



Submission of Switzerland

REDD+ information systems on safeguards, forest reference levels, and MRV

September 19, 2011

Switzerland is pleased to submit this contribution to the guidance requested by the SBSTA at its 34th session for REDD+. Submissions were invited in FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.14 for **views on the methodological guidance** for activities relating to 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:

- **guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected,**
- **guidance for modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels,**
- **guidance on modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying.**

Specifically for safeguards, Cancun decision 1/CP.16 (paragraph 71(d)) requests developing countries undertaking REDD+ actions to develop a system for providing information on the safeguards as identified in Appendix I paragraph 2. (a)-(g) of Decision 1/CP.16. Further, Para. 71d states that the information provided on this system must demonstrate how the safeguards are being **addressed and respected** throughout implementation of REDD+. Switzerland considers this system to be a requirement for success.

Further, developing modalities for forest reference levels and making progress on modalities to measure, report, and verify REDD+ impact, as requested in the L.14 document, are for Switzerland immediate priorities. Methodological guidance is needed immediately to contribute to ongoing REDD+ efforts. Therefore, we take advantage of this submission to urge Parties toward completion of this phase of work by the SBSTA at its 35th session en route for development of REDD+ draft text for Durban, eventually contributing to the success of COP17.

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

Switzerland's general view on information systems for safeguards is that they must provide a reliable and comparable basis on which both national and international assessment of the social and environmental benefits as well as governance aspects of REDD+ actions can be made. This information system must be integrated into other monitoring and reporting efforts that simultaneously cover emission reductions, management of forests, and national reporting. Ensuring the participation in, quality, and on-going improvement of information systems for safeguards is essential to providing constant feedback and continued finance of REDD+ programs and will ultimately consolidate their credibility.

(a) Characteristics

- be based on transparent, accurate and reliable sources (accountability) and methods of social, environmental and governance information;
- should prioritize strengthening and build on existing national and international systems, institutions and methodologies for monitoring and reporting on environmental, social and

governance issues;

- information and reports should be publicly available and readily accessible.

(b) Design

- draw upon existing data sets, analysis, systems, guidance and frameworks for information provision on social, environmental and governance issues;
- information on and analysis of the respect for safeguards should be incorporated into national strategies and action plans;
- need international guidelines or general principles that each country can adapt to its respective capacity and circumstances;
- combine on-the-ground information collection, including local recollection and analysis of information with institutional (top-down) perspectives and analytic tools, and may:
 - embody and reinforce the guidance and rules of existing environmental and human rights treaties, particularly UNDRIP and FLEGT, when relevant;
 - draw upon and complement relevant standards, for instance those of the voluntary forest carbon market;
 - use experience and analysis from multiple-benefit forest carbon and other land-use projects (i.e. REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards developed by Brazil and other individual countries, Social Impact Analysis, Development Indicators, etc.).

(c) Provision of information

- information systems for safeguards should be contributed to by multiple sources, including relevant stakeholders, particularly indigenous peoples and local communities;
- at the national level, developing countries should make the information publicly available, with particular attention to making the information available in affected communities. Information must be regularly updated and presented in a way that makes it useful and is easily accessible to stakeholders in-country.
- at the international level, the information from each national system should be provided through a common international structure, linked to and part of the broader system under the UNFCCC.

(d) Potential barriers, including barriers, if any, to providing information, on addressing and respecting safeguards

- governance: the strengthening of governance and monitoring structures, particularly local and national forest governance programs will be required;
- national legislation and its enforcement, particularly concerning land tenure and the governance of natural resources must evolve to more effectively address REDD+ safeguards;
- support must be provided for capacity building and through funding. More resources should be prioritized for LDCs than other countries with more resources;
- effectively complying in addressing and respecting safeguards should be expected to vary according to national capacity and circumstances, but improvement should be required.

(e) Other relevant issues

Safeguards are not an additionality, rather a requirement for REDD+ success.

2. Guidance for modalities relating to forest reference levels and forest reference emission levels:

Forest reference levels should be established transparently, taking into account historic data, and adjusted for national circumstances (Paragraph 7 of Decision 4/CP.15). This reference level is then compared to the actual level of emissions or removals as well as of carbon stocks to measure the impact of REDD+.

Paragraph 71b of 1/CP.16 mentions two different kinds of reference levels:

- A **forