

Government of Costa Rica
Submission of views on “Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected”.

A. Introduction

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during its 34 session initiated the consideration of methodological guidance for the development of an information system on how to address and respect the safeguards of REDD+. The SBSTA also invited Parties and accredited observers to submit to the secretariat, by 19 September 2011, their views on the issues identified in paragraphs 28-30 of document FCCC/SBSTA/2011/21. It requested the secretariat to compile the submissions by Parties into a miscellaneous document for consideration by the SBSTA at its thirty-fifth session.

Costa Rica has prepared this submission in order to provide elements that facilitate decision making during the next session of the SBSTA and COP in Durban regarding systems for providing information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected.

1. We acknowledge that an information system on the implementation of safeguards for REDD+ can contribute significantly to improve the political and social conditions for the full functioning of the national strategies for REDD + in our developing countries and to strengthen their linkages with other national sustainable development objectives.
2. This submission follows the general guidance for submissions provided in Annex II of document FCCC/SBSTA/2011/2

a. Scope and Purpose

Overall scope of REDD+ safeguards is contained in the Cancun Decision (1/CP.16) and its Annex I.

b. Characteristics

Decision 1/CP.16 itself defines a number of features that should be an integral part of the safeguards information system for REDD+, including:

¹ Report of the SBSTA on its thirty-fourth session, held in Bon from 6 to 16 June 2011, document FCCC/SBSTA/2011/2, 3 August 2011.

- The system for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected is not an independent element, but an integral part of REDD + strategies. Indeed, this system is the fourth component of REDD + as is clearly set out in subparagraph d) of paragraph 71 of that decision. As a consequence, the safeguards information system should be part of the overall information on the both REDD+ strategy in general and will address information needs for both internal and external legitimate stakeholders.
- The system for providing information on safeguards, similarly to the overall REDD+ strategy implementation, must correspond to the different phases in a progressive manner until reaching the stage of full implementation (result-based).
- Developing Countries that choose to implement REDD+ strategies on a voluntary manner are also assuming a national commitment. That is an official commitment by Governments which in turn implies the obligation to report on the status of the implementation of the strategy. The information to be provided by countries on REDD+ implementation becomes official and therefore must be generated by the official mechanisms established in each country, or that will be required to be created, when they are absent or are inadequate to provide the information that adequately reflects how safeguards are addressed and respected. In other words, not all sources of information will necessarily be valid unless they can be classified as official information by a relevant national authority.
- The system for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected will be fully aligned with the principles and guidance set out in Paragraph 1 of Annex I of the Decision 1/CP16; as well as with any additional guidance derived from such decision and any further elaboration of those provision adopted by the Conference of the Parties in subsequent sessions. It is unnecessary for the SBSTA to spend time and resources to discuss guidelines that are already explicitly contained in these instruments, such as:
 - a. Transparency
 - b. Full and effective participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities,
 - c. Consideration of national circumstances and capabilities of developing country Parties and the level of support received;
 - d. Respect for national sovereignty

e. Promotion of environmental integrity

f. Consistency with national development priorities

B. Design of the system

- The information system must be able to provide accurate, timely, reliable and complete information on the various elements and sub-elements that can be identified in each of safeguards as set out in paragraph 2 of Annex I to Decision 1/CP.16.
- For reasons of efficiency in public investments Parties will use as appropriate and to the extent possible, the existent relevant and official sources and mechanisms of information to generate data on the safeguards.
- Information quality (relevance, consistency, objectivity, comparability in time) and the implementation of the system must be consistent with existing national regulations and procedures relating to official information based on parameters set by the Department of Statistics and Surveys or similar office.
- The system for providing information on safeguards must also be consistent with the system of monitoring, reporting and verification of REDD + and must include an accessible and open space for the participation of stakeholders to submit their complaints if affecting legitimate rights as a result of the implementation of REDD+ measures and activities.
- It should also incorporate information on the number of complaints received and their resolution.
- The final design of such an information system must be legitimized with relevant stakeholders.
- The design of the system will also be consistent of the phase or stage of implementation of the REDD+ strategy and subject to the level of support received.

C. Provision of information

- Information on how safeguards are addressed and respected, should be presented as an integral part of progress reports on the implementation of the overall REDD+ strategy, so that is consistent with the state and the implementation phase of it. Should also allow to meet the information needs of internal stakeholders as well as from legitimate third parties as is the case of donors that provide funds REDD+ in the country, the FCPF or UN-REDD and the UNFCCC.

- Therefore, the periodicity of the provision of information on safeguards should be consistent with the reporting intervals of the REDD+ strategy in general.

The entity responsible for REDD+ will then be responsible for managing the information system. However, in the process of designing and implementing the information system on safeguards and in the provision of information, other authorities or relevant institutions will also be involved in accordance with their legal mandates in areas of implementation of policies related to REDD+, in particular national authorities in the forestry, biodiversity and protected areas fields. The specific roles of these entities or authorities shall be defined accordingly.

- The presentation of information shall be in accordance with the arrangements for reporting the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAS) set out in paragraph 60 of the Cancun Agreements and through national communications.

D. Potential barriers

- In some cases, it is expected that the country does not have mechanisms for gathering information to respond specifically to each of the safeguards and its components and therefore must develop these mechanisms and instruments, in accordance with national regulations. Investments to be made in order to fill these gaps will then need to be financially supported. Some features of safeguards will require significant investments in the design and implementation processes (for example, measuring the social, economic and biodiversity benefits from REDD+) and then becomes more relevant to the principle that this system must be duly accompanied or supported by adequate and sustainable financial resources for start-up and monitoring.
- Therefore, the design and implementation of the system should be progressive and consistent with the provision of financial resources, as set forth in decision 1/CP.16.