

REDD+ under the UNFCCC – the “Warsaw Framework”

ACRONYMS

AT	Assessment Team	LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
BUR	Biennial Update Reports	MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
COP	Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC	NC	National Communication
FREL	Forest Reference Emission Level	RBA	Results-based actions
FRL	Forest Reference Level	RBF	Results-based finance
GHG	Greenhouse gases	BBP	Results-based payments
ICA	International Consultation and Analysis	WFR	Warsaw Framework for REDD+

INTRODUCTION

At COP19, Warsaw, in 2013, most of the work programme on REDD+ was finalised, only pending further guidance on safeguard information systems. Together, the seven REDD+-related decisions adopted at COP19 (referred to as the ‘Warsaw Framework for REDD+’ (WFR), complete the REDD+ ‘rulebook’. Taken with earlier COP decisions, the UNFCCC has now set out the process for developing countries to have the results of their REDD+ activities recognised and available for results-based payments (RBPs) and results-based finance (RBF). The REDD+ ‘Rulebook’ and relevant decisions are summarised in 1 below.

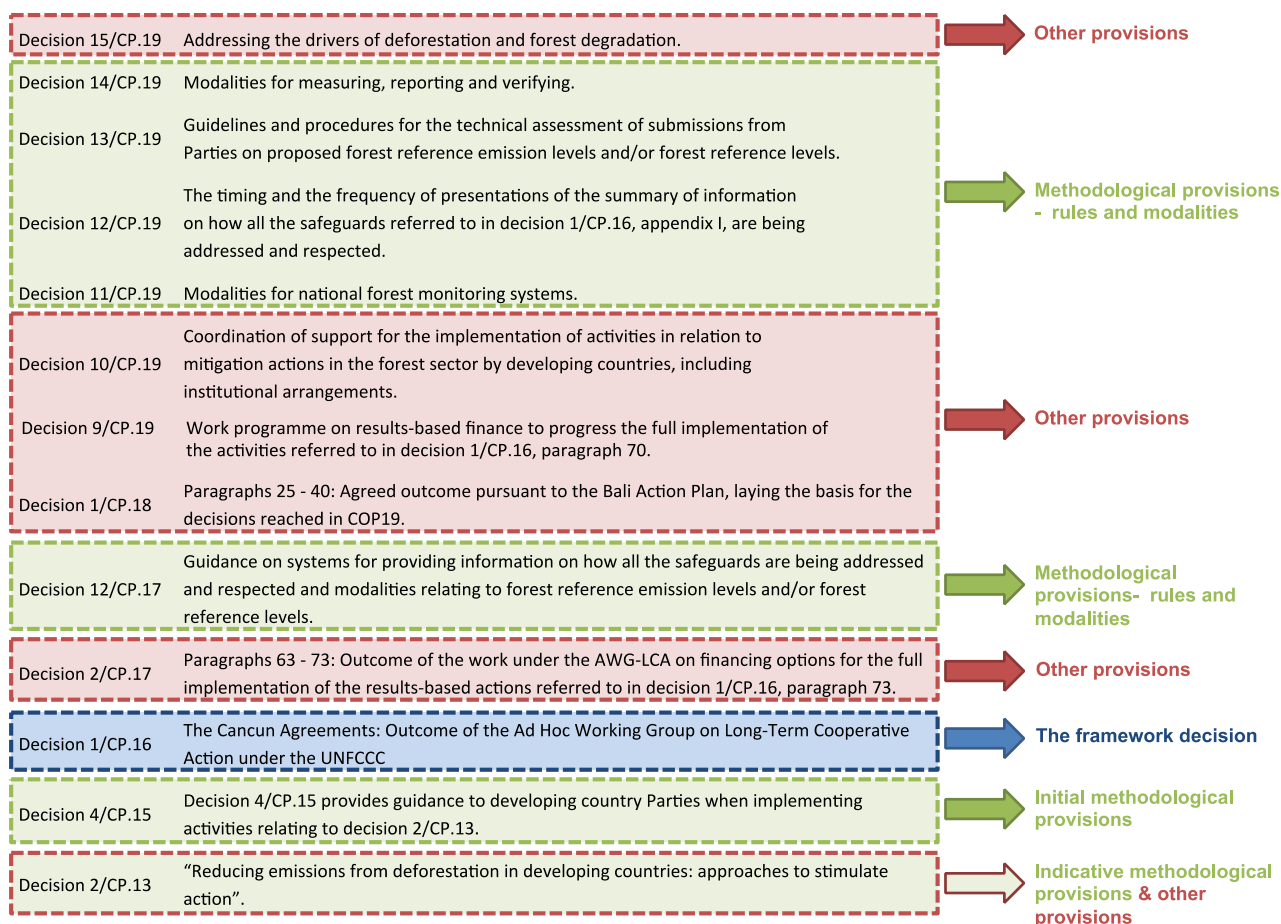


Figure 1 The REDD+ decisions, which together represent the ‘rulebook’ for REDD+ implementation. Decisions highlighted in green refer to technical methodological provisions; decisions highlighted in red refer to other types of provisions (i.e. non-methodological provisions such as: drivers of deforestation, coordination of support, work programmes on issues of results-based finance/payments etc.) and the decision highlighted in blue refers to the Cancun Agreements that represents the framework for REDD+.

ACCESSING RBPs/RBF FOR RESULTS-BASED ACTIONS

The WFR sets out how countries can access RBPs/RBF for REDD+ results-based actions (RBA). It is important to note that the decision text uses RBPs and RBF interchangeably without any distinction being made between the two terms in the text. Regarding the conditions of obtaining RBF, paragraph 3 of decision 9/CP.19 recalls that for developing country Parties undertaking the RBAs referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73, to obtain and receive RBF, those actions should be fully measured, reported and verified:

- In accordance with decisions 13/CP.19 on guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed FREL/FRL; and with
