented in 2 nd meeting
3.2 Identifying options for national response				9									9. Draft options and guidance presented in 2 nd meeting
3.3 Exploring synergies													Opportunistic responding

Activity	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Milestones
with other processes													to timeframe of other processes, eg FCPF SESA
3.4 Establishing/operating expert advisory groups						10							10. Environmental & social groups operating by 3 rd STWG-SG meeting
Result 4: national safeguard information system (SIS) developed													
4.1 Monitoring UNFCCC SBSTA guidance						11							11. Outcome of SBSTA 36 reflected and acted on by 3 rd STWG-SG meeting
4.2 Developing SIS framework document												12	12. Final SIS framework document approved by MARD within 2012
4.3 Identifying monitoring needs for standards												13	13. Monitoring elaborated under expert groups; incorporated in SIS doc.
4.4 Exploring participatory monitoring approaches									14				14. Regional participatory monitoring event hosted in Hanoi by end quarter 3