TECHNICAL RESOURCE SERIES 2

Safeguards Edition 2

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Country Approaches to REDD+ Safeguards

A Global Review of Initial Experiences and Emerging Lessons

December 2015

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii
ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS iv
LIST OF BOXES AND TABLES v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

PART 1 INTRODUCTION 7
1.1 Overview 7
1.2 UNFCCC safeguards requirements 8
1.3 Country approaches to safeguards 10
1.4 Purpose 10
1.5 Audience 11
1.6 Methods 11

PART 2 COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND EMERGING LESSONS 13
2.1 Setting goals and scope 13
2.1.1 Setting safeguards goals 14
2.1.2 Setting the scope of safeguards application 15
2.2 Clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances 16
2.2.1 Identifying, assessing and strengthening existing governance arrangements 17
2.2.2 Linking application of safeguards to REDD+ actions 20
2.3 Identifying, assessing and strengthening existing governance arrangements for safeguards 20
2.3.1 Identifying and assessing existing and relevant governance arrangements 21
2.3.2 Strengthening existing and relevant governance arrangements 24
2.4 Development of safeguards information systems 25
2.4.1 Setting objectives of the safeguards information system 26
2.4.2 Determining safeguards information needs 26
2.4.3 Determining safeguards information structure 27
2.4.4 Establishing functions of the safeguards information system 28
2.5 Stakeholder engagement 30
2.5.1 Capacitating stakeholders 30
2.5.2 Consultation and participation of stakeholders at different levels 31

PART 3 CONCLUSIONS 33

BIBLIOGRAPHY 36

ANNEX I UNFCCC Decisions on Safeguards 38
ANNEX II Selected Country Factsheets 43
Democratic Republic of the Congo 43
Ecuador 46
Ghana 49
Indonesia 51
Malaysia 53
Mexico 55
Viet Nam 57
Zambia 58
ANNEX III Country Approach to Safeguards Conceptual Framework 60

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CONAFOR	National Forestry Commission of Mexico
COP	Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
ENAREDD+	Draft national REDD+ strategy (Mexico)
ESIA	environmental and social impact assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FLEGT	Forest law enforcement, governance and trade
FPIC	free, prior and informed consent
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
GHG	greenhouse gases
GRM	grievance redress mechanism
LGDFS	Law on Sustainable Forest Development (Mexico)
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification
NFMS	national forest monitoring system
NS/AP	national REDD+ strategy / action plan
NSS	national safeguards system
NTC	National Technical Committee (Uganda)
PCI	principles, criteria and indicators
PES	payment for ecosystem services
PLRs	policies, laws and regulations
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
REDD+ SIS	REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SINIA	Costa Rica's National System for Environmental Information
SIS	safeguards information system
STWG-SG	Sub-Technical Working Group on Safeguards (Viet Nam)
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD Programme	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

LIST OF BOXES AND FIGURES

Box 1 . . . . . The Cancun safeguards 9
Box 2 . . . . . Democratic Republic of Congo's experience with attempting to link FCPF and UNFCCC safeguard requirements 15
Box 3 . . . . . Mexico's scope of safeguards application. 17
Box 4 . . . . . Ecuador's evolution of a safeguards approach and the definition of the Cancun safeguards clarification in accordance with national circumstances. 19
Box 5 . . . . . Indonesia's experience of translating the Cancun safeguards into a national context as a key input to its safeguards information system design 19
Box 6 . . . . . Mexico's experience with identifying and assessing existing governance arrangements for safeguards 23
Box 7 . . . . . Costa Rica's proposed objectives for their safeguards information system 25
Box 8 . . . . . Malaysia's experience in structuring safeguards information 27
Box 9 . . . . . Ecuador's safeguards information system's functions 28
Box 10 . . . . Indonesia's experience in piloting the safeguards information system's operations 29
Box 11 . . . . Tanzania's experience in stakeholder consultation and capacity building 31
Box 12 . . . . Viet Nam's experiences with a multi-stakeholder coordinating body 32

Table 1 . . . Self-assessment of progress in assessing existing governance arrangements as part of selected country approaches to safeguards. 21

Figure 1 . . Generic framework for country approaches to safeguards (showing links with national strategy / action plan process) 61

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY MESSAGES:

1. **Setting the goals and scope of safeguards application for REDD+ is an iterative process that should be linked to national strategy or action plan** (NS/AP) development, and the identification of REDD+ actions appropriate to the scale(s) at which REDD+ will be implemented.
2. **Clarifying safeguards in accordance with national circumstances is key**, as it presents an opportunity to anchor safeguards to existing frameworks of policy, law and regulations (PLR), as well as to REDD+ actions comprising evolving NS/APs and serves as a basis for designing a safeguards information system.
3. **Building on existing governance arrangements is central to country approaches to safeguards**, and presents a strategic opportunity to strengthen those existing governance arrangements – such as PLRs, institutional arrangements; information systems and sources; grievance redress mechanisms; and law enforcement mechanisms – with far-reaching benefits beyond REDD+.
4. **Safeguards information system design processes** which relate to the overall strategic approach, REDD+ actions and **a country's clarification of the Cancun safeguards** help identify what information is needed to demonstrate safeguards have been addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions.
5. **Engaging stakeholders is paramount in any country approach to safeguards** and will define the quality and ownership of processes and outcomes; how, when, where and to what degree, different constituencies are engaged will make or break a country approach to safeguards.

INTRODUCTION

Five years have passed since Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed on seven broad principles constituting a set of safeguards for REDD+, known as the Cancun safeguards. Since the Cancun safeguards were agreed in 2010, a number of countries have attempted to meet these and other associated UNFCCC safeguards requirements, as well as those of other initiatives and sources of financing, such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's (FCPF) Readiness Fund and Carbon Fund, through a single country approach to safeguards.

The country approach to safeguards is an approach that a country adopts based on its own unique needs and circumstances to enhance REDD+ social and environmental benefits and reduce the risks. Components of a country approach to safeguards include three core elements; policies, laws and regulations which address safeguards, institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the safeguards are being respected and a safeguards information system which makes information available on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected.

Photo: CIFOR

Through the country approach to safeguards, the diverse requirements of the different donors, investors and other related programmes can be accommodated – with a country having to meet only a single reporting process.

These are early days for country approaches to safeguards and many countries are still in the initial stages of their safeguards processes. As such, many REDD+ stakeholders are "learning by doing", which has yielded important preliminary lessons. These lessons learned are now informing dialogue and decision-making on how to meet different REDD+ requirements for safeguards through the unified and coordinated system of a country approach to safeguards. This UN-REDD Programme Technical Resource publication presents an initial global overview of country perspectives, experiences and lessons learned that may be used to inform better safeguards processes and practices in the future. These have been gathered through broad consultations with countries on how they have responded to REDD+ safeguard requirements. Semi-structured interviews with national government focal points, dialogue captured during regional South-South knowledge exchange workshops, and a desk-based review of published and unpublished literature, has yielded a rich and diverse body of information.

Five main topics related to a country approach to safeguards have been identified through the collation and synthesizing of this information:

1. Setting safeguards goals and scope
2. Clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances
3. Identifying, assessing and strengthening existing governance arrangements;
4. Developing safeguard information systems
5. Engaging stakeholders in country approaches to safeguards

SETTING SAFEGUARDS GOALS AND SCOPE

These two interrelated components are emerging as fundamental to framing country approaches to safeguards:

1. **Setting goals:** determining which safeguards a country seeks to apply for REDD+ – including the Cancun safeguards and any other additional safeguards requirements chosen by the country.
2. **Setting scope:** determining what interventions – REDD+ actions or others – will be used in forestry and land-use sectors, to which the chosen safeguards will be applied.

In setting safeguards goals, perhaps the most important perspective shared by countries is that the Cancun safeguards constitute the default, not minimum, safeguards to be applied. The Cancun safeguards were negotiated under the UNFCCC to ensure all countries looking to implement REDD+ apply this essential set of safeguards to their REDD+ actions – while some countries may choose to include additional safeguards in accordance with their national and international policy and funding commitments.

In defining the scope of safeguards application, countries identified that it is vital to have a clear idea of what REDD+ actions might be implemented. This is particularly the case for countries that have chosen to embed REDD+ in low-carbon development or green growth strategies and are applying the Cancun safeguards more broadly than just to REDD+ actions alone. These countries have expanded the scope of safeguards application to other forest-sector activities, or even more widely to activities in other sectors that impact forests and land use.

CLARIFYING THE CANCUN SAFEGUARDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances requires reaching a shared in-country understanding, among different stakeholder constituencies, of the rights and obligations that are embodied in the Cancun safeguards, as relevant to the specific country context. Examining and utilizing existing PLRs can be important in this iterative clarification process.

In order to ensure that the implementation of REDD+ actions is consistent with the Cancun safeguards, countries have acknowledged that they will need to anchor their country-specific clarification of the Cancun safeguards to their proposed REDD+ actions (i.e. policies and measures) comprising their REDD+ NS/APs. This will enable priority environmental and social benefits to be optimized and risks mitigated. Clarifying the Cancun safeguards can also be central to the design of safeguards information systems and subsequent preparation of the summary of information.

IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING EXISTING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Existing governance arrangements for safeguards – such as PLRs, institutional arrangements, information systems and sources, grievance redress mechanisms, and law enforcement mechanisms –are considered by many countries as the foundation through which they can address and respect the Cancun safeguards throughout the implementation of their REDD+ actions. Building on existing governance arrangements allows countries to respond effectively to safeguards commitments in a rigorous yet flexible manner.

Though existing governance arrangements can be used to address and respect the Cancun safeguards, gaps, weaknesses and/or possible inconsistencies in these arrangements are also to be expected and would need to be identified. While there has been a focus on PLR assessments to date, PLR reforms are not the only approach to deal with identified gaps. They can be difficult to achieve (requiring high levels of objectives and long periods of time) and are usually outside of the control and influence of the government institutions leading REDD+ and the country's approach to safeguards. Strengthening institutional capacity to implement PLRs can be an effective option in this regard.

Several countries that have embarked on the identification and assessment of their safeguards-relevant governance arrangements recognize that building on existing PLRs, institutional arrangements and information systems has application and benefit beyond immediate REDD+ requirements. They have found that these assessments identify gaps, weaknesses and contradictions in forest and broader land-use governance arrangements that a country may want to resolve, regardless of REDD+, as part of on-going efforts to strengthen governance to meet policy goals.

DEVELOPING SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A safeguards information system (SIS) is generally recognized by countries as a domestic institutional arrangement built on existing information systems and sources that is used to gather, compile and provide information as to how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected. Countries have identified that their SIS should meet national objectives first and foremost, in addition to UNFCCC requirements. Aligning SIS objectives with national policy agenda goals related to the environment, forest management and sustainable development has been essential for a number of countries in their justification of SIS development and operational costs.

Many countries have also found that the overall strategic approach to REDD+, the specific REDD+ actions outlined in evolving NS/APs, and the clarification of the Cancun safeguards according to national circumstances, are all crucial to determining the information needs and structure of their SIS. In addition, countries noted that an assessment of existing systems and sources of information has proven to serve as a primary input and consideration when trying to determine how the information needs of their SIS can be met.

Countries also identified that the potential functions of their SIS should be considered in its design phase, and that these functions could include compilation, analysis, validation and dissemination of information. In many cases, the information systems and sources countries intended to build on in developing their SIS, already encompass internal analysis and assessments of the information they collect and provide, and this should also be considered in designing a SIS.

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS IN COUNTRY APPROACHES TO SAFEGUARDS

The success of a country's approach to safeguards will depend on stakeholder ownership across a wide range of constituencies, particularly national and subnational government agencies, civil society, indigenous people and local communities. Two main issues are emerging from countries' initial experiences in engaging stakeholders in their country approaches to safeguards, namely the need to:

1. Raise awareness of safeguards requirements, thematic issues and stakeholder responsibilities.

2. Build capacities so stakeholders can effectively engage in safeguards processes.

Defining the appropriate timing and format for carrying out awareness raising and capacity building activities has been found, by countries, to be critical to the success of any stakeholder engagement in safeguards processes. Managing stakeholder expectations is also recognized as very important. In communicating with stakeholders, a safeguards process "owner" (typically the national government) needs to ensure the clarity of messages to be communicated, how messages should be communicated (i.e. through appropriate media and in a culturally appropriate manner), and when messages should be communicated in relation to each stakeholder group.

In terms of a stakeholder consultation process on safeguards, country experiences show that a national government-led, technical or political coordinating body can be highly conducive to advancing multi-stakeholder safeguards processes. Coordinating bodies can identify and reach out to the most interested and relevant stakeholders to engage at the appropriate junctures, as well as lobby for necessary political support in both national line ministries and subnational government departments. A coordinating body does not need be a new entity. Where it may be newly established, it can be built on existing platforms that have the requisite political capital and technical capacities.

CONCLUSION

A country approach to safeguards is emerging as a practical, cost-effective, and strategic model for meeting UNFCCC (and other relevant) REDD+ safeguards requirements, as well as supporting all-important country ownership and relevance. Common standard elements, or steps, in a country approach to safeguards are beginning to emerge: setting goals and scope, clarifying safeguards, building on existing governance arrangements, and various SIS design considerations.

A clear lesson learned from countries is that to be effective a country approach to safeguards should not be initiated or undertaken in isolation. Safeguards processes should ensure regular and frequent exchange with other REDD+ readiness processes to ensure synergies with essential elements of REDD+ architecture. Paramount among these, countries have identified, is the need to link safeguards to REDD+ actions – the specific policies and measures to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as more sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks – as part of the development of a REDD+ NS/AP. Forging such links with REDD+ actions is now widely acknowledged by countries as imperative to ensuring that safeguards will be effectively addressed and respected during REDD+ implementation.

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1

1.1 OVERVIEW

Five years have passed since Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed on seven broad principles constituting a set of safeguards for REDD+[1], known as the Cancun safeguards (Box 1). The implementation of REDD+ activities[2] – more specifically, the policies and measures put in place to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as managing, conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks – should be consistent with the Cancun safeguards. Other safeguard-related requirements, notably on information provision[3], have been agreed under the Convention since 2010, and a set of rules for safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation, as with other technical aspects of the REDD+ mechanism, are now encapsulated in the Warsaw framework for REDD+.

Over the past five years, an increasing number of countries have been working to meet these UNFCCC, and other relevant, REDD+ safeguards requirements through a single **country approach to safeguards.**

The country approach to safeguards is an approach that a country adopts based on its own unique needs and circumstances to enhance REDD+ social and environmental benefits and reduce the risks. Components of a country approach to safeguards include three core elements; policies, laws and regulations which address safeguards, institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the safeguards are being respected and a safeguards information system which makes information available on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected.