- Decision 14/CP.19 on measuring, reporting and verifying anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities
- In addition, developing country Parties should have all of the elements referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71 (the REDD+ design elements), in place, in accordance with decisions 12/CP.17 and 11/CP.19:
 - A national strategy or action plan;
 - A national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level
 - A national forest monitoring system
 - A system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities
- Lastly, developing country Parties should provide the most recent summary of how the Cancun safeguards have been addressed and respected before they can receive RBPs.

In summary, before receiving RBPs/RBF, countries need to have in place the elements presented in Figure 2, and ensure that the most recent summary of how the Cancun safeguards have been addressed and respected is provided.

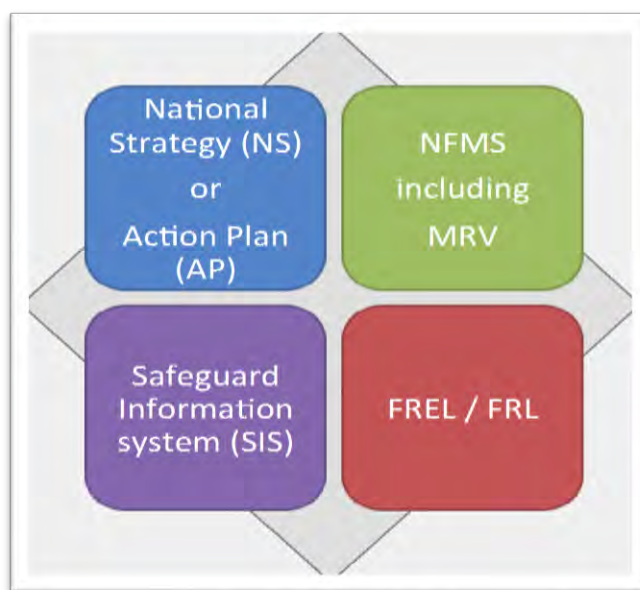


Figure 2: Elements a country needs to have in place before being able to access RBPs/RBF

Once all this is in place, a country has to follow two distinct procedures to access RBPs/RBF under the UNFCCC. The first is the technical assessment of the proposed FREL/FRL and the second is the MRV of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities.

1. The technical assessment of a submitted FREL/FRL

Decision 13/CP.19 provides guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed FREL/FRL. The technical assessment process will be coordinated by the UNFCCC

secretariat. The assessment team (AT) will be composed of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts. Participating experts will serve in their personal capacity and will be neither nationals of the Party undergoing the technical assessment nor funded by that Party.

A FREL/FRL may be submitted at any time, following the guidelines agreed in decision 12/CP.17, and will be assessed during the next scheduled assessment session, following the date the submission is made. Each submission will be technically assessed by an AT in accordance with the procedures and timeframes established in the guidelines agreed in Warsaw. The assessment sessions will be scheduled once a year, and any submissions received by the UNFCCC Secretariat no later than ten weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at that session.

