

Information brief on the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ - Rules and modalities for REDD+

Background

With seven decisions from COP19 in Warsaw UNFCCC delivered all the expected technical guidance for REDD+ implementation. The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ builds on earlier decisions especially the Cancun Agreements from COP16 which defined the REDD+ activities, the safeguards, the phased approach and the four key elements required for developing countries participating in REDD+.

Guidance for the four elements have subsequently been elaborated through decisions from COP17 and finalized with the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ which completed “the REDD+ rulebook”.

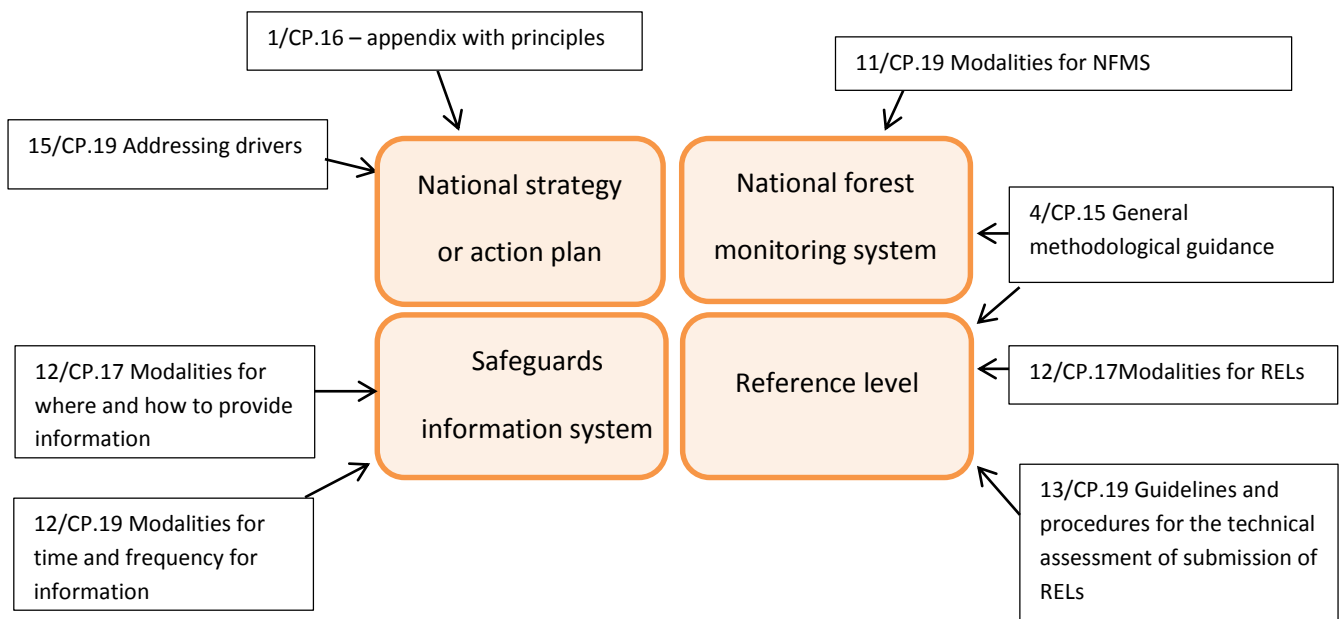


Figure 1: The four key elements and the decisions providing guidance

Understanding guidance provided through decisions

The guidance provided is in many cases not very specific with several references to national circumstances, interim measures and the stepwise approach. This not unusual for UNFCCC decisions and should be seen as an opportunity for the largest possible number of countries to participate in REDD+ and it should be seen as an opportunity rather than an obstacle for participation.

When implementing REDD+, constructing reference levels and developing safeguards information systems (SIS) countries should be guided by the question: Is this ambitious enough to satisfy financing entities and bilateral donors and is it possible and realistic to implement?

This may seem complicated but countries should note the words “interim” and “stepwise approach” and substantial focus is likely to be on whether progress is being made and countries are improving the systems rather than whether the systems are perfect from the beginning.

This means that the first proposed reference level can cover less than the full national territory if this is helpful, but there should be a plan for how to include the full national territory sometime in the future, or the reference level can include less than all five activities, but there should be a plan for how to

include all significant activities. When it comes to estimating emissions e.g. using emission factors etc. countries can use the principle of conservativeness, meaning not overestimating emissions reduction and thereby add credibility to the results achieved.