These are early days for country approaches to safeguards and many countries are still in the initial stages of their safeguards processes. As such, many REDD+ stakeholders are "learning by doing".

In doing so, a burgeoning, yet diverse, body of knowledge has begun to amass on such country approaches, and how they have been developed and implemented in different country and regional contexts. This publication in the UN-REDD Programme Technical Resource series attempts to collate and synthesize this diverse body of knowledge, drawing out emerging and common (but by no means universal) themes from this collection of unique country experiences.

This publication presents an initial global overview of country perspectives, experiences and lessons that may be used to inform better safeguards processes and practices in the future. These have been gathered through broad consultations with countries on how they have responded to REDD+ safeguard requirements. The publication does not attempt to offer consensus, or assess progress, on any particular aspect of country approaches to safeguards. It focuses on how country approaches have been carried out, what appears to be working,

Photo: Riccardo Gangle / UN-REDD Programme

and where challenges remain rather than what has been done as part of these country approaches.

It is emphasized that this publication presents a synthesis of information that countries themselves have reported in the literature, voiced in workshops, or communicated directly to the UN-REDD Programme for the purposes of this publication. As such, this is a compilation of their experiences and does not represent the position of the UN-REDD Programme. (See Section 1.6 for a list of countries directly consulted in this study).

1.2 UNFCCC SAFEGUARDS REQUIREMENTS

REDD+ is a voluntary international climate change mitigation mechanism adopted under the UNFCCC to reward developing countries with results-based payments for results-based actions under one or more of five UNFCCC-agreed activities:

1. reducing emissions from deforestation;
2. reducing emissions from forest degradation;
3. conservation of forest carbon stocks;
4. sustainable management of forests; and
5. enhancement of forest carbon stocks[4].

The potential environmental and social benefits and risks of REDD+, particularly with regard to indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights and well-being, as well as biodiversity and ecosystem services, have brought increased attention to safeguards. To ensure that environmental and social risks associated with REDD+ are addressed and that multiple benefits can be achieved, Parties to the UNFCCC agreed a set safeguards for REDD+ at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Cancun, Mexico. These Cancun safeguards (Box 1) constitute seven broad principles that can help to ensure that REDD+ actions[5] "do no harm" to people or the environment, as well as "do good" and enhance environmental and social benefits.

At the 19th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP19) in Warsaw, 2013, Parties agreed on key technical aspects of REDD+ – known as the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. With REDD+ now an agreed UNFCCC mechanism, REDD+ countries are moving forward with the development and implementation of, their National REDD+ strategies or action plans (NS/APs).

Box 1: The Cancun safeguards

"When undertaking [REDD+] activities, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

(a) That 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;

(e) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the [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;[6]

(f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;

(g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions."

Source: UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I, paragraph 2

Countries seeking to implement NS/APs, and receive results-based payments for REDD+ under the UNFCCC should meet three principal safeguards-related requirements:

1. ensure REDD+ activities, regardless of the source and type of funding, are implemented in a manner consistent with the Cancun safeguards;[7]
2. develop a system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected (i.e. a safeguards information system - SIS);[8] and
3. provide a summary of information on how all the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities.[9]

Details of all UNFCCC COP decisions relating to safeguards are presented in Annex I. UNFCCC guidance, by political and practical necessity, is general in nature. In response to this absence of detailed guidance, and because meeting these requirements demands due consideration of each country's national circumstances, country approaches to safeguards, as explored in this publication, have evolved, and continue to evolve, building on existing governance arrangements specific to each country.

1.3 COUNTRY APPROACHES TO SAFEGUARDS

"Country approaches to safeguards" is a general term used (but not definitively delineated) in this publication to mean those elements and processes undertaken, by countries to meet safeguards requirements for REDD+ under the UNFCCC and other relevant initiatives and institutions. Country approaches are characterized by the identification, application and improvement of existing governance arrangements for REDD+ to meet the different safeguards requirements a country may choose to adopt. These governance arrangements include policies, laws and regulations (PLRs); institutional arrangements; information systems and sources; grievance redress mechanisms; and law enforcement mechanisms. They also have the flexibility to accommodate innovation and the development of new governance arrangements if necessary, or if so desired by the country.

Country approaches typically aim to ensure, among other things, that[10]:

- safeguards are *addressed* through the existence of a coherent body of PLRs dealing with the risks and benefits associated with proposed REDD+ actions;
- safeguards are *respected* through the implementation and enforcement of those PLRs, by government and (where relevant and appropriate) non-government actors, throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions;
- a SIS is in place to provide information that is accessible to all stakeholders on how safeguards are being addressed and respected; and
- summaries of information on safeguards are submitted periodically to the UNFCCC.

There is no blueprint for a country approach to safeguards. Each country's approach is different and reflects their specific national circumstances as well as what governments, with contributions from other stakeholders, define as the overall goals of the approach. How countries are beginning to define their country approaches to safeguards is presented in Part 2 of this publication, which experiences and emerging lessons.

The UN-REDD Programme has, with other initiatives and agencies[11] over the past three years or so, endeavoured to capture the experiences of different country approaches to safeguards, and identify emerging common steps in developing and refining a generic country approach framework. This framework guides the Programme to structure its tailored support to countries developing and pursuing their safeguards approaches to meeting UNFCCC (and other) relevant requirements. The most recent iteration of this framework used by the UN-REDD Programme is summarized in Annex III, not as a prescriptive template for country approaches, but as a reference for some of the terms and concepts discussed in this paper.

1.4 PURPOSE

In attempting to capture the state-of the-art knowledge and perspectives on country approaches to REDD+ safeguards, the aims of this publication are to:

1. facilitate information exchange among REDD+ countries related to their experiences and initial lessons from efforts to meet (or even exceed) UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards requirements;

2. inform improved, evidence-based and needs-driven, technical assistance provision (by the UN-REDD Programme and others) in support of REDD+ countries' approaches to safeguards ; and
3. inform the expectations of the international community in regards to REDD+ countries meeting UNFCCC (and other relevant) safeguards requirements, in addition to those associated with accessing funds and payments.

1.5 AUDIENCE

This publication is presented as a technical resource for in-country stakeholders involved in REDD+ readiness, and in particular safeguards processes, including policy makers and civil servants from national institutions, and members of civil society organizations. Additionally, the publication can also inform representatives from multilateral and bilateral development partners providing technical and financial assistance to in-country stakeholders on different aspects of REDD+ safeguards.

1.6 METHODS

Three methods were employed to compile the information synthesized and interpreted in this publication:

1. Semi-structured interviews and consultations with national government focal points from pioneering countries which have made progress with safeguards and who were willing to their share their experiences and emerging lessons:

Brazil	Ghana
Costa Rica	Malaysia
Democratic Republic of Congo	Tanzania
Ecuador	Zambia

2. A series of regional South-South knowledge exchange events on safeguards convened by the UN-REDD Programme over 2015:

   - Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Consultation on Safeguards and Safeguards Information Systems, Bangkok, Thailand, 11-12 March 2015;
   - Africa Regional Exchange on Country Approaches to Safeguards, Nairobi, Kenya, 17-19 June 2015; and
   - Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Exchange of Practical Experiences in Implementing the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, Guadalajara, Mexico, 11-13 August 2015.[12]

3. A desk review of the limited documentation published and unpublished on experiences and lessons stemming from initial country approaches to safeguards.[13]

It should be noted that, although attempts were made to gain perspectives directly from stakeholders other than national government focal points, particularly civil society, insufficient information was obtained to draw out common themes from civil society. This is partly due to the global nature of this review, not having the resources to explore different domestic stakeholder perspectives in-country.[14] But it also reflects the fact that most countries are still in the early stages of their country approaches to safeguards and that national government agencies, leading these processes, have been the principal institutions and individuals capturing and reflecting on their experiences. It should be noted, therefore, that the information presented in this publication documents the main collective experiences and emerging lessons as perceived by these government sources only.

To rationalize the diverse array of country experiences, and focus in on the emerging lessons and messages, a simple rule was applied in selecting what to present in this publication: if three or more countries reported a similar experience, it was deemed a key emerging lesson and included.

Photo: CIFOR

PART 2 COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND EMERGING LESSONS

2

Drawing on information gathered from documentary evidence and provided by countries in workshops, interviews or in writing, the experiences and lessons emerging from initial country approaches to safeguards can be categorized into five main areas:

1. setting safeguards goals and scope;
2. clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances;
3. identifying, assessing and strengthening existing governance arrangements
4. developing safeguard information systems; and
5. engaging stakeholders in country approaches to safeguards.

While summaries of information are an important UNFCCC safeguards requirement, country experiences and lessons related to this requirement are not included in this publication as few countries have started to consider the contents and structure of their first summary of information, and only one (Brazil) has made a submission to the UNFCCC.

Under each area of experience from, or key element of, country approaches to safeguards, illustrative case study examples are offered where available. Factsheets, produced by those pioneering countries that generously contributed information through interviews and written comments, are provided in Annex II. These factsheets are presented as concise and up-to-date sources of background information on what countries have undertaken, and plan to undertake, as part of their country approaches to safeguards.

Lastly, it should be noted that countries in all regions agree that country approaches to safeguards are non-linear and highly iterative processes. The order in which countries have conducted or plan to conduct different "steps" in their country approaches varies greatly. Yet, ongoing improvement is a common theme throughout the country approaches as changes are made to NS/APs, and knowledge is acquired through experience (i.e. "learning by doing") and further inquiry. The structure and ordering of experiences and lessons in this publication should not be interpreted as a prescriptive template or sequence for country approaches to safeguards.

2.1 SETTING GOALS AND SCOPE

Two interrelated steps are emerging as fundamental to framing country approaches to safeguards, as well as linking safeguards to the REDD+ actions in evolving NS/APs. These are defined by collective country experiences as:

- **setting the goals** of the country approach to safeguards: determining which safeguards a country seeks to adopt (Cancun safeguards, by default under the UNFCCC, and any other additional safeguards requirements) taking into account their national and international commitments and priorities such as bilateral agreements; and

- **defining the scope** of safeguards application: determining exactly, which REDD+, and other, actions the chosen safeguards will be applied to.

2.1.1 SETTING SAFEGUARDS GOALS

Under the UNFCCC, developing countries should ensure that REDD+ actions, regardless of the source and type of funding, are implemented in a manner consistent with the Cancun safeguards.[15]

Country experiences and early lessons in setting safeguard goals are reported as:

- **The Cancun safeguards are widely perceived to be the default, not minimum, safeguards to be applied to REDD+.**
  Overall, and in accordance with UNFCCC requirements, countries in all regions seek to ensure that their REDD+ actions are consistent with the Cancun safeguards. An important point countries have highlighted is that the Cancun safeguards were negotiated under the UNFCCC to ensure all countries seeking to implement REDD+ apply this set of safeguards to their REDD+ actions. REDD+ countries do not see the Cancun safeguards as a minimum requirement in terms of the safeguards goals that must be met, but as the requirement. They highlight that it is already very challenging for some countries to address and respect the Cancun safeguards and meet UNFCCC safeguards requirements. If additional or significantly different requirements were imposed by others entities that may make payments for results under REDD+ in the future, these additional requirements could hinder efforts to meet the Cancun safeguards. Countries noted and recommended that with the adoption of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, financing agencies and donors should actively and effectively promote and support the application of the Cancun safeguards, aligning themselves with the UNFCCC.[16]

- **Meeting the requirements of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Common Approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards can be integrated into a country's approach to safeguards**.
  Countries participating in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) are required to adhere to the Operational Policies of the World Bank. For some countries, however, the adherence to these policies, as part of the FCPF readiness process or Carbon Fund, does not necessarily constitute a different or additional set of safeguards.[17] Each country's clarification of the Cancun safeguards (Section 2.2), according to their national circumstances, presents an opportunity to cover all relevant safeguard requirements (including the World Bank Operational Policies). Some countries have highlighted that they are attempting to align FCPF safeguard-related processes (i.e. Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments – SESA and Environmental and Social Management Frameworks - EMSF) with their country approaches to safeguards. (Box 2 summarizes the Democratic Republic of Congo's ongoing efforts to link FCPF and UNFCCC safeguards requirements).

Box 2: The Democratic Republic of Congo's experience with attempting to link FCPF and UNFCCC safeguards requirements

The Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) experiences with safeguards demonstrates the non-linear nature of country safeguards approaches, with an iterative process that has been informed by and linked with, the various instruments being developed for REDD+ in DRC.

DRC began its safeguards work in 2011, and developed national REDD+ standards, through a broad consultative process, involving civil society, based on a set of international normative standards. The national standards contain 7 principles, 25 criteria and 43 indicators, covering issues of participation, governance, transparency, sharing of potential social and economic benefits, mainstreaming of gender issues, the promotion of rights and appeal procedures.

In a separate process, a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) was planned and conducted, under the FCPF, and began the important step of looking at risks and benefits of proposed REDD+ actions, policies and measures. The SESA was completed in 2015, with finalization of an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) consisting of six inter-related documents. Although, the SESA process did not use the Cancun safeguards or DRC's national REDD+ standards, the completed ESMF does contain an assessment of the current legal framework, and proposes how the risks and benefits identified can be managed through existing legal instruments. Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and grievance redress mechanism (GRM), guidelines are also being developed.

A number of actions have been implemented to better link the processes for a more efficient and effective outcome (Annex II). These efforts are aimed at producing a revised set of national standards drawing on the SESA-ESMF process and responding specifically to the Cancun safeguards. A matrix has been developed that compares the Cancun safeguards with the current set of principles and criteria of the national standards, in order to show coherence and fine-tune the standards for their applicability to all REDD+ actions, at project, jurisdictional and national levels. DRC has also decided to structure the proposed Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be conducted by REDD+ projects (when applicable), as well as the associated risks management frameworks, around the national REDD+ standards

Sources: DRC (2014); DRC (2015); UN-REDD Programme (2013a); UN-REDD Programme (2015h)

2.1.2 SETTING THE SCOPE OF SAFEGUARDS APPLICATION

The scope of safeguards application refers to what interventions the safeguards will be applied to and is linked to the strategic approach to REDD+ the country intends to adopt and implement. The default UNFCCC requirement is to apply the Cancun safeguards to all REDD+ actions to be implemented under the NS/AP.[18]

NS/APs are currently being developed and are structured differently. Countries may focus on all five REDD+ activities (Section 1.2), or a sub-section of these according to national circumstances. Various approaches including a policy approach at the national level, measures implemented at various levels and/or a discrete set of site-specific interventions, are being designed and implemented. The scope of REDD+ safeguards application, therefore varies and could extend to cover broader forestry and other land-use sectors, not included in a country's NS/AP, in order to achieve national development goals.