Each AT will conduct a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the submitted FREL/FRL, and as the main output of the process, the AT will prepare a report, under its collective responsibility. The process for the assessment of a FREL submission to the UNFCCC is as follows (the timeline is summarised in

Figure):

- a. Prior to the assessment session, the AT should identify any preliminary issues requiring clarifications from the Party.
- b. The Party that submitted the FREL/FRL may interact with the AT during the assessment of its submission to provide clarification and additional information to facilitate the assessment by the AT.
- c. The AT may seek additional clarifications from the Party no later than one week following the assessment session. This may result in the provision of technical inputs to the Party on the construction of its FREL/FRL.
- d. The Party is to provide clarifications to the AT no later than eight weeks following the request. As a result of the facilitative process referred to above, the Party may modify its submitted FREL/FRL in response to the technical inputs of the AT.
- e. In the event that the Party modifies its submitted FREL/FRL in response to the technical inputs of the AT, the AT will consider this information within four weeks from the submission of the modified FREL/FRL.
- f. The AT will prepare a draft report and make it available to the Party no later than 12 weeks following the assessment session. In the case that a Party has modified its submitted FREL/FRL, this period will be extended to no more than 16 weeks following the assessment session. The report should include an assessed forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and, if relevant and appropriate, areas identified for further technical improvement, and capacity-building needs for the construction of future forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.
- g. The Party will have 12 weeks to respond to the draft report of the AT.

- h. The AT will then prepare a final report within four weeks following the Party's response. This final report should include the contents described above for the draft report, and, in addition, should contain the Party's response to the draft report.

The intention of the FREL/FRL technical assessment process under the UNFCCC is to support countries to improve their FREL/FRL. This means that a FREL/FRL can be simple and improved over time.

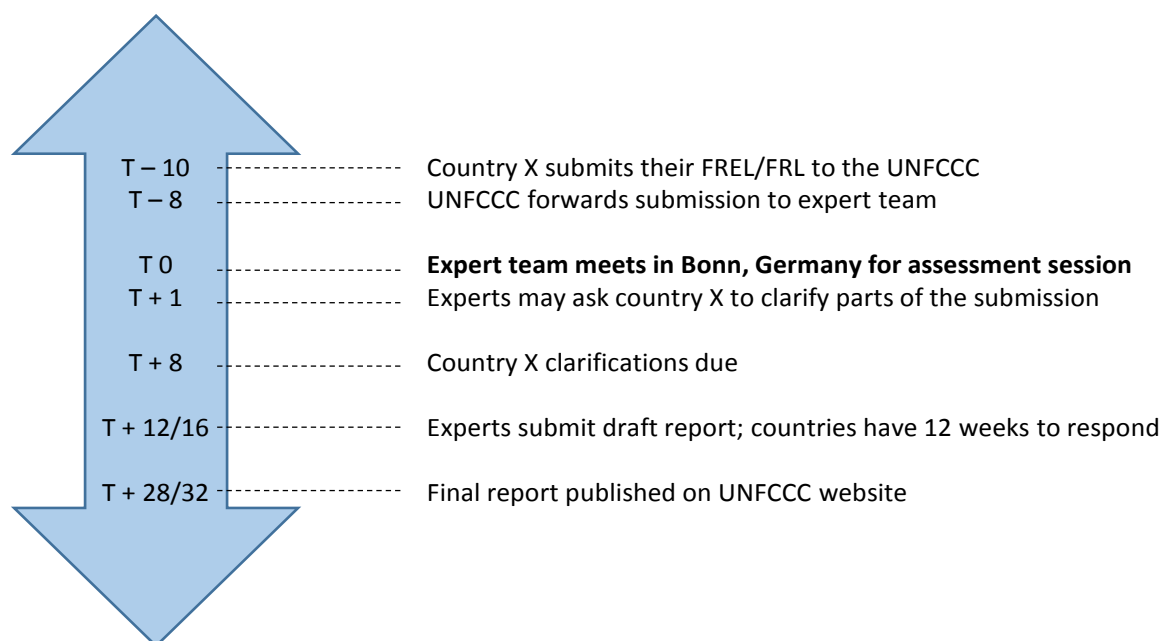


Figure 3: Timeline for technical assessment of FREL/FRL

2. MRV

Decision 14/CP.19 covers the modalities for MRV. Key elements of this decision are:

- The estimation of anthropogenic forest related GHG emissions and removals, carbon stocks and forest area changes should be consistent with UNFCCC methodological guidance, data and information should be transparent and consistent over time, and consistent with FREL/FRL. This is the first time that a link is made in the decision texts between MRV and FREL/FRL.
- Results should be provided via Biennial Update Reports (BURs) on a voluntarily basis. When developing countries want to obtain and receive payments for results-based actions, an additional technical annex should be provided through the BURs. The information to be provided should be consistent with decisions 4/CP.15 and 12/CP.17.
- Results submitted for RBPs should be expressed in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.

