

Information brief on safeguard information systems (SIS)

Background

Safeguards is a key concept for REDD+ since the Cancun Agreements decision 1/CP.16 included seven safeguards for REDD+ which should be addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+. The safeguard contains both environmental including climate concerns and social concerns. The safeguards are listed in table 1 below.

The Cancun Agreement also states that countries participating in REDD+ should establish a safeguard information systems to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected. Two further decisions have provided guidance for the safeguard information system.

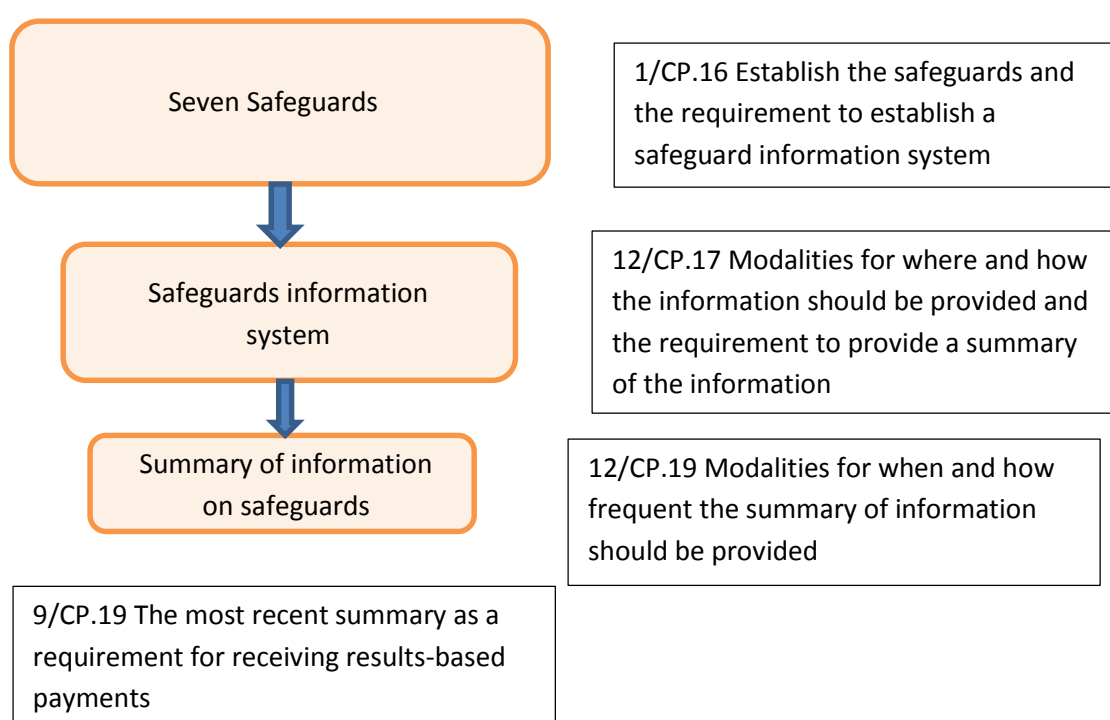


Figure 1: Decisions on REDD+ safeguards

Decision 12/CP.17 provides guidance for where and how the information should be provided, including that it should provide transparent and consistent information accessible to all relevant stakeholders on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. Addressed and respected is not defined further but could be understood as covering both how the safeguards are taken into account and how effective this is. The same decision states that such systems should be country-driven and implemented at national level and build on existing systems if appropriate. This is also the decision which requests countries to also provide a summary of the information which should be provided through national communications to the UNFCCC.

Decision 12/CP.19 from the Warsaw Framework states that the summaries of information should be provided through national communication or alternatively through the web platform on the UNFCCC website, beginning after the start of the implementation of REDD+ activities and then with a

frequency following the frequency for the submission of national communications which is every four years. Using the web platform at the UNFCCC website provides some additional opportunities for updating the summary of information.

While the safeguard information already was a requirement from the Cancun Agreements, decision 9/CP.19 from the Warsaw Framework makes the submission of the most recent summary of information a requirement for receiving results-based payments.

Implementing the safeguard information system

It should be noted that UNFCCC decisions does not requests a particular format or the use of criteria and indicators for the various safeguards. Countries will need to decide the best approach for their particular circumstances which fulfil the requirement for providing transparent, consistent information on all the safeguards which should be implemented at national level and accessible to all stakeholders. In fact the decision text calls for a flexible system which can be improved over time, and mentions that this it should be country-driven and can build on existing systems, if appropriate.