Key experiences and early lessons include:

- **Defining the scope of safeguards application – REDD+ actions only vis-à-vis broader sectoral application – is challenging.**
  While UNFCCC decisions may imply that safeguards requirements for REDD+ strictly apply to those activities that reduce GHG emissions (or increase their removal from the atmosphere), many countries suggested that this narrow safeguards application could prove difficult to implement and that isolating REDD+ actions from others, solely for the purposes of safeguards application, introduces unnecessary complications. In particular, it was noted for those countries which are embedding REDD+ into broader low-carbon development or green economic growth strategies. Therefore, many are taking what they see as a more practical approach in applying the Cancun safeguards more broadly, for example, to all forest-sector activities, or even more broadly to all sectors that impact forests and land use (Box 3).

- **A clear idea on what REDD+ actions a country might implement is crucial in defining the scope of safeguard application**.
  A draft NS/APs, or similar document, that clearly identifies and characterizes the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as barriers to sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, is required to offer some idea of the REDD+ actions that are to be implemented, i.e. those policies and measures that the safeguards will be applied to.

- **Ascertaining the scope of safeguards application is important in managing stakeholder perceptions and expectations**.
  The potential exists for stakeholders, particularly domestic civil society and grassroots-level actors, to have very high expectations for, or oppose, REDD+ in general, and safeguards in particular. Countries shared that some domestic stakeholders have expected safeguards to be applied more broadly than just to REDD+. To provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders and effectively manage expectations, several countries have, or plan to, clearly outline the scope of REDD+ safeguards application within their NS/APs.

2.2 CLARIFYING THE CANCUN SAFEGUARDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Parties to the UNFCCC agreed to the seven broad principles of the Cancun safeguards that countries are expected to apply in accordance with national circumstances. As such countries can be expected to "clarify"[19] what the Cancun safeguards mean in their country context. One critical factor contributing to a country's particular national circumstances will be the identification of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Additionally, they may want to consider any barriers to "plus activities" of REDD+ in order to enable the design of REDD+ actions or policies and measures, comprising the evolving NS/AP. The clarification of the Cancun (or any other) safeguards is recommended, therefore, to be linked to the choice of these REDD+ actions to tackle drivers and barriers.

Box 3: Mexico's scope of safeguards application

In terms of safeguards goals, Mexico has given express recognition to the Cancun safeguards in the draft National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+), which is currently undergoing a process of public consultation.

The scope of the Cancun safeguards in Mexico is linked to the country's approach to REDD+, which promotes a territorial and multi-sectorial approach, in order to reduce the pressures that lead to deforestation and forest degradation.

Consequently, the scope of application of the Cancun Safeguards is broadly multi-sectorial and the ENAREDD+ is based on inter-sectoral coordination.

In addition, in 2012, Mexico reformed its Law on Sustainable Forest Development article 134 bis, legally recognizing the Cancun safeguards as the set of safeguards to be consistent with, and further establishing a set of safeguards to be applied to policies and measures related to environmental services regulated by this law.

Sources: CONAFOR (2014); CONAFOR (pers. comm., 2015)

Such clarification processes are iterative and are best carried out in a consultative manner with stakeholders, such as (national and subnational) government, civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities.

2.2.1 CLARIFYING THE CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

Key country experiences and early lessons include:

- **Clarifying the Cancun safeguards according to national circumstances requires reaching a shared in-country understanding of the rights and obligations that are embodied in the Cancun safeguards.**
  Countries highlighted that while they may already recognize the rights and obligations embodied in the Cancun safeguards, they may express them differently in their domestic context. For instance, Cancun safeguard (c) requires that countries respect "the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities", and while some countries have important populations of indigenous peoples, and therefore recognize their rights and knowledge through domestic laws, others may not recognize the term in their legal frameworks, instead referring to and protecting the rights of "vulnerable groups" or "ethnic minorities".

- **Examining and drawing on existing PLRs can be important in clarifying the Cancun safeguards.**
  Drawing on the country's existing PLRs is seen by countries as a key input to ensure the clarification of the Cancun safeguards is consistent with the country's context and circumstances.

- **Developing a principle, criteria and indicator framework can be a means to clarify the Cancun safeguards**

  While not a UNFCCC requirement, several countries have chosen to develop principle, criteria and indicator (PCI) frameworks as a means of clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances. Multi-stakeholder consultative processes to develop national (and in some cases subnational) PCI frameworks have achieved mixed results. On the positive side, PCI frameworks have:

  1. helped identify what the Cancun safeguards mean, collectively, to the participating stakeholders involved, i.e. helped to break down the broad safeguards principles into constituent elements;
  2. built understanding among diverse stakeholders about REDD+ in general, the potential benefits and risks of REDD+ actions, and the role of safeguards in managing these risks and realizing benefits; and
  3. served as a means to galvanize unprecedented levels of stakeholder consultation in forest governance issues at national and sometimes subnational levels.

  A number of countries that have advanced with PCI frameworks or indicator sets have, however, noted the following challenges with the way some PCI frameworks were developed:

  1. The purpose of the PCI framework was not always initially clearly formulated. In some cases it served as a national clarification of the Cancun safeguards, in others a means to structure the information in a SIS, and often, an unclear mix of the two.
  2. The number of principles, criteria and, especially, indicators were sometimes too large, with some countries having now initiated processes of rationalizing and prioritizing indicators down to a feasible number of those indicators most immediately relevant to their NS/AP.
  3. The PCI framework of some countries was not linked to existing PLRs.
  4. The PCI framework of some countries was not linked to proposed REDD+ actions and the emerging NS/AP. (see Section 2.2.2 below for related experiences with linking safeguards to REDD+ actions).

  As a consequence of these lessons learnt, several countries have embarked upon a process to revise their PCI framework in response to the issues highlighted above, i.e. explicitly state the purpose of the PCI framework; rationalize the number of criteria and indicators to a manageable size while still covering the priority environmental and social benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ actions; and aim to produce a more realistic PCI framework and link it directly to both existing PLRs and the REDD+ actions comprising their emerging NS/AP. (Box 4 provides a descriptive example from Ecuador).

- **Clarifying the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances is a key input into SIS design and preparation of summaries of information.**

  Countries reported that clarification of the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances, together with the links to REDD+ actions proposed in the evolving NS/AP, determine the content a country should provide under each safeguard in their SIS and summaries of information. Indonesia's experiences, in this regard, are presented in Box 5.

Box 4: Ecuador's evolution of a safeguards approach and the definition of the Cancun safeguards clarification in accordance with national circumstances

Starting in 2012, Ecuador developed a framework of principle, criteria and indicators (PCIs) at the national level. An analysis of the initial PCI framework development process identified some limitations due to an extensive and unmanageable number of indicators. Some of these indicators were not linked to the country's legal framework or in accordance with the country's national circumstances. Consequently, the PCI framework was adapted to align more with the country's REDD+ approach, capacities and needs.

This was done, in part, through an analysis of its legal framework, which was used as a key input to adapt the original set of safeguards indicators and to "clarify" the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances. Safeguard information system (SIS) indicators were then adapted, keeping the original priority topics, but adjusting the scope and design to link them more effectively to the country´s REDD+ and safeguards approaches. This resulted in an adjusted set of 24 indicators (flexible and adaptable to the country´s needs and advances) that will be used to provide information on safeguards.

Ecuador did experience some challenges in developing its safeguards approach. This included the challenge of adequately involving relevant stakeholders in the process and in developing SIS reporting tools. The country also felt challenged in maintaining stakeholder representation and participation throughout the REDD+ readiness phase in general. It was also considered demanding to manage different views, expectations and diverse inputs from stakeholders.

With the country´s REDD+ approach defined, facilitating stakeholder participation and dialogue now focuses on use of existing platforms and mechanisms, which consider stakeholders' interests, needs, priorities and capacities.

Source: Ministry of Environment and Forestry (pers. comm., 2015)

Box 5: Indonesia's experience of translating the Cancun safeguards into a national context as a key input to safeguards information system design

Indonesia's process of translating the Cancun safeguards into the national context revealed that REDD+ safeguards are not new to Indonesia's approach to sustainable forest management. A number of existing policies, laws, regulations (PLRs), and standards were identified within the forest sector that provided a basis for developing national principles, criteria and indicators (PCIs) for the Cancun safeguards.

An evaluation of the various existing mandatory PLRs and voluntary instruments was an important initial step in determining the content to be provided under each safeguard in the Indonesian safeguards information system (SIS). The evaluation was carried out using the following criteria:

a. relevance to the Cancun safeguards with respect to how they could be applied taking into consideration technical feasibility, potential of effectiveness under ideal conditions, and current practices relating to implementation and effectiveness;

b. limitations with regards to the scope of the existing instruments; and

c. effectiveness of these instruments when applied at varying scales and contexts.

The result of this evaluation process has provided a strong and reliable basis for the next steps in the process of developing a set of PCIs for SIS-REDD+ in Indonesia. Clusters of emerging elements were identified, linked to the Cancun safeguards and mapped into a PCI framework, which made reference to the existing instruments for forest management. 7 principles, 17 criteria and 32 indicators have been identified for Indonesia's SIS.

Sources: CSE (2013); BP REDD+ (2014); MEF (2014); MEF (2015); UN-REDD Programme (2015b)

2.2.2 LINKING APPLICATION OF SAFEGUARDS TO REDD+ ACTIONS

To ensure that the implementation of REDD+ actions are consistent with the Cancun safeguards, as noted above, countries identify that they need to anchor their country-specific clarification of the Cancun safeguards to their proposed REDD+ actions and their NS/APs. Key country experiences and early lessons in this regard, include:

- **A clear and precise identification and characterization of the proposed REDD+ actions is required to understand what the safeguards should be applied to**.
  Countries noted that, in most cases, the REDD+ actions outlined in their NS/APs are broad objectives, which need to be further defined through the identification of specific policies and measures for the scale(s) (e.g. national, subnational, site level) at which REDD+ interventions will take place.

- **Identification of benefits and risks of specific policies and measures, comprising the NS/APs, might be an effective way to anchor safeguards to proposed REDD+ actions**.
  Country experiences show that understanding how, when and where policies and measures outlined in the NS/APs are implemented is essential to identifying the specific benefits and risks of those actions, and what environmental and social issues will need to be safeguarded. Many policies and measures relevant for REDD+ are not new. Consequently, some environmental and social benefits and risks may already be known. When countries need to conduct a SESA process under the FCPF, the SESA may be used to support the benefit and risk analysis of the specific policies and measures intended to implement the proposed NS/AP. However, this depends on the scale and scope of SESA application, and if the SESA is considering the country-specific clarification of the Cancun safeguards (or only the World Bank's Operational Policies). Countries noted that depending on country circumstances there may be more time- and resource-effective ways of carrying out a benefit and risk analysis required to anchor the country-specific safeguards clarification.

2.3 IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING EXISTING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDS

It is now generally considered by most countries that identifying, assessing and strengthening existing governance arrangements for safeguards provide a fundamental framework though which they can address and respect the Cancun safeguards throughout the implementation of their REDD+ actions. The understanding and scope of the term "governance arrangements" differs from country to country, but the key elements countries are considering include:

- policies, laws and regulations
- institutional arrangements
- information systems and sources
- grievance redress mechanisms
- enforcement mechanisms

Several countries have embarked on the identification and assessment of their safeguards-relevant governance arrangements. A summary table of selected country progress with, and plans for, assessing existing governance arrangements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Self-assessment of progress in assessing existing governance arrangements as part of selected country approaches to safeguards

Policies, laws and regulations	Institutional arrangements	Information systems and sources	Grievance redress mechanisms	Enforcement mechanisms
Brazil	Brazil	Brazil		
Costa Rica		Costa Rica	Costa Rica	
Dominican Republic	[Dominican Republic]	[Dominican Republic]		
DRC	DRC	DRC		
Ecuador	Ecuador	Ecuador		
Ghana	[Ghana]	[Ghana]		
Honduras	[Honduras]	[Honduras]	[Honduras]	[Honduras]
Malaysia		Malaysia	Malaysia	
Mexico	[Mexico]	Mexico	[Mexico]	[Mexico]
Panama	[Panama]	[Panama]		
Viet Nam	[Viet Nam]	[Viet Nam]		
Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania	[Tanzania]
Zambia	Zambia	Zambia		

Notes:

• only countries directly consulted as part of this review are included in the table;

• country names in square brackets [ ] indicate planned, but not yet executed, assessments

2.3.1 IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING EXISTING AND RELEVANT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Most countries have undertaken, or plan to undertake, an assessment of their PLRs, institutional arrangements, and safeguards-related information systems and sources. In some cases, countries plan to identify and assess their GRMs and law enforcement mechanisms. Overall, countries agree that PLRs, institutional arrangements and information systems are three central elements of their governance arrangements that need to be identified, assessed and strengthened to address and respect safeguards through a country approach.

Key country experiences and early lessons related to the identification and assessment of relevant and existing governance arrangements include:

- **Building on existing governance arrangements allows countries to respond to safeguards commitments in a rigorous yet flexible manner.**
  This flexibility allows countries to tailor broad international requirements, notably the Cancun safeguards, to their own context and circumstances. In doing so, countries have the opportunity to accommodate diverse requirements from donors, investors and other programmes in a single coordinated country approach to safeguards, rather than following multiple donor-by-donor, requirements and processes.

- **Identifying and assessing existing governance arrangements can significantly contribute to demonstrating how the Cancun safeguards are to be addressed and respected**.
  The identified relevant governance arrangements are associated with demonstrating how the Cancun safeguards are to be addressed; while information about how these governance arrangements are working in practice, together with the resulting outcomes of their implementation, have been associated with demonstrating how the Cancun safeguards are being respected (Box 6).

- **PLR assessments have, to date, largely focused on national-level statutory legislation, but could include a broader scope of contractual and customary PLRs that embody the rights and obligations deemed relevant to addressing the Cancun safeguards**.
  PLRs may include international agreements and conventions, the national constitution and national legislation, operational plans and programmes, protocols and guidelines, among others. Some countries have noted that PLRs outside the public sector – such as corporate environmental and social responsibilities and sustainable commodity standards in the private sector – could also contribute to addressing the Cancun safeguards.

- **Identification and assessment of the PLRs, institutional arrangements, and information systems has application and benefit beyond immediate REDD+ requirements**.
  Such assessments identify gaps, weaknesses and contradictions in forest, and broader land-use governance arrangements that a country may well wish to resolve, regardless of REDD+, as part of on-going efforts to strengthen governance to meet existing policy goals.