Reporting: BURs and National Communications (NCs)

Countries will have to report some parts of the results of REDD+ implementation through National Communications (NCs) and other results through BURs. Information on the Cancun safeguards will have to be reported through a NC, while the NFMS and M part of the MRV component will have to be reported through a technical annex of the BUR. It is important to note that the submission of a FREL/FRL is done through a separate communication channel to the UNFCCC (not a NC and not a BUR). Figure 4 summarises the key elements that countries need to take into account when reporting the results of REDD+ activities through the technical Annex of a BUR.

Reporting

Decision 14/CP.19

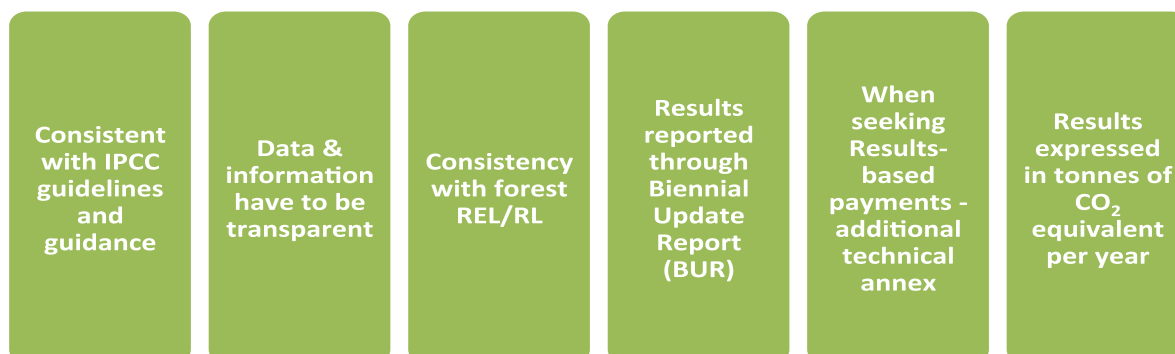


Figure 4: Key elements to take into account when reporting REDD+ implementation results

NCs serve as a tool for Parties to communicate progress on the implementation of the Convention to the COP. The core elements of the NC (for Annex I and non-Annex I Parties) are information on the activities a Party has undertaken to implement the Convention and on emissions and removals of GHGs. NCs typically contain information on national circumstances, a vulnerability assessment, financial resources and transfer of technology, and education, training and public awareness. Furthermore, NCs from Annex I Parties additionally contain information on policies and measures implemented to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Annex I Parties that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol must include supplementary information in their NCs and their annual inventories of emissions and removals of GHGs to demonstrate compliance with the Protocol's commitments. Guidelines for the preparation of NCs for non-Annex I Parties have existed since COP2 in 1996. These were reviewed and revised guidelines were adopted at COP 8 in 2002¹. Annex 1 countries submit NCs approximately every four years². To date there has been no requirement on the periodicity for submission of NCs by non-Annex 1 countries.

In 2011 COP17 adopted guidelines for the preparation of BURs from non-Annex I Parties³. Non-Annex 1 countries should submit their first BUR by December 2014, while the least developed country Parties and Small Island Developing States may submit BURs at their discretion. BURs are to be submitted every two years.

REDD+ INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

'Information hub' on the UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform

Decision 9/CP.19 includes a few important paragraphs (9-12) on the creation and the information to be held on an information hub on the [UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/items/1408.php). The UNFCCC Secretariat will publish information on the results of the five REDD+ activities and corresponding RBPS/RBF on the site. The objective of the hub is to increase transparency of information on RBA, on the corresponding payments, as well as on countries' four design elements (decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71), without creating additional requirements for developing countries. The inform hub will contain the following (including the information on the four design elements already presented below in Figure 1):

- A link to the NS/AP as referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(a) (as appropriate);
- The assessed FRELs/FRLs and a link to the final report of the technical assessment team (decision

¹ http://unfccc.int/national_reports/items/1408.php

² "There are no fixed dates for the submission of NCs of non-Annex I Parties, although these documents should be submitted within four years of the initial disbursement of financial resources to assist them in preparing their national communications" (UNFCCC - http://unfccc.int/national_reports/items/1408.php)

³ It is important to note that Annex I countries are obligated to submit BURs as well. A main difference is that these will go through a more rigorous review process called "Institutional Assessment and Review" (IAR) versus the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) for non-Annex I BURs.