While the summary of information should be submitted at regular interval, the safeguard information system could be updated whenever there is new information available and this does not necessary need to happen for all seven safeguards at the same time.

Assuming that a country have established the necessary safeguards building on existing rules and regulations the next step will be to consider which information is relevant to demonstrate that the safeguards are being addressed and respected and how this information can be made accessible to all stakeholders in a consistent manner. This will likely include considerations on language and means of communication – while communication via internet is quick and cheap it might have to be complemented by other means as well.

Providing a summary of information of how the safeguards have been addressed and respected should be relatively easy after the safeguard information system has been established.

UNFCCC negotiations

Whether the UNFCCC should provide further guidance for the implementation is on the agenda for SBSTA42 this year with focus on providing guidance what types of information countries should consider when providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. The result of these negotiations is unknown but it will build on existing decisions.

Below are two tables with suggestions for information submitted by two Parties, where the first from the EU is at a more general level and the second from the US is listing a number of questions to be considered when providing information on safeguards. These are suggestions only and countries can use them for inspiration.

Table 1: EU submission from 11th September 2011

<i>Safeguards as contained in paragraph 2 of Appendix I to decision 1/CP.16</i>	<i>Information requirements</i>
(a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;	Contribution of REDD+ actions to achieving objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international agreements and processes;
(b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;	Description of policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks, including on law enforcement;
(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;	Identification of different right holders and their rights and description how those rights are respected;
(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;	Description of participatory process for the design and implementation of a national REDD+ strategy or action plan and how this process was applied, including a description of systems to disseminate and receive information;
(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;	Identification of the positive and negative impacts of a national REDD+ strategy or action plan on biodiversity and ecosystem services and identification and monitoring of natural forest;
(f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;	Description of the actions and liabilities;
(g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions;	Description of the actions and identification of significant sources, and the collection of data on, the displacement of emissions.

Table 2: US submission from 12th April 2012

<p>(a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the objectives of the national forest programme? • What are relevant national laws, policies, institutions and regulations? • Which relevant international conventions and agreements has the Party ratified, and what other relevant international commitments has the Party made? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the design and implementation of actions contemplated in the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant) consistent with the objectives of the national forest program; laws, policies and regulations; conventions and agreements ratified, or other international commitments a country has made? • What challenges and tradeoffs, if any, does the Party perceive in implementing their REDD+ strategy or action plan related to these objectives, and how are these being resolved?
<p>(b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the relevant formal forest governance structures at the national, subnational, and local levels? • What are relevant administrative bodies, laws, policies, regulations, and law enforcement mechanisms, including permitting and/ or certification (i.e. for harvesting, planting, clearing or transport of timber and non-timber forest products)? • What are relevant traditional forest governance structures at the national, subnational, and local levels? • Are land tenure and/or land rights clearly defined and stable in areas eligible for REDD+ activities? If not, is there a system that can be described for determining land tenure or land rights in these areas? • Is there a local or national mechanism for dispute resolution in cases of conflicting land claims in REDD+ eligible areas? • How are the rights to carbon and carbon-related (REDD+) incentives, and arrangements for the transfer of incentives to relevant stakeholders, defined? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are relevant laws, policies, and regulations, and carbon rights, made easily available to stakeholders (i.e. translation into local languages, posting in local communities)? • How have traditional forest governance structures, including customary tenure or usage, been respected in the design and implementation of REDD+ activities? • How are carbon-related (REDD+) incentives being provided to relevant stakeholders (e.g. awareness building activities, arrangements created, programs established, funds transferred, accountability mechanisms put in place)? • Have any changes in land tenure or land rights been associated with REDD+ programs?
<p>(c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which rights-holders may be affected by a national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant), and what are their unique rights? • What are relevant laws, policies and regulations?