- **The FCPF SESA process could make important contributions to assessing relevant governance arrangements as part of a country approach to safeguards**.
  Countries note that these contributions could particularly support the assessment of the country's legal and institutional frameworks. SESA processes have also included consideration of existing grievance redress mechanisms and free, prior and informed consultation/consent that could be integrated into the framework used to address and respect safeguards through a country approach.

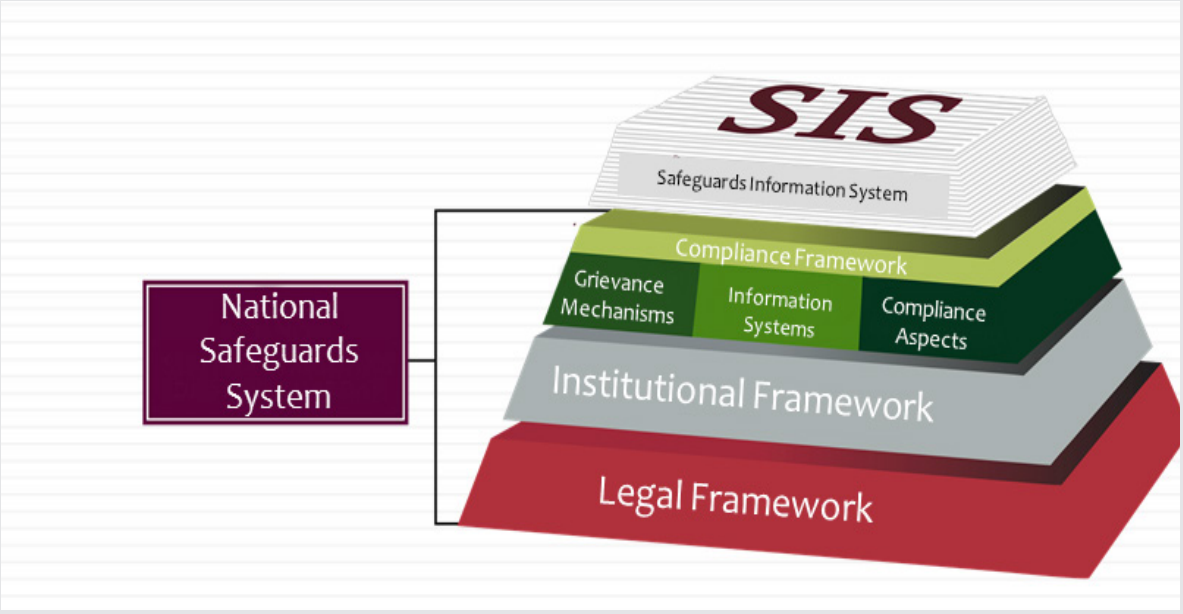
Box 6: Mexico's experience with identifying and assessing existing governance arrangements for safeguards

Mexico's draft National REDD+ Strategy outlines the development of a National Safeguard System (NSS). The three elements that make up Mexico's NSS are the:

- legal framework: serves to define how safeguards are to be adhered to when implementing REDD+ activities;
- institutional framework: serves to define who will be responsible for ensuring safeguards are adhered to when implementing REDD+ activities; and
- compliance framework: serves to ensure compliance with the safeguards, and is composed of three sub-elements: information systems, grievance redress mechanisms and noncompliance mechanisms.

To design the NSS it was important to carry out the identification and analysis of the legal, institutional and compliance frameworks in order to identify which aspects of these frameworks are relevant to REDD+ safeguards, i.e. what specific aspects exist in the legislation, procedures and institutions to ensure compliance with the safeguards and facilitate their reporting. The analysis of the legal framework for REDD+ safeguards was conducted in 2013. In 2014, Mexico started analysis of existing information systems, which might contribute to design of a SIS, with initial focus on the reporting mechanism provided for in the existing Planning Act (which aims to systematize information reported at the federal level).

Mexico is now developing an inventory of existing information systems and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, derived from and linked to, the national and international legal framework to see if these are relevant SIS. The results of analysis of the relevant legal framework were used as a key input to determine which systems and mechanisms would be explored. The interpretation of safeguards is the next key step that Mexico plans to undertake; this will be used to further define what information would be needed to be included in the SIS.



Sources: CONAFOR (2014); CONAFOR y UN-REDD (2015); CONAFOR (pers. comm. 2015).

- **PLR assessments can be lengthy and resource-intensive processes, requiring dedicated time, financial and technical resources.**
  In particular, countries report that PLR assessments carried out in a very inclusive manner, where inputs were solicited and considered from various stakeholder groups as the work progressed, have proven particularly protracted and costly. Stakeholder inputs and feedback might be most efficiently obtained through consultation around draft products of assessments led by technical specialists. Some countries have noted, however, that PLR assessments, due to their inherent technical and legalistic nature, have been challenging for stakeholders to engage in. Such countries have realized that appropriate stakeholder engagement strategies and capacity building are required in order to obtain feedback on the results of technical assessments.

2.3.2 STRENGTHENING EXISTING AND RELEVANT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

As noted, the value of using existing governance arrangements to address and respect the Cancun safeguards has been demonstrated. It is equally becoming apparent, however, that there will likely be certain gaps, weaknesses, or possible inconsistencies in the PLRs, institutional arrangements and information systems. A number of countries are now moving forward to put in place plans to fill identified gaps, tackle weaknesses and resolve inconsistencies.

Key country experiences and early lessons in this regard include:

- **Strengthening the mandate, procedures and the capacities of relevant institutions could be central to a country approach to safeguards.**
  Countries report that this is important, as effective institutions are essential for implementing the relevant PLRs. This would be a more cost-effective approach than PLR reforms (or new PLR development) per se. In particular, most countries highlighted that legal reforms are not the main approach they are considering to deal with the identified gaps, as these are difficult to achieve (requiring high levels of political capital and long periods of time), and are usually outside of the control and influence of the government institutions leading REDD+ and the country approach to safeguards.

- **PLR reforms are considered as a means to better address safeguards in some situations.**
  Countries report that this is relevant in circumstances where:
  - sufficient political will, at the decision-making level, can be secured;
  - an approach to reform, in terms of prioritizing procedures, protocols and regulations under the mandate of the relevant government agency is pursued in favour of trying to reform laws and policies; and
  - countries take advantage of the opportunities provided by reform processes as and when they occur.

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The SIS is generally understood by countries to be a domestic institutional arrangement and technological solution, building on existing national information systems and sources, which would be designed and developed according to each country's national circumstances.

The SIS is intended to serve as a means for each country to domestically gather, compile and provide information as to how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions.

Overall, countries are currently working on five main aspects of SIS design:

1. setting objectives of the SIS;
2. determining safeguards information needs;
3. determining safeguards information structure;
4. establishing the necessary functions of the SIS; and
5. exploring the institutional arrangements for the SIS.

Experiences and emerging lessons are presented below on the first four of these topics. Countries report that they are only now just beginning to explore the necessary institutional arrangements for their SIS, and therefore, there is insufficient experience and knowledge to draw out clear emerging themes and messages at this time.

Box 7: Costa Rica's proposed objectives for its safeguards information system

Costa Rica's SIS is expected to serve national objectives first and foremost. The national SIS will require institutional structures responsible for compiling, adding and packaging information for these various reporting objectives:

1. Collect and submit relevant information to show the UNFCCC how the safeguards adopted by COP16 are addressed and respected during the implementation of REDD+ measures (legislative, administrative).
2. Allow for taking timely decisions on risks that must be addressed.
3. Contribute to the preparation of country reports related to the state of the environment through the National System of Environmental Information (SINIA) official platform and ensuring the use of its protocols to generate quality information.
4. Offer information accessible to different relevant REDD+ stakeholders, including agencies that constitute sources of funding and cooperation.

Source: FONAFIFO (2015)

2.4.1 SETTING OBJECTIVES OF THE SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEM

The objective of a SIS, from a UNFCCC requirement perspective, is to provide information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders to demonstrate that the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation. Key country experiences and early lessons include:

- **It is important to a number of countries that the SIS should meet, first and foremost, national objectives, in addition to UNFCCC requirements.**
  Aligning SIS objectives with national policy agendas related to environment, forest management and sustainable development goals has been essential to a number of countries in justifying the costs of SIS development and operation. Some of these additional objectives are illustrated in Box 7.

2.4.2 DETERMINING SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION NEEDS

Another key SIS design consideration countries have identified is determining what information is needed to demonstrate whether the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected. Key country experiences and early lessons are:

- **The overall strategic approach to REDD+ and specific REDD+ actions outlined in evolving NS/APs are essential to determine the information needs and structure of the SIS**.
  Countries highlighted that it is very challenging to determine a SIS's information needs and structure without any clarity and considerations of the REDD+ actions (e.g. the specific policies and measures) the country is expecting to undertake. Many countries noted that they have yet to determine the specific policies and measures outlined in their NS/APs. As such preliminarily identified SIS information needs and structures are likely to be revised as the detailed polices and measures for REDD+ are elaborated.

- **The clarification of the Cancun safeguards according to national circumstances is an important factor shaping SIS design and determining information needs.**
  Countries note that they risk compiling information that it is too broad and not directly linked to specific country context if the results of the clarification process do not inform SIS design.

- **Existing systems and sources of information should serve as the basis for SIS design and development.**
  Countries report that this is because they are important inputs when trying to determine how information needs can be met. A consideration of what information is available, and what the associated limitations are, help define what information can be included in the SIS. In particular, countries felt it important to recognize:
  - the limitations of the institutional capacities to generate relevant information (e.g. training, staff, budget, technology);
  - cases of duplication of information;
  - the existence of harmonized protocols and applied methodologies;

- any weaknesses of coordination between institutions; and
- the accessibility of existing information.

- **GRMs and law enforcement mechanisms could serve as important existing information systems and sources relevant to SIS design and development**. Countries also noted it could be useful to take account of the reporting mechanisms to relevant multi- and bilateral international conventions and agreements.

2.4.3 DETERMINING SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION STRUCTURE

The information structure will depend on a number of variables, including the goals and scope of safeguards, scale of REDD+ interventions, objectives of the SIS, capacity and resources, and how existing information is structured. Countries that have progressed to preliminary SIS design have highlighted that determining how information is to be structured in their SIS has been a key consideration. Key country experiences and lessons in this regard include:

- **The information structure to be employed in the SIS should be in accordance with the country circumstances, be cost-efficient and sustainable in the long term.** Several countries noted they have mostly worked towards developing a structure based on PCI frameworks, while other countries preferred an alternative structure of narrative

Box 8: Malaysia's experience in structuring safeguards information

Malaysia structure to collect and provide information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected is built upon existing systems.

In particular, the country reports that it is considering drawing on the Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management for Forest certification, which consists of nine principles, 47 criterion, 97 indicators and 307 verifiers. Of these, five principles are deemed directly related to the Cancun safeguards:

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws and Principles: Forest management shall comply with all applicable laws of Malaysia and respect international treaties and agreements to which Malaysia is a signatory, and comply with all the principles and criteria contained in this standard.

Principle 2: Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities: Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

Principle 3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights: The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories and resources shall be recognized and respected.

Principle 4: Community Relations and Worker's Rights: Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of local communities and forest workers.

Principle 5: Benefits from the forest: Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

In addition, Malaysia is considering incorporating into their structure the Aichi Targets 3,4,5,7,11,12,14 and 15.

Sources: UN-REDD Programme (2015d); Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia, (pers. comm. 2015)

descriptions of how safeguards are being addressed and respected. Others have noted that a hybrid approach – using narrative descriptions for some safeguards and PCIs for others – would be more desirable.

- **PCI frameworks have been a popular approach to structure information for SISs to date**.
  This is partly due to the fact that several countries already have experiences with PCI frameworks (including forest certification schemes), which were identified as an appropriate basis from which to structure safeguards information (Box 8).

2.4.4 ESTABLISHING FUNCTIONS OF THE SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEM

The UNFCCC does not offer any guidance on what specific functions the SIS should perform (e.g. information compilation, analysis, validation, dissemination) beyond the need to "provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis" on how all the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected. Countries might find it useful to determine what functions their SIS should encompass in accordance with their national circumstances.

Key country experiences and early lessons in determining the SIS functions include:

- **Compilation, analysis, validation and dissemination of information have all been identified as important functions to include in SIS design**.
  In addition, countries highlighted that in many cases the information systems and sources they intend to utilize for their SIS already encompass internal analysis and external assessments of the information they collect and provide, and that this should be considered in designing the SIS (Box 9).

Box 9: Ecuador's safeguard information system's functions

Ecuador's SIS is expected to be a flexible and multipurpose system, which provides information on the design and implementation of REDD+ measures and actions. The SIS functions that Ecuador envisions are:

1. Compilation of primary and secondary information: refers to collating information from different sources in relation to the country specific safeguards approach and scope;
2. Analysis of information: considers processing, analysis and synthesizing information;
3. Revision and validation of information: review and validation of the safeguard related environmental and socio-economic information that has been compiled and analysed. It is expected that this function could be complemented with actions undertaken to evaluate the implementation of the national REDD+ Action Plan; and
4. Report on safeguards promotion and respect: entails dissemination of information required to the UNFCCC, and for national purposes.

Source: Ministry of Environment of Ecuador et al. (2014)

- **A country's SIS will largely be built on existing systems, but the challenge will be determining how these existing systems can provide information in the context of the REDD+ actions**.
  Information collected by the existing systems will need to be thematically relevant to the country specific safeguards, but will likely not be collected in accordance with the scope of a country's REDD+ actions. The challenge is ensuring information collected is relevant, and can be used, to demonstrate safeguards have been addressed and respected throughout implementation of REDD+ actions. SIS design based on existing information systems and sources will also require incorporation, not just of different types of information, but also different methods of information compilation, analysis, dissemination, etc. used in these existing systems.

- **Piloting a SIS, and testing its functionality, can be an important step.**
  Countries report that this is important to make sure that identified PLRs do address safeguards, and that the institutional capacity is sufficient to effectively implement these PLRs and contribute to respecting safeguards. Inclusion of a pilot phase in SIS development can also help to check if the information collated and disseminated through the SIS meets its stated objectives (Section 2.4.1). (See Box 10 for Indonesia's experience as an example).

Box 10: Indonesia's experience in piloting safeguards information system's operations

Indonesia's SIS-REDD+ has made significant steps to becoming operational through two tracks at the national and subnational levels. REDD+ implementers (e.g. demonstration and pilot activities) were invited to conduct self-assessments in order to provide information on safeguards application by using the principles, criteria and indicators (PCI), together with assessment tools for the SIS (Box 5). At the subnational level, Indonesia's SIS-REDD+ was piloted in East Kalimantan and Jambi provinces. This piloting process has been an important step in developing the SIS, concretely demonstrating how the system will operate.