13/CP.19, paragraph 18);

- Information on the NFMS;
- The summary of information on how the REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected;
- The results for each reporting period expressed and a link to the MRV report;
- Information on quantity of results for which payments were received, expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, and the entity paying for results.

In summary, the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ sets out six required 'information streams' to be published on the information hub (Figure 5).

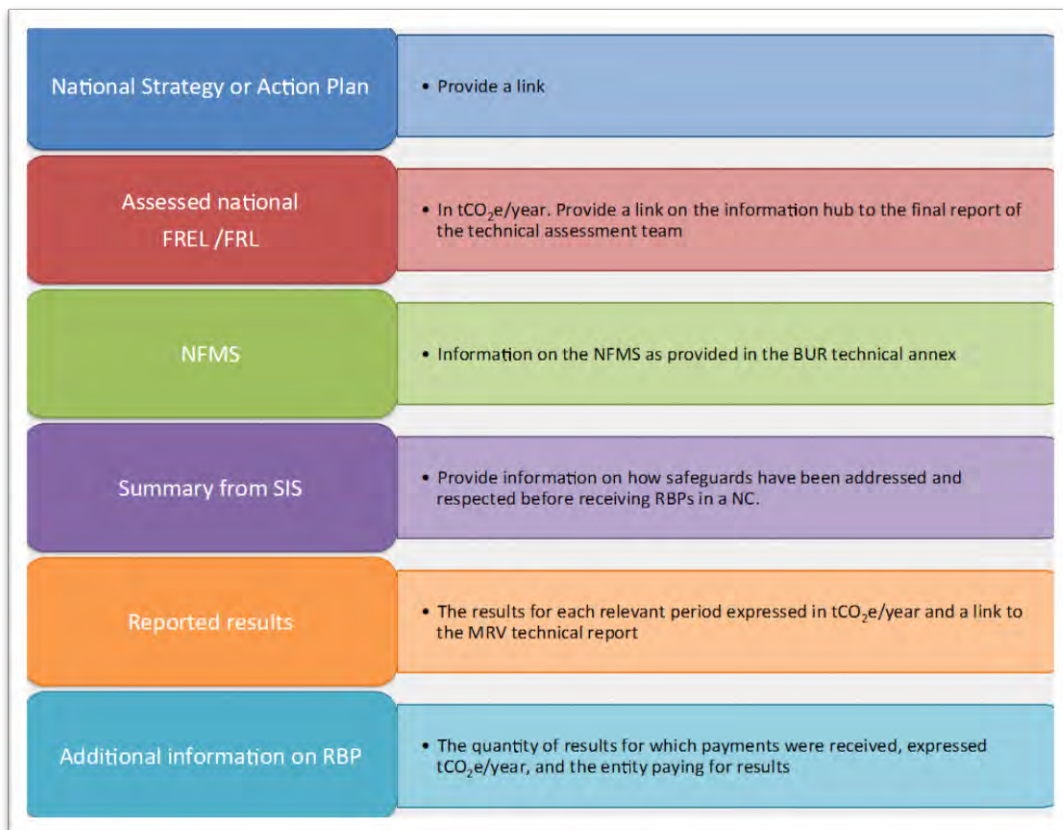


Figure 5: The six 'information streams' that the information hub on the UNFCCC REDD+ Web platform will contain

INFORMATION REQUIRED WHEN SEEKING RBPS/RBF

Paragraph 3 of decision 9/CP.19 states that in order to obtain and receive RBPs/RBF (for RBA), REDD+ actions should be fully MRV'able and that all the elements referred to in paragraph 71 of 1/CP.16 (the so-called 'design' elements) should be in place. Figure 1 (see next page) summarises for the four core elements how information is communicated, the review process and timing, and what goes onto the UNFCCC REDD+ information hub.

What	UNFCCC Channel	Process	Timing	Information Hub	Reference
National Strategy (NS) or Action Plan (AP)	None	No further action	When seeking RBP	As appropriate, link to NS or AP	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11
National FREL / FRL	FREL / FRL submission	Technical assessment in context of RBP	When ready (especially when seeking RBP)	FREL/RL Submission & final assessment report	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (b) 13/CP.19
NFMS including MRV	Technical Annex BUR	Technical assessment in context of RBP	Every two years	Final technical report	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (a) & (e) 14/CP.19
Safeguard (SG) Information	NC	No further action	Approximately every four years	Summary of information on addressing & respecting SG	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (c)

Figure 1 Summary of the four design elements and what is needed when seeking RBPs for RBA