For the safeguard information system it should be noted that financing entities and bilateral donors are aware that the forest sector is complicated, and a major concern for many potential donors are the reputational risks involved. This is probably the most important reason why REDD+ has safeguards while other sectors under the UNFCCC don't. The SIS should be seen in this context and transparency and involvement of stakeholders are key features in this. The system can be developed and improved over time and transparency and stakeholder involvement during this process will most likely satisfy not only the stakeholders but also financing entities and bilateral donors.

For the national strategy the Cancun Agreements provide some guidance including that it should address inter alia the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities. The UNFCCC does not provide further guidance on possible issues or propose solutions and countries should remember that REDD+ is voluntary and country driven and should do what is most useful for their national circumstances for the implementation of REDD+ and possible also use the national strategy as a mean for communication including with ministries, non-governmental stakeholders as well as potential donors.

Guidance for the later phases

Phase two – implementation of policies and measures – demonstration activities (results-based)

Decision 2/CP.13 provides indicative guidance for demonstration activities which are being supported by a number of donors including e.g. the Carbon Fund of the FCPF.

Phase three - full implementation – results-based and fully MRV

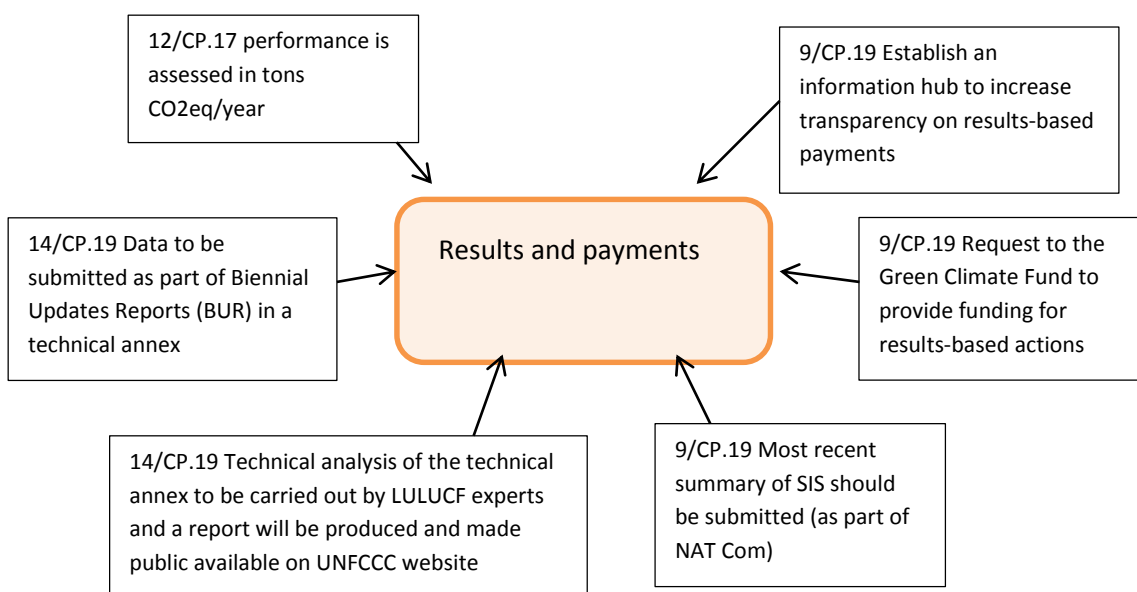


Figure 2: Decisions guiding results and payments

In addition to these decisions the Warsaw Framework also delivered a decision on coordination of support for all phases of REDD+ and Parties are encouraged to meet annually first time in Lima to address the need for coordination of support.

Biennial Updates Reports (BUR) are not specific to REDD+ and guidance for these reports can be found in decision 2/CP.17, Annex III where the technical annexes are referred to in paragraph 19, while the obligation to report can be found in decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 60 and decision 2/CP.17 paragraph 41 stating that developing countries should submit BURs beginning by December 2014 with added flexibility for LDCs and small island developing States.

Pending issues

Funding modalities through the Green Climate Fund are being developed and the UNFCCC could also decide to establish appropriate market based mechanism. This is still under negotiations and decision 14/CP.19 on MRV mentions that further modalities for verification may be needed for market based approaches. This could perhaps be resolved as part of the 2015 agreement. Other issues such as possible additional guidance for safeguards information systems, non-carbon benefits and joint mitigation-adaptation approaches are likely to have minor effect on the overall structure.