The pilots provided the national SIS-REDD+ manager with the opportunity to test the conformity of safeguards information available at the subnational level, while following the PCI hierarchy in the structure of the SIS. By having this, the piloting also enable the national SIS-REDD+ authority to test the institutional arrangements and flow of information as part of the overall SIS design.

The piloting of institutional arrangements also promotes the involvement and inclusiveness of varied stakeholders in the process of information provision. It also facilitates future improvements through feedback from subnational government authorities.

In addition, Malaysia is considering incorporating into their structure the Aichi Targets 3,4,5,7,11,12,14 and 15.

Source: Ministry of Environment and Forestry (pers. comm. 2015)

2.5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

There is broad agreement that stakeholder engagement will be essential in developing an inclusive and transparent country approach to safeguards.[20] The success of a country's approach to safeguards, and its resulting products (e.g. SIS, summaries of information, any other domestic reporting) will depend on stakeholder ownership across a wide range of constituencies, particularly government bodies, civil society, indigenous people and local communities. Two main issues are emerging from countries' initial experiences in engaging stakeholders in their country approaches to safeguards:

1. **raising awareness** of safeguards requirements, thematic issues and stakeholder responsibilities, and building capacities to engage in safeguards processes; and

2. **ensuring consultation and participation**, cost-effectively throughout country approaches to safeguards.

2.5.1 CAPACITATING STAKEHOLDERS

All countries have or plan to embark on building the institutional and individual capacities and awareness of priority stakeholders, which may include governmental and/or non-governmental stakeholders.

Key country experiences and early lessons include:

- **Awareness raising, capacity building and dissemination activities are critical throughout the entire process of a country approach to safeguards.**
  Countries report that this allows stakeholders to contribute effectively to national and subnational dialogues (Box 11). Key individuals, both government and non-government stakeholders, can serve as champions of multi-stakeholder safeguards processes. A challenge is posed when these individuals move on, taking with them the capacity and institutional knowledge of the process. Access to financial resources needed to undertake these capacity building activities can also be limiting.

- **Managing expectations is important, in particular when developing PCI frameworks, as an extensive list of indicators can be difficult and expensive to maintain in the long run.**
  A number of countries have, however, also noted that developing PCI frameworks, whether to clarify the Cancun safeguards, structure a SIS, or both, presents a valuable opportunity to build capacity and promote stakeholder engagement.

2.5.2 CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

- **A national government-led technical and/or political coordinating body is highly conducive to advancing multi-stakeholder safeguards processes.**
  Such coordinating bodies can identify and reach out to the most interested and relevant stakeholders to engage at the appropriate junctures, as well as lobby for necessary political support in both national line ministries and subnational departments. Such a coordinating body need not be a new entity; there may be existing platforms to build on which have the requisite political capital and technical capacities. Composition, role and functions of such coordinating bodies need to be clear (and best captured in a document, such as a terms of reference, for example) if they are to gain the trust of the key different stakeholder constituencies represented in the group's membership, as well as efficiently drive the safeguards process forward (Box 10).

- **Broad stakeholder ownership and support for safeguards, and REDD+ in general, can be achieved through key consultative or participatory steps in the safeguards process.**
  The clarification of the Cancun safeguards, together with structuring the information in a SIS, appear to be two important entry points for stakeholder engagement in country approaches to safeguards. A number of countries report that these two aspects of a country approach are combined in an iterative process of defining a collective understanding what the Cancun safeguards (and other safeguards) mean to different domestic stakeholder groups.

Box 11: Tanzania's experience in stakeholder consultation and capacity building

Under the National REDD+ Task Force, a technical working group was established to take part in the REDD+ safeguards development process. The National REDD+ Task Force oversees the country safeguards approach and provides guidance to the technical working group on how best the process could be accomplished. Both members of the teams (i.e. technical working group, National REDD+ Task Force) were trained on the subject of safeguards prior to engaging in the process.

Consultations were held at the subnational level, while stakeholders attending these meetings were trained on REDD+ safeguards and the country's approach before engaging in discussions on the principles, criteria and indicators framework. This framework encompasses the risks that would need to be mitigated, and the benefits that could be enhanced, when implementing all proposed REDD+ actions, irrespective of financing source.

In addition, consultations were held at the sectoral level with actors and agents in forestry, agriculture, livestock, lands, environment, local government and local communities, as well as with bodies such as the Members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Standing Committee of the Parliament and that of the National Climate Change Steering and Technical Committees.

The process of developing REDD+ safeguards has not yet been completed and it is envisaged that more stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, will have their capacity built in order to embark on development of the country's SIS. Stakeholders will also be part of a process to discuss how REDD+ is mainstreamed into the sector plans and programmes in Tanzania.

Source: Tanzania National REDD+ Task Force (pers. comm., 2015)

- **Determining the appropriate content, timing and format of awareness raising and capacity building activities is critical to the success of any stakeholder engagement process**.
  In particular, it is important to have clarity about what message is to be provided, how it should be provided (i.e. through appropriate means and in a culturally appropriate manner) and when it should be provided in relation to each stakeholder group. Participation processes are most effective when the timing is well-planned, and appropriate information is provided, otherwise there is a risk of generating unrealistic expectations.

- **Consultation and participation processes for safeguards should not be undertaken in isolation from other processes of stakeholder engagement for REDD+**.
  In particular, consultation and participation related to REDD+ safeguards should be linked to broader REDD+ discussions.

Box 12: Viet Nam's experiences with a multi-stakeholder coordinating body

The National REDD+ Network was established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2009. Thereafter, recognizing the need for thematic technical working groups, six Sub-Technical Working Groups have been established under the National REDD+ Network, with one dedicated to safeguards. The Sub-Technical Working Group on Safeguards (STWG-SG) was established as a multi-stakeholder platform to contribute coordinated technical assistance to government-led efforts to address and respect the Cancun safeguards and other relevant international and national policy commitments. In doing so, the STWG-SG's ultimate goal is to contribute to promoting social and environmental co-benefits from REDD+ at national, subnational and local levels. The STWG-SG is chaired by the government through the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and co-chaired by a civil society representative.

The STWG-SG has commissioned and coordinated assessments of Viet Nam's existing national PLRs to produce a roadmap for safeguards, under the National REDD+ Action Programme. The STWG-SG is now preparing to coordinate stakeholder inputs to an assessment of institutional capacities to implement the relevant existing PLRs identified in the roadmap, as well as a consultative SIS design process, building on existing systems and sources of information.

To date, the STWG-SG and five other thematic REDD+ working groups – along with the parallel Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) negotiation process – have facilitated unprecedented levels of stakeholder engagement in forestry policy dialogues. How these technical-level dialogues have influenced decision makers and policy reform processes in Viet Nam is yet to become clear; many recommendations and suggestions have been incorporated into various terms of references, draft decisions and papers – and will be approved soon.

Sources: UN-REDD Programme (2013b); UN-REDD Programme

PART 3 CONCLUSIONS

3

These are early days for country approaches to safeguards and many countries report that they are in the initial stages of their safeguards processes. Progress in meeting UNFCCC REDD+ safeguard requirements has been slower, relative to other pillars of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. Overall, countries highlight that this is largely because: a) many countries are still working on developing their NS/APs, without which, countries are not able to contextualize and determine how safeguards requirements will be met; and b) there is uncertainty over how to best meet UNFCCC (and other) safeguards requirements in accordance with national circumstances. Understanding and dialogue among REDD+ stakeholders on safeguards has yet to mature, but learning by doing has yielded important lessons and continues to inform this discourse on meeting UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards requirements.

The potential for country approaches to meet these requirements, nevertheless, appears to be promising, and common generic elements are emerging: setting goals and scope; clarifying safeguards; building on existing governance arrangements; and various SIS design considerations. These components constitute a practical and strategic model for meeting all the UNFCCC REDD+ (and other relevant) safeguards requirements as well as acting as means for strengthening country ownership and relevance.

A clear message from countries, even at this early stage, is that a country approach to safeguards should not be undertaken in isolation. Safeguards processes should include regular and frequent exchange and feedback to ensure and capitalize on synergies with other essential elements of REDD+ architecture. Linking safeguards to REDD+ actions, the specific policies and measures to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as more sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, as part of the development of the NS/APs is now widely acknowledged by countries as imperative to ensuring that the safeguards are effectively addressed and respected when it comes to implementation.

In exploring countries' different approaches to meeting UNFCCC (and other relevant) requirements on REDD+ safeguards a rich and diverse body of knowledge has been generated. This report has attempted, wherever possible, to compile, synthesize and make sense of this heterogeneous body of knowledge, drawing out emerging common (but by no means universal) themes from what is essentially a collection of unique country experiences. The voice and perspectives of stakeholders outside national government, particularly domestic civil society, have yet to be heard, and it is hoped this paper might stimulate subsequent studies that, through engagement with other stakeholder groups in the near future, could enrich or clarify some of the emerging lessons captured here.

The list of issues, themes and lessons, categorized under the five emerging areas of common experience above – goal and scope; clarifying safeguards; applying governance arrangements; designing a SIS; and engaging stakeholders – can serve to inform the

structuring of a country approach to safeguards. In this concluding section, a single key take-home message is offered by way of summarizing the body of experiences and lessons under each of these categories:

Setting goals and scope of safeguards application, is an iterative process that needs to be linked to that of NS/AP development. Coherence between these two processes is essential to ensure that safeguards are addressed and respected throughout implementation of REDD+ actions, and to facilitate the development of a SIS. In this regard, countries noted that, in most cases, the REDD+ actions outlined in their NS/APs are framed as broad objectives, which need to be further defined through the identification of specific policies and measures for the scale(s) (e.g. national, subnational, site level) at which REDD+ interventions will take place.

Clarifying safeguards in accordance with national circumstances, is a key aspect of a country approach to safeguards as it presents an opportunity to anchor safeguards to the existing PLR framework as well as to the REDD+ actions included in evolving NS/APs, and to serves as a basis for SIS design (as well as subsequent production of summaries of information). The iterative clarifying step in a country approach to safeguards also presents a valuable entry point to engage different stakeholder groups (e.g. national and subnational government, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities). Devising effective stakeholder engagement strategies for, and managing expectations of, these different constituencies are two clear challenges identified by countries where improvements can and are being made as countries continue to learn by doing.

Applying governance arrangements (and continually improving them to fill gaps and strengthen weaknesses) presents a strategic opportunity to strengthen existing PLRs, institutions and information systems, etc. with far reaching benefits beyond, and irrespective of, REDD+. In order to make use of existing governance arrangements, however, lengthy and resource-intensive assessments are an essential first step to take stock of what is already available, and where there are gaps and weaknesses. This requires dedicated financial and technical resources, as well as adequate time to achieve. Identifying gaps and weaknesses in existing and relevant governance arrangements is a relatively straightforward undertaking; the challenge is to find those gap-filling measures that are both cost-effective and politically viable in the context of REDD+ actions having to compete with other, perhaps more lucrative, forest and land use choices.

Designing a SIS process could benefit from two emerging lessons: 1) the information needed to demonstrate that safeguards have been addressed and respected should be informed by the country's clarification of the Cancun safeguards; and 2) the information structure to be used in the SIS should be in accordance with the country's national (and possibly subnational) circumstances, to ensure design of a SIS that is both achievable and relevant in its operations. Countries are embarking on the process of determining how existing systems, could contribute to building their SIS, and provide information in the context of the REDD+ actions. Information collected by these existing systems, although thematically relevant to the safeguards, is not currently being collected in accordance with the scope of REDD+ actions and, consequently, the challenge is ensuring that information collected can be used to demonstrate that safeguards have been addressed and respected throughout implementation of REDD+ actions.

Engaging stakeholders is paramount in any country approach to safeguards and will define the quality and ownership of processes and outcomes. How, when, where and to what degree different constituencies are engaged will make or break a country approach to safeguards, with the potential to elevate mutual trust to unprecedented levels, or to exacerbate existing antagonistic positions and raise expectations. Effective socialization of technical assessments and targeted involvement of stakeholders at conducive junctures present opportunities for ongoing improvement in the multi-stakeholder processes that constitute country approaches to safeguards.

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Photo: Riccardo Gangle / UN-REDD Programme

ANNEX I UNFCCC DECISIONS ON SAFEGUARDS

DECISION 1/CP.16 (CANCUN, 2010)

69. Affirms that the implementation of the activities referred to in paragraph 70 below should be carried out in accordance with annex I to this decision, and that the safeguards referred to in paragraph 2 of annex I to this decision should be promoted and supported;

71. Requests developing country Parties aiming to undertake the activities referred to in paragraph 70 above, in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technological support to developing country Parties, in accordance with national circumstances and respective capabilities, to develop the following elements:

    a. A system for providing information on how the safeguards referred to in appendix I to this decision are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities referred to in paragraph 70 above, while respecting sovereignty;

72. Also requests developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of appendix I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities;

76. Urges Parties, in particular developed country Parties, to support, through multilateral and bilateral channels, the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures and capacity-building, followed by the implementation of national policies and measures and national strategies or action plans that could involve further capacity-building, technology development and transfer and results-based demonstration activities, including consideration of the safeguards referred to in paragraph 2 of appendix I to this decision, taking into account the relevant provisions on finance including those relating to reporting on support;

Appendix 2

2. When undertaking the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

    a. That 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 the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision;

e. That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision 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.

DECISION 12/CP.17 (DURBAN, 2011)

Preamble: Noting that guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are addressed and respected should be consistent with national sovereignty, national legislation and national circumstances,

I. Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected

1. Notes that the implementation of the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16, and information on how these safeguards are being addressed and respected, should support national strategies or action plans and be included in, where appropriate, all phases of implementation referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73, of the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of the same decision;

2. Agrees that systems for providing information on how the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are addressed and respected should, taking into account national circumstances and respective capabilities, and recognizing national sovereignty and legislation, and relevant international obligations and agreements, and respecting gender considerations:

   a. Be consistent with the guidance identified in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, paragraph 1;
   b. Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;
   c. Be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;
   d. Provide information on how all of the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are being addressed and respected;
   e. Be country-driven and implemented at the national level;
   f. Build upon existing systems, as appropriate.