<p>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;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which relevant international conventions and agreements has the Party ratified, and what other relevant international commitments has the country made? • What indigenous peoples and local communities in areas eligible for REDD+ activities might be affected by REDD+ activities (including explicit location, population, governance structure, and any unique rights allocated)? • Are there any legally declared or formally claimed indigenous territories in the areas being considered for REDD+ actions? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the design and implementation of actions contemplated in the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant) consistent with the rights (including usage rights) of indigenous peoples, and members of local communities, (including the relevant laws, policies and regulations and international conventions described)? • How have the traditional extractive uses and non-extractive forest management practices of indigenous and local communities been recognized, respected and incorporated into the national REDD+ strategy (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant), and the activities contemplated therein? • How has the knowledge of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, been incorporated into the national REDD+ strategy (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant), and the activities contemplated therein? • What opportunities have indigenous peoples and local communities, had to provide input on whether and how their knowledge and rights have been protected, and how can this input be accessed?
<p>(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;</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders that could be involved in and impacted by REDD+ activities been carried out? What methodology was used? • What stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, members of local communities, and women are involved in or affected by the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of the Cancun agreement? • What relevant national laws, policies, or regulations outline required consultation or participation? • What provisions for consultation and participation of stakeholders are included in the national REDD+ strategy or action plan, if any? • What participatory process was used in the design of the national strategy or action plan? • What systems are used to provide information to, and receive information from, stakeholders? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has each identified stakeholder group participated in the design and implementation of the national strategy or action plan, and actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 (eg stakeholder committees, stakeholder representatives on national REDD+ councils, local community control over locally-implemented activities, referenda, stakeholder consultations and participants, communication channels for stakeholders)? • What opportunities do stakeholders have to provide comment on their full and effective participation, and how can these comments be accessed? • How has information on carbon rights, and potential carbon-related incentives, been made available to local communities?
<p>(e) That actions are consistent</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What nationally- or internationally-recognized biodiversity priority areas (eg

<p>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;</p>	<p>., national parks and protected areas, critical habitats, indigenous reserves, national biodiversity priority areas, High Conservation Value Areas, Key Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance) are included in or affected by the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What surveys, inventories, studies, or monitoring systems will be used to monitor biodiversity included in or affected by the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant)? • What natural forests, spatially identified by type, are included in or affected by the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant), and what definition was used to identify these forests? • What spatially identified plantations are included in or affected by the national REDD+ strategy or action plan, and what definition was used to identify these plantations? • What provisions in the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant) are used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits? • What surveys, inventories, studies, or monitoring systems will be used to assess the impact of REDD+ actions on the protection of natural forests, ecosystem services, and other social and environmental benefits? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes in forest cover or management regime in any of the identified biodiversity priority areas occurred as a result of the implementation of the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant)? • What changes in biodiversity occurred in the areas included in or affected by the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant), and how much of this change may be attributed to REDD+-related activities? • Does monitoring show any natural forests converted to plantation forests, and if so which? What impact does the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (and interim subnational strategies, if relevant) have on the protection of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and other social and environmental benefits?
<p>(f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the primary factors behind the risks of reversals, temporary or permanent*? <p>*Examples of reversals include sustainable forest management activities resulting in short term emissions that may later be recaptured in tree growth, or a regrowing forest is claimed as enhanced stock, but where stored carbon is released in the future by disturbance and can no longer be counted as net emissions reductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What systems are in place, or actions are implemented, to address reversals (e.g. conservation easements, land contract/laws, buffers, reserve banks, fire/pest management) • What is the system/infrastructure for identifying reversals in carbon stocks, temporary or permanent, so that they may be measured and reported on in a Party's MRV system?

	<p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the identified key risks of reversals monitored? • How are systems or actions to address such risks implemented? • What major dynamic stock changes were captured by the MRV system, and what were the causes and approximate volumes?
<p>(g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions;</p>	<p>How is this safeguard addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the possible causes of emissions that might be displaced internationally (leakage) as a result of the implementation of REDD+-related activities, and what are the locations from which these emissions might be displaced? • (If implementing REDD+ activities at a subnational scale on an interim basis), what are causes of emissions that might be displaced within country (leakage) as a result of the implementation of REDD+-related activities, and what are the locations from which these emissions might be displaced? • How are related activities (e.g. wood product production, agriculture production, trade in associated products, etc), and the associated land areas, monitored? • What systems are in place, or measures are planned, to mitigate the risk of this displacement? <p>How is this safeguard respected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures were implemented to avoid emissions from displacement of activities associated with REDD+ within the country? • Are avoided or increased emissions from displacement calculated, and if so how? • How is information on emissions associated with displacement used to improve the effectiveness of measures to mitigate displacement risk?"