3. Agrees also that developing country Parties undertaking the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, should provide a summary of information on how all of the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities;

4. Decides that the summary of information referred to in paragraph 3 above should be provided periodically and be included in national communications, consistent with relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties on guidelines on national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention, or communication channels agreed by the Conference of the Parties;

5. Requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, at its thirty-sixth session, to consider the timing of the first presentation and the frequency of subsequent presentations of the summary of information referred to in paragraph 3 above, with a view to recommending a decision on this matter for adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth session;

6. Also requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, at its thirty-sixth session, to consider the need for further guidance to ensure transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all safeguards are addressed and respected and, if appropriate, to consider additional guidance, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth session;

DECISION 9/CP.19 (WARSAW, 2013)

4. Agrees that developing countries seeking to obtain and receive results-based payments in accordance with decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 64, should provide the most recent summary of information on how all of the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, paragraph 2, have been addressed and respected before they can receive results-based payments;

11. Decides that the information hub will contain, as reported through the appropriate channels under the Convention: The summary of information on how all of the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected, as referred to in decisions -/CP.199 and 12/CP.17, chapter I;

DECISION 12/CP.19 (WARSAW, 2013)

The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected
The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 17/CP.8, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17 and 12/CP.17,

Also recalling, in particular, decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 5,

1. Reiterates that according to decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 3, developing country Parties undertaking the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, should provide a summary of information on how all of the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities;

2. Also reiterates that according to decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 4, the summary of information referred to in paragraph 1 above should be provided periodically and be included in national communications, or communication channels agreed by the Conference of the Parties;

3. Agrees that the summary of information referred to in paragraph 1 above could also be provided, on a voluntary basis, via the web platform on the UNFCCC website;

4. Decides that developing country Parties should start providing the summary of information referred to in paragraph 1 above in their national communication or communication channel, including via the web platform of the UNFCCC, taking into account paragraph 3 above, after the start of the implementation of activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70;

5. Also decides that the frequency of subsequent presentations of the summary of information as referred to in paragraph 2 above should be consistent with the provisions for submissions of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention and, on a voluntary basis, via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.

ANNEX II
SELECTED COUNTRY FACTSHEETS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Overall approach

The country has adopted its own normative framework which is referred to as the REDD+ national social and environmental standards. These standards were developed with the strong participation of civil society to enable the country to report on the safeguards inherent for REDD+ implementation as per the UNFCCC requirements (Decision 1/CP.16) and other multilateral and bilateral funding requirements. The standards were developed to meet the requirements of transparency and good governance at the national and local level.

Projects, programme and reforms which will be part of or enable the implementation of REDD+ will also have to respect these standards, which have been organized into principles, criteria and framework indicators as follows;

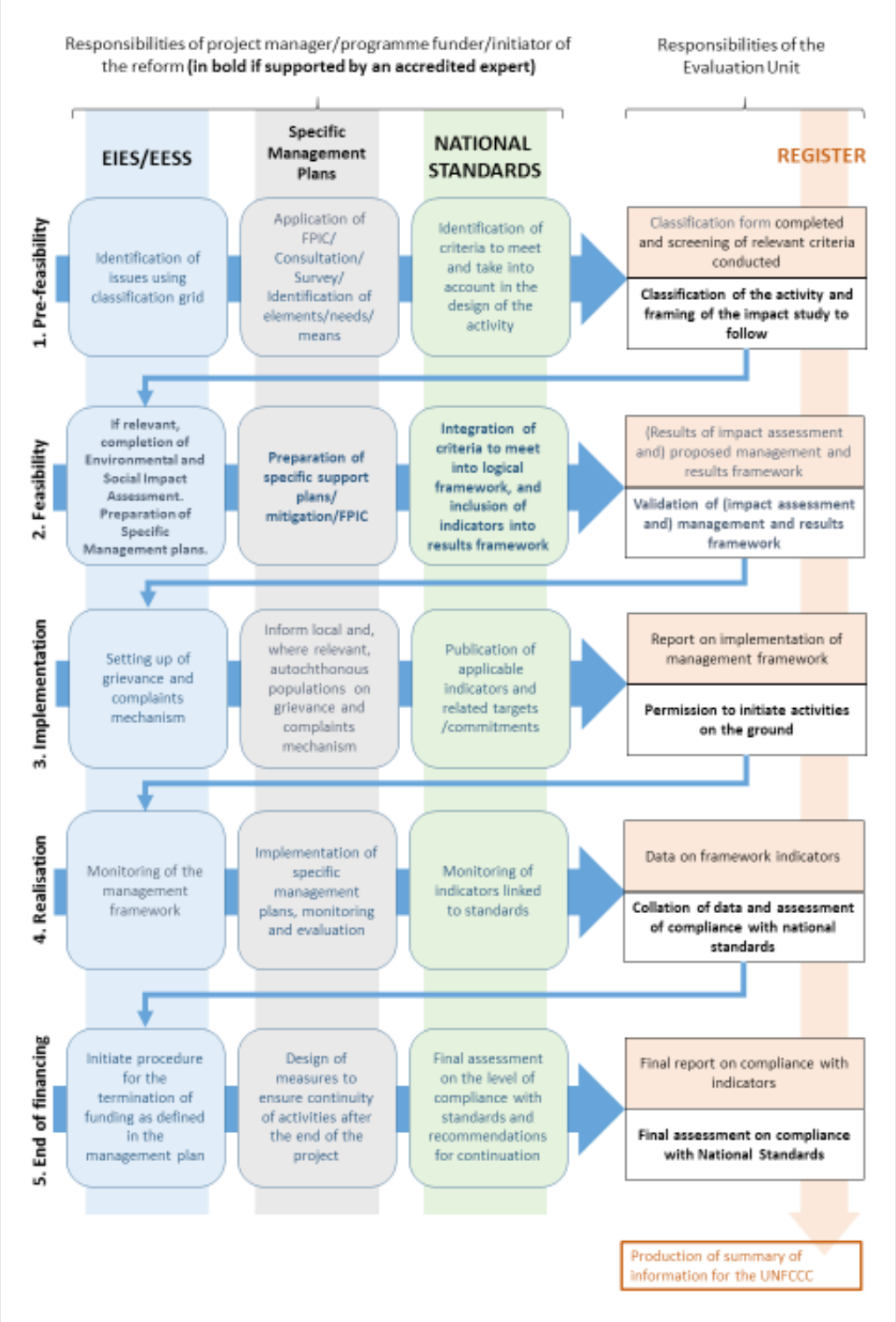
- Principle represents the vision and the ideals that the country intends to achieve to ensure the smooth implementation of DRC's REDD+ Strategy. These take into account the Cancun safeguards and the requirements of DRC's main partners;
- Criteria: define the elements that enable the principle to be achieved.
- Framework indicators: define what types of information or parameters are needed to meet the performance criteria. These are defined at the national level, and may require the development of site-specific indicators in the case of projects and programmes.

This normative framework is complemented by an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) as well as five products from the Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment (SESA) which sets specific requirements for an identified REDD+ activity and determines procedures to follow. The SESA process resulted in the inclusion of issues related to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). This was an innovative approach and DRC is the first African country to have their REDD+ safeguards, which also incorporate the Cancun Safeguards, validated by the World Bank. The integration of the FCPF's SESA process and the REDD+ national standards is continuing and includes discussion on how the four main components: ESIA; specific requirements (such as FPIC); the REDD+ national standards; and the Registry are perceived to become operational. The figure on the following page describes how these four main components interact with each other to integrate a SESA/ESMF into a country approach to safeguards.

Construction of the safeguards information system

These standards will be incorporated into the legal framework for REDD + in the DRC, particularly through the decree (on REDD+ standards - L'arrêté d'homologation) spelling out the conditions a project or programme must fulfil in order to be granted the right of

Integration of key safeguards components in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



generating REDD+ results. This decree is currently being revised and will refer to these standards as criteria for approval of a project or programme. The monitoring of their implementation will be through the National Registry for REDD+. This registry collects and shares information on REDD+ activities in the DRC.

With a view to validate a final version of the national standards, the current version will undergo field testing in order to develop SMART (i.e. sustainable, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) framework indicators applicable to all types of REDD+ activities in the DRC. The principles and criteria will be subjected to significance changes. The objectives of the field testing will be to:

- **Assess the applicability of framework indicators for REDD+ activities implemented in the field.** The framework indicators should be formulated broadly enough to be relevant to all REDD + activities undertaken in the DRC. Each project or programme must then decide how each can respond to these framework indicators. Field testing in four project sites, will point to where the indicator framework can be revised, if required.

- **Inform the development of the safeguards information system.** Depending on the final structure adopted for the SIS, the data collected to inform the framework indicators will be synthesized and used to produce the summary information to the UNFCCC on how safeguards are addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities.

- **Identify sources of information available at the project or programme levels**. This is in order to ensure that information required by the framework indicators proposed in the Standards can be collected

- **Engage with project leaders through the testing process about the needs, processes and capacity that will be required to address and respect the standards during implementation.** For example, whether or not the project will need to undertake an environment and social impact assessment.

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ECUADOR

Safeguards scope and goals

The preparation process for REDD+ in Ecuador involved significant efforts in identifying, mapping and prioritizing social and environmental benefits in addition to climate change mitigation benefits, while ensuring consistency with national objectives and priorities. From the beginning, priority was given to addressing safeguards according to country circumstances.

The experience with the national interpretation of REDD+ SES (2009-2013), enabled the country to identify, through a participatory process, priority safeguard themes/issues that were identified through the analysis of potential risks and social and environmental benefits associated with REDD+ implementation. These themes constituted inputs for the definition of a National Safeguards Scope.

Subsequently, the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador (MAE)[21] led a process of analysis of relevant international initiatives and tools for addressing and reporting on REDD+ safeguards (e.g. REDD+ SES, UN-REDD Programme, FCPF, RIA). The strengths and elements of these contributed to the definition of the country approach to safeguards and the development of tools to report on safeguards (e.g. indicators).

Ecuador's view is that it is key to adequately involve relevant stakeholders in the construction of a safeguards approach and SIS reporting tools, and even more important to maintain stakeholder participation throughout the REDD+ preparation phase. Efforts needed to compile and manage different views, expectations and diverse inputs from stakeholders can be challenging. Once the country´s REDD+ approach was defined, the stakeholder participation efforts have focused on channelling discussion through existing participation platforms and mechanisms, considering interests, needs, priorities and capacities.

Building on this progress, a National Safeguards Scope was defined that is based on an interpretation of the Cancun safeguards. This constitutes the implementing framework for safeguards at the national level, thus determining the interpretation of each of the UNFCCC safeguards requirements according to Ecuadorian context. Moreover, it sets the parameters for reporting on how safeguards are being addressed and respected when implementing REDD+ activities, in accordance with existing national legal instruments and mechanisms.

At an operational level, the National Safeguards Scope directs the determination of social and environmental considerations for the development of territorial planning instruments, management of institutional arrangements, and design and implementation of REDD+ Measures and Actions (M&A).[22]

Identification and strengthening of governance arrangements to demonstrate how safeguards are addressed

Strengthening governance systems is essential to ensure the sustainability of the REDD+ actions and the application of the principles of fairness, transparency and efficiency promoted by safeguards. Through the identification of opportunities and needs for the implementation of the legal and political framework, and the resulting definition of actions, the country's goal

Photo: Ecuador Ministry of the Environment

is to enforce these laws, policies and regulations, and to strengthen the relevant capacities and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the REDD+ Action Plan. Inter-institutional coordination is required for efficient and transparent implementation of REDD+ in Ecuador, and the adequate involvement of different actors.

Measures to ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders

In Ecuador, several processes to promote the participation of various actors were put in place. Efforts were made to socialize information and promote dialogue, to build capacities of local actors, and to gather inputs and strengthen national proposals (relating to various topics, including safeguards), as well as adapting them to priorities and circumstances of the country.

The REDD+ Round Table was the most important dialogue platform during the REDD+ preparation phase, which brought together the National REDD+ Authority (MAE) and representatives of civil society organizations (e.g. NGOs, women and youth organizations, academia, private sector) and indigenous peoples. This platform held regular meetings for discussion on various topics, allowing the collection of contributions towards the design of the REDD+ Action Plan, which was complemented with the inputs resulting from technical dialogues.

Workshops with national and international experts were held to disseminate the country's progress, and to receive feedback regarding improvements, on the SIS design. Similarly, during the development of the REDD+ Action Plan various stakeholders provided inputs, including several government institutions and representatives of indigenous peoples.

Development of a REDD+ safeguards information system in Ecuador

For the design of the SIS, it was essential to map existing national information systems, considering among other aspects the type and scope of the information, frequency of updates, and existing institutional arrangements.

The National Safeguards Scope determines the type of information that will be handled by the SIS, while the specific/detailed information is established by the design of REDD+ M&As and the tools designed for their follow up. Therefore, the information covers data from national information systems, along with other sources of information related to the implementation of REDD+ M&As.

It is expected that Ecuador will have a system for reporting local and national information on socioeconomic and environmental themes, and which includes data on the implementation of various REDD+ M&As. By doing this, the system seeks not only to generate information relevant to the UNFCCC, but also to donors and key national and international stakeholders. The country expects that both the system and the information managed will be improved over time, within the framework of national capacities and circumstances. Moreover, the information generated by the SIS will facilitate the identification of good practices and potential areas for improvement to strengthen the implementation of REDD+ in the country. The implementation of the SIS requires establishing institutional arrangements, developing and strengthening capacities for the efficient management of information, and linking the SIS with certain processes determined for REDD+ implementation and with other information systems.

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GHANA

Overall approach

Ghana's entry point for a REDD+ safeguards has been the safeguards requirements for the Forest Carbon Partnership facility (FCPF) – the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), as well as the environmental and social issues of proposed REDD+ actions that would trigger World Bank Operational Policies. More recently, Ghana incorporated the Cancun safeguards into the analysis, during the review of the national REDD+ strategy, and the country is now embarking on a more comprehensive approach to safeguards.

Linking safeguards to the existing legal framework and REDD+ actions

The SESA involved an assessment of the existing policies, laws and regulations (PLRs) associated with governance issues that might arise through REDD+ implementation. The findings of this PLR assessment were then discussed in a national validation workshop. This consultation processes identified specific emerging governance issues such as the need for revisions on the regulations governing tree tenure to provide an adequate incentive for REDD+ implementation by farmers and local communities. This point and others are now subjects of further discussions, through more extensive consultation, in order to identify the PLRs that can be strengthened in their implementation through existing institutional arrangements, mandates and procedures.

Ghana began a process of revising its national REDD+ strategy through a consultative process in 2015. A consultative analysis of the risks and benefits of the proposed policies and measures in the revised national REDD+ strategy is also planned. For each of the policies and measures, the implications for safeguards and how they can be operationalized will be explored. This detailed analysis will be documented in annexes to the national REDD+ strategy.

Coordinating body for safeguards

The national REDD+ strategy review process also includes establishment of a national safeguards working group. The working group is planned to be operationalized in the near future and lead on the following tasks:

- clarify the goals of the safeguards work and ascertain the best approach to an integrated safeguards framework for Ghana;
- unpack the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances (this had already been done generally but not in a systematic way);
- bring together the various components of work that will be relevant to safeguards (including those activities under the SESA/ESMF), such as PLR assessment, work done on grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) and conflict resolution, resettlement framework, benefit sharing, and mainstreaming gender considerations;
- define a plan to build capacity on safeguards work;
- develop and present a budget for the national safeguards working group, the SIS design and institutional capacity building plan;
- widen ownership of safeguards work so that a community of practice can be developed; and
- conceptualize the design of the SIS (see below).

The implementation of the ESMF will be important to SIS design and will contribute to demonstrating how safeguards have been addressed and respected in Ghana. Equally important will be the existing country framework for safeguards, which is based on social and environmental impact assessments, by the Environmental Protection Agency, although these assessments are primarily applied at the project level.

Safeguards information system

This SIS will build on existing institutions, and be linked to the evolving national forest monitoring system, and in line with the scope of the revised national REDD+ strategy. The safeguards working group will lead the process to develop a SIS in a consultative and participatory way and be tasked with:

- arriving at a consensus on the objectives of the SIS;
- identifying resources for a consultative process;
- identifying existing sources, types and structure of information;
- identifying costs of establishing and operating the SIS;
- identifying sources and means of collecting information;
- determining levels of information transparency and accessibility;
- determining institutional arrangements for the SIS;
- integrating existing work on ESMF, GRMs, benefit sharing and gender mainstreaming considerations

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INDONESIA

Overall approach

Indonesia has focused its national-level REDD+ initiatives to develop a) a safeguards information system (SIS), known as SIS-REDD+; and b) a national safeguards framework, known as PRISAI. A number of subnational safeguard developments have also taken place, namely piloting of provincial-level REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES), and participatory governance assessments (PGA). All of these interventions are characterized by being based on a standards-type model of principles, criteria and indicator (PCI) frameworks.

Safeguards information system: SIS-REDD+

The process to develop a SIS commenced in early 2011 by translating the seven Cancun safeguards into the national context. During the translation process, it became clear that REDD+ safeguards are nothing new for Indonesian sustainable forest management. The Indonesian government, through the then Ministry of Forestry (now the Ministry of Environment and Forestry) embarked on a multi-stakeholder process to assess and analyse various existing mandatory and voluntary policies and regulations. The criteria used in the assessment were:

a. relevance to the Cancun safeguards for REDD+ activities, particularly on technical practices relating to implementation and effectiveness;
b. limitations in scope of policy and regulatory instruments; and
c. effectiveness of instruments at different scales and contexts.

SIS-REDD+ Indonesia was designed using the following principles: simplicity, completeness, accessibility and accountability. The assessment and analysis process of the existing instruments, which resulted in the initial PCI framework, was conducted through the following steps:

1. identifying and prioritizing elements contained in existing policy and regulatory instruments relevant to the Cancun safeguards;
2. identifying clusters of elements or "common denominators";
3. linking the emerging clusters to the Cancun safeguards; and
4. mapping clusters into a PCI framework and referencing the PCI to the original policy and regulatory instruments

The seven principles, 17 criteria, and 32 indicators, which were derived from existing safeguards-related instruments, were further interpreted and translated into concrete practical assessment tools to assess the conformity of safeguards implementation with the PCI. These tools are intended to be used as systematic guidance by REDD+ implementers to do self-assessments and so provide information on REDD+ safeguards implementation within the PCI framework.

A SIS-REDD+ web platform has been developed, which marks the operationalization of the early version of SIS-REDD+ in Indonesia. The web-platform consists of two parts, namely: a database to collect, compile and manage information on REDD+ safeguards implementation; and a web portal for displaying the information.

National safeguards framework: PRISAI

PRISAI was developed by the Government of Indonesia through the (now defunct) REDD+ Task Force, in parallel to the development of the SIS, which was led by the Ministry of Forestry. PRISAI is a jurisdiction- and project-level standards-based safeguards initiative that was developed to:

1. prevent significant social and environmental risks and realise the potential of the REDD+ mechanism to protect the environment and communities;
2. inform natural resource policy reform in order to realise the principles and execution of good governance, human rights and the spirit of democracy.

To accomplish these purposes, PRISAI works operationally as a mechanism to screen or examine proposed REDD+ projects; and strategically to provide general safeguards-related information and recommendations to the national government and general public. PRISAI consists of 10 principles, 27 criteria and 99 indicators.

Jurisdictional approach to safeguards - REDD+ SES

In Indonesia, the international REDD+ SES initiative has supported pilot interventions in two provinces: Central Kalimantan and East Kalimantan. The content of provincial-level standards was based on the key forest governance issues faced by the provincial governments. In East Kalimantan, for example, the SES were developed based on 11 significant and urgent issues on natural resource management. The issues were derived from stakeholder consultations in the province and districts. Monitoring assessment against the provincial-level standards in both provinces has been conducted and the results reported to the public. The results of these subnational pilots will contribute to the implementation of the national-level SIS-REDD+.

Specific focus on governance - PGA

Participatory governance assessments for REDD+ is another safeguards-related initiative worked out in the country. The objectives of PGA are to inform policy-making by providing regularly updated and robust governance information accompanied by recommendations, serving as a basis to inform and link with the national-level SIS-REDD+. The focus is on Cancun safeguard (b) transparent and effective national forest governance structures, as well as on policy, legal and regulatory coherence and meaningful stakeholder participation. PGAs attempt to demonstrate that there is a positive correlation between good forest governance (i.e. structures and practice) and efforts to reduce Indonesia's emissions from forest degradation and deforestation. The PGA framework consists of four principles, three criteria and 32 indicators. The assessment is conducted every two years (2012 and 2014 so far) at the central level, and in two districts in each of 12 provinces. The Minister of Environment and Forestry has now proposed to produce the PGA report annually.

Next steps

The three safeguards systems are currently implemented or tested for different purposes, at different levels and jurisdictions. Further steps are needed to ensure coherence between the PCIs in the various systems (e.g. SIS-REDD+, PRISAI, REDD+ SES and PGA).

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MALAYSIA

Overall approach

Malaysia is focusing on sustainable management of forests and carbon stock conservation through an initial step-wise approach to REDD+. In doing so, REDD+ is expected to make significant and necessary contributions to advancing the Malaysian forestry sector from a goods-based to a mixed goods and services-based business model for the 21st century. In line with this forestry sector "plus activity" focus for REDD+, Malaysia is adopting and interpreting the Cancun safeguards in relation to the existing Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management.

Interpretation of key UNFCCC terms

REDD+ safeguards consultations were carried out to achieve a collective understanding of UNFCCC requirements, first within national government and secondly with broader stakeholder constituencies. As a result of these consultations, a collective understanding of addressing safeguards was achieved in regards to the existing national laws, regulations and/or policies. This will ensure REDD+ safeguards principles are considered throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities. The concept of respecting safeguards is now understood as how these laws, regulations or policies are applied in practice. With this understanding, Malaysia divided the Cancun safeguards into three broad categories as follows:

- governance safeguards – national and subnational responsibilities;
- social safeguards – subnational obligation with monitoring at the national level; and
- environmental safeguards – national and subnational responsibilities.

Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme

The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) comprises nine principles, 47 criteria, 97 indicators and 307 verifiers of sustainable forest management (SFM). Five of the existing SFM principles are directly related to the Cancun safeguards (Box 8). REDD+, delivered through the existing SFM certification scheme, ensures safeguards are aligned with existing national and internal policy commitments.[23] It also secures, by default, essential political support for REDD+, both vertically upstream and horizontally across relevant line ministries.

Independent audits are conducted against the existing indicators every three years, together with annual surveillance. All forest management units in Malaysia are expected to comply with the national certification scheme by 2017 (most already do). Grievance redress mechanisms are already an integral part and parcel of the existing SFM certification scheme: third-party audits identify areas of non-compliance, which lead to certification being revoked.

Consultation with civil society and grassroots stakeholders is already embedded in the existing SFM certification scheme, with periodic reviews of the principles, criteria and indicators (PCIs), with the most recent review being 2012.

Safeguards information system design

Malaysia is currently in the final stages of stakeholder consultation with representatives of government, civil society and technical assistance partners on the SIS design. Two key preparatory steps where undertaken prior to elaborating the SIS's design:

1. taking stock of what is already available in terms of policies and processes that could contribute to addressing and respecting Cancun safeguards; and
2. interpreting and understanding the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances.

Fulfilling national policy commitments has been identified as a priority objective of the SIS, which should first and foremost serve as a cost-effective source of information on national policy implementation. The secondary objective of the SIS is to meet UNFCCC REDD+ safeguard requirements. The SIS will be hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment with the following features to ensure transparency and effectiveness:

- description of national circumstances associated with each safeguard;
- identification of relevant SFM certification PCIs, and level of achievement against these indicators, as reported by auditors;
- links with FORMA, the public monitoring system;
- description of how the right to free, prior and informed consent has been address and respected as and where applicable;
- grievance redress reports, if any;
- maps of REDD+ activity implementation; and
- contributions to Aichi Biodiversity Target achievement.

The SIS will be built on existing systems (including the national forest monitoring system), but these will need some adjustment to meet new requirements of REDD+ safeguards – for example, PCIs of the existing SFM certification scheme are expected to be revised in 2017 to be more REDD+-relevant in terms of safeguards and carbon accounting.

The structure of the (existing systems and sources of) information contained within the SIS is envisaged to have three main components:

1. narrative descriptions of the interpretation of each Cancun safeguard in the context of national circumstances;
2. Progress against PCIs drawing largely from existing MTCS (including third-party audits) for subnational information on environmental and social safeguard processes and outcomes, coupled with national-level information on policy implementation; and
3. feedback from the public to foster transparency and more reliable information.

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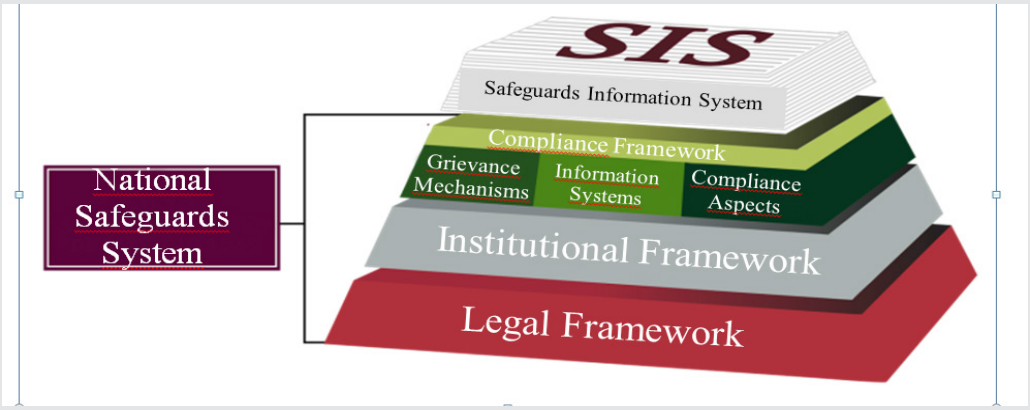
MEXICO

Mexico has given express recognition to REDD+ safeguards in its draft National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+), which is currently undergoing a process of public consultation. The ENAREDD+ contemplates the development of a National Safeguards System and a Safeguards Information System (SIS) to ensure compliance with the national legal framework and UNFCCC requirements.

Mexico envisions developing its SIS by building upon existing reporting mechanisms and information systems at the national level, which will allow submitting information in an integrated manner. The SIS will be comprised of systematized sets of data existing in the country that are deemed relevant to reporting how REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected. [24]

In Mexico, it has been recognized that having an information system will not necessarily guarantee compliance with REDD+ safeguards. Rather, it may be necessary to have a system or support structure that considers the existing governance system of the country – particularly the legal, institutional and compliance frameworks, which combined and linked, will be used to operationalize the safeguards. This system or structure is known as the National Safeguards System (NSS).



The NSS will define how REDD+ safeguards application will be guaranteed in Mexico and to which activities they will be applied. It will identify the laws and institutions that are to support their implementation and reporting, and the compliance aspects of the system, which will allow for the resolution of conflicts, dealing with complaints and feedback information loops.

To advance the design and implementation of the NSS, a series of measures/steps have been identified. These will not necessarily be sequential or linear, and are to:

1. promote a process of participation and communication during the design and implementation of the NSS;
2. identify and analyze the legal, institutional and compliance frameworks relevant to the REDD+ safeguards;
3. determine how the NSS and SIS will operate between national and state levels; and
4. design the SIS.

Participatory process

The draft for public consultation of the ENAREDD+, which includes safeguards as a cross-cutting theme in addition to a specific safeguards related component, has been constructed through an analytical and participatory process since 2011, and is currently receiving feedback by a diverse number of stakeholders through the national consultation process.

In order to strengthen the conceptual proposal for the NSS and SIS, in 2014, a panel for information and dialogue with civil society, academia and government was carried out. The recommendations were reflected in the document Designing a National Safeguards System published on CONAFOR's website: http://www.conafor.gob.mx:8080/documentos/docs/35/6358Designing%20a%20National%20Safeguards%20System%20(Versi%C3%B3n%20en%20Ingl%C3%A9s).pdf

During 2014 and 2015, CONAFOR conducted three inter-institutional dialogues with institutions from different sectors, to explore the necessary institutional arrangements for the reporting of REDD+ safeguards.

The participatory process in Mexico has benefited from the participatory platforms in the country that have been involved in the REDD+ process, such as the Working Group of the ENAREDD+ from the National Forest Council, the National REDD+ Technical Advisory Committee (CTC), the State CTC and recently a specific safeguards working group for the Yucatan Peninsula was created.

Mexico has made significant strides to achieve REDD+ safeguards requirements. CONAFOR did an analysis of the national laws, politics, and international treaties and convents that are relevant and applicable to REDD+ safeguards. This analysis demonstrated that Mexico has a solid and comprehensive legal framework which will contribute to defining, regulating and putting into practice the REDD+ safeguards.

CONAFOR has carried out an analysis of the existing types of information and reporting mechanisms envisaged by the Planning Law, which responds the obligations to inform and report on the actions of sectorial and institutional programmes identified relevant to REDD+ safeguards. Finally, CONAFOR has been comprehensively systematizing existing national information systems and reports made for international treaties and conventions, which can be used to report on and provide information to the SIS.

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VIET NAM

Overall approach

Viet Nam has reviewed the various international safeguards frameworks relevant to REDD+ including the civil society-led REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards, the UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria, and World Bank Operational Policies. It now seeks to comply with the Cancun Safeguards while being able to meet the multiple REDD+ safeguards requirements of relevant REDD+ programmes in which Viet Nam participates.

Multi-stakeholder platform

A Sub-Technical Working Group on Safeguards (STWG-SG), under the National REDD+ Working Group, has been established since 2009. The STWG-SG was established as a multi-stakeholder platform to contribute coordinated technical assistance to government-led efforts to address and respect the Cancun safeguards and other relevant international and national policy commitments related to REDD+. In doing so, the STWG-SG's goal is to contribute to promoting social and environmental co-benefits from REDD+ at national, subnational and local levels. The STWG-SG is chaired by the government (Viet Nam's REDD+ Office) and co-chaired by a civil society representative (currently, SNV – The Netherlands Development Organization).

Policy, legal and regulatory assessment

The first intervention in Viet Nam's country-led approach to safeguards was to commission a comprehensive gap analysis of existing safeguards-relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs) as a contribution to a safeguards roadmap under the National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP). To date, there have been two iterations of the PLR gap analysis. The latest iteration has incorporated additional analytical findings together with feedback from stakeholders, via the STWG-SG, and was completed in June 2014. The identification and detailed analysis of Viet Nam's legal framework demonstrated that Viet Nam's PLRs are largely consistent with, and can satisfactorily address most aspects of, the Cancun safeguards (from an international legal best practice perspective). However, specific legal gaps were identified and recommendations provided. These gap-filling measures need to be addressed in order to ensure Viet Nam's legal framework is fully consistent with the Cancun safeguards.

Next steps

Viet Nam has recognized the importance of the Cancun safeguards and associated UNFCCC requirements, and has begun to define concrete steps to ensure their compliance. It was clearly indicated in the NRAP that "solutions and measures applicable for implementing the NRAP (including safeguard measures) should be systematic, coordinated, phased and focused, and consistent to the specific conditions of the country, the provisions of the UNFCCC, as well as the technical and financial support from the international community". Thus far, only the legal framework has been assessed to see how it could be applied in contributing to addressing the Cancun safeguards. Consequently, Viet Nam is now in the process of assessing the institutional framework to implement the PLRs. The SIS is being designed to meet reporting requirements of the Cancun safeguards. In addition, the country's first summary of information is expected to be produced in 2016.

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ZAMBIA

Overall approach

Zambia's holistic and integrated approach to safeguards is rooted in, and builds on, existing policy, legal and regulatory (PLR) frameworks, institutional arrangements and monitoring systems. The country has a set of existing national safeguards, which serves as a cross-sectoral framework for environmental and social performance across all land-based sectors. These national safeguards have been identified using the Cancun safeguards as a guide, but the emphasis is on a set of safeguards that can also apply to any programme including: the Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape Programme supported by the BioCarbon Fund; the Forest Investment Programme (FIP); and any other investments and funding Zambia will seek to access through its holistic, integrated landscape approach.

The REDD+ Coordination Unit, working in collaboration with the Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Secretariat (ICCS) aims to elevate REDD+ to a higher political level within government, so that it is integrated into a landscape-level approach. When REDD+ actions and interventions are determined for the Luangwa watershed, for example, all the funders' requirements will be taken into consideration, whether they be World Bank Operational Polices for the BioCarbon Fund and FIP, or safeguards of the Green Climate Fund. In other words, investments for REDD+ will need to be made within the context of an integrated landscape approach where water, forests, agricultural land and mining areas are planned and managed within that landscape. The national REDD+ safeguards, adopting a phased approach, will then be interpreted, applied and specified at this landscape level for particular locales and their stakeholder constituencies to support local community livelihoods and investments.

Unpacking the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances

The Cancun safeguards were unpacked around the following issues:

- rights and ownership of forest carbon;
- conflict redress and management system;
- national safeguard PLRs;
- access to and sharing of information; and
- public participation in decision-making.

Consultations on the above were held in 10 provinces, and 104 districts were involved with a minimum of four persons from each district. Zambia will continue with consultative processes, within the limitations of available funding. Expectations of local stakeholders have been carefully managed throughout these consultations, and general environmental and social risks and benefits have been identified.

Addressing and respecting safeguards

Mechanisms are already in place to show that safeguards are being addressed and respected. Evidence of this is already available, for example, in the mining sector, where mining applications are still pending if communities and biodiversity would be affected negatively. Similar safeguards in wildlife management areas exist, and the lands tribunal is in place to address land disputes. Capacity to ensure that these safeguards are being respected, however, still needs to be strengthened further.

The national REDD+ strategy is general in nature and provides overall policy direction only; particular interventions or measures to tackle deforestation or forest degradation have not yet been identified. Existing PLRs have already been analysed and gaps have been assessed through a consultative process. Over 50 PLRs were reviewed and analysed including, for example, the Public Audit Act and the Public Procurement Act. These PLRs will be examined in more detail once the site-specific interventions and measures for REDD+ have been determined and prioritized. An analysis of risks and benefits of these interventions and measures will also be undertaken, and safeguarding measures proposed and monitored, as part of comprehensive land-use and investment planning.

Safeguards information system

The approach to SIS development is to build on existing institutions and data collection methods. Analyses are being undertaken to look at information flows and how complaints can be addressed, which institutions have the information required, how is it being collected and disseminated, and where there are gaps. The Forestry Department will act as the lead institution in developing the SIS, facilitating and bringing together stakeholders in a consultative design process. An existing web portal will be used and relevant data from the national forest monitoring system and the Forest Information System accessed.

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ANNEX III COUNTRY APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A generic country approach framework was first articulated in 2012 through a collaborative dialogue between the FCPF, the REDD+ SES initiative and the UN-REDD Programme. Subsequently, other agencies have adopted and elaborated variations in the framework.

The purpose of summarizing this generic framework here is to provide a reference and explanation of terms used in this report, for those readers less familiar with the concepts and vocabulary of country approaches to safeguards. This framework is not presented as prescriptive guidance for countries to follow or adopt. A number of other important caveats about this country approach framework should also be considered when referring to its contents and structure:

1. this generic framework for country approaches to safeguards is **not** a UN-REDD Programme safeguards requirement – there are no safeguards requirements specific to the UN-REDD Programme;
2. country approaches to safeguards are non-linear and highly iterative processes – the sequence of steps presented here represents a theoretical and idealized best practice processes for illustrative purposes only; and
3. a number of other initiatives use a similar framework to describe country approaches to safeguards – the framework used by the UN-REDD Programme is presented here as an illustrative example only.

Country approaches to safeguards allows a country to respond to international safeguards frameworks by building on existing governance arrangements that, combined with national policy goals, can be used to operationalize the Cancun safeguards. The governance arrangements targeted by the country approach comprise three core elements that together can ensure that potential REDD+ social and environmental risks are mitigated and that REDD+ benefits are enhanced (Figure 1), these are:

Policies, laws and regulations, which define, on paper, what needs to be done in order to support REDD+ activity implementation in a manner consistent with Cancun safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being addressed;

Institutional arrangements, which are the mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant policies, laws and regulations are actually implemented in practice, i.e. how safeguards are being respected; and

Information systems, which collect and make available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

The following points provide outline explanations and definitions for each key step in this generic framework.

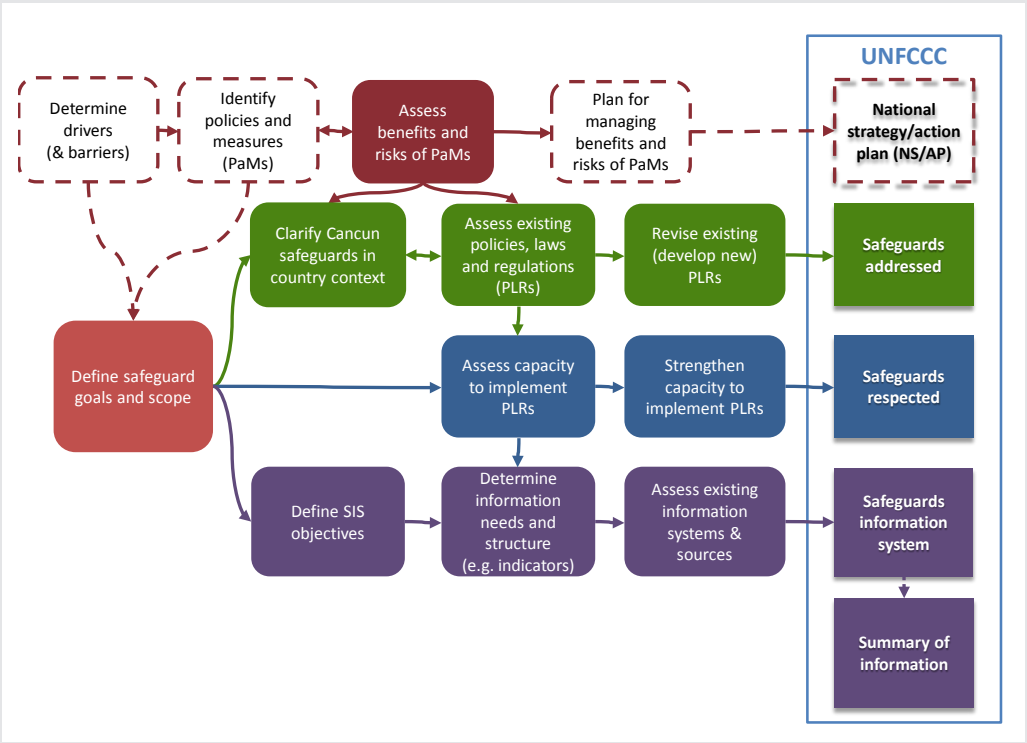

Figure 1:
Generic framework for country approaches to safeguards (showing links with national strategy/action plan process)

Define goal – what safeguards requirements and other objectives the country wishes to meet in its implementation of REDD+. Apart from the default requirement of the Cancun safeguards, to be eligible for results-based payments under the UNFCCC, a country may also want to consider other bi-/multi-lateral safeguards requirements

Define scope – determine the range of activities that will be covered by the chosen safeguards. A country may wish to integrate REDD+ into wider forestry sector strategies, or even broader, as a cross-sectoral mechanism including agriculture and biomass energy, for example.

Assess benefits/risks – analysing the potential environmental and social benefits and risks of candidate REDD+ actions comprising the NS/AP, that are proposed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (as well as barriers to more effective and extensive plus activities).

Clarify Cancun – determine what are the key issues to consider with regard to each Cancun safeguard in relation to the main benefits and risks associated with candidate REDD+ actions in the country context.

Assess PLRs – how effectively the existing PLRs address, on paper, the benefits and risks of planned REDD+ actions. Such assessments could be undertaken by a team of experts, with findings being validated through stakeholder workshops.

Revise PLRs – PLR reform can take a gradual approach with a longer term view to refining policies and laws. Efforts in the shorter term focus on relatively low-cost and quick regulatory reform, and where possible an opportunistic refinement of polices and laws.

Safeguards addressed – governance arrangements are in place in terms of PLRs, institutional arrangements and information systems that seek to guarantee the implementation of the safeguards and to meet adopted safeguard requirements.

Assess capacity – assessing institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to implement relevant PLRs.

Strengthening capacity – acting to correct weakness in implementation identified by the preceding assessment step. Repeated assessment should be able to demonstrate incremental improvements in respecting safeguards, which can help assure those entities making payments for REDD+ results.

Safeguards respected – the country has implemented its PLRs (together with any relevant industry standards and customary norms), and the implementation outcomes are in line with the country's adopted safeguards.

Define information objectives – by default, would be to meet UNFCCC requirements to obtain payments for results under REDD+; but information on how environmental and social benefits and risks are being managed in forestry and other land-use sectors and what benefits are achieved could contribute to a range of other domestic objectives.

Determine information needs - what specific information is needed, in relation to the specific benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ actions, to demonstrate appropriate PLRs are in place (addressing safeguards) and are being adequately implemented (respecting safeguards)?

Determine information structure - how the necessary information will be organised in the SIS. The structuring of information will depend on a many factors including, among other things the goal and scope of the country approach to safeguards, scale of REDD+ intervention, etc.

Assess existing systems – once a first analysis of information needs has taken place, and an appropriate structure has been identified, existing sources and systems of information (as well as any new systems in development) can then be assessed to determine their contribution to the SIS.

Safeguard information system – a system that combines information from existing national (subnational as desired) systems and sources of information with additional components where appropriate, to show how all of the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions.

Summary of information – a summary of information on how all the Cancun safeguards, are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions, primarily for international audiences.

ENDNOTES

1. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, plus the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
2. UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 69,
3. Namely:
   a. 'a system for providing information on how the [Cancun] safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of [REDD+] activities' - UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 71(d); and
   b. 'a summary of information on how all of the [Cancun] safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities – UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.19, paragraph 3
4. Decision 1/CP.16 Paragraph 70 – available at http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf
5. Throughout this paper, REDD+ actions refers to the policies and measures, under the five REDD+ activity categories agreed under the UNFCCC (Decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 70 (a-e), comprising the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (or similar document) and put in place to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and/or enabling more effective or extensive "plus activities", i.e. conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
6. Taking into account the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and their interdependence on forests in most countries, reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the International Mother Earth Day.
7. UNFCCC Decision 1/CP. 16 paragraph 69
8. UNFCCC Decision 1/CP. 16 paragraph 71 (d), Decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 3
9. UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17 paragraph 3, Decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 4
10. UN-REDD Programme, 2015a
11. Notably, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) initiative.
12. In collaboration with the National Forestry Commission of Mexico.
13. Notably, REDD+ SES (2014a); REDD+ SES (2014b) CLP (2015); REDD/CCAD-GIZ (2015).
14. It is also partly a product of the source material that informs this review: much, but not all, of the limited literature documenting country approach experiences, as well as the 2015 UN-REDD Programme workshops, engaged mostly national government focal points.
15. Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix II, Decision 2/CP.17 paragraph 63
16. Decision 9/CP.19 paragraphs 5 and 6
17. It should be noted, however, that a final determination on this would result partly from the World Bank's due diligence on safeguards-related issues and impacts, particularly for those countries developing ER Programs for the Carbon Fund
18. Decision 2/CP. 17 paragraph 63
19. Synonymous terms used in the literature and by practitioners include: "contextualizing", "elaborating", "interpreting", "specifying" and "unpacking" the Cancun safeguards.
20. A number of both REDD+ and donor countries cite UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 72, "developing country Parties, when developing…their NS/APs, [are requested to ensure] the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders…", as a requirement for full and effective stakeholder participation to apply to REDD+ readiness processes, as well as the implementation of REDD+ actions.
21. With the support of Conservation International and the UN-REDD National Joint Programme
22. The term used in Ecuador that corresponds to Policies and Measures (PAMs)
23. Such as the relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets (3,4,5,7,11,12,14 and 15) for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 2011–2020, of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
24. These sets of data mainly contain information used to report national goals, strategies and activities established in the legal and political framework of the country.

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

UNDP Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

UNEP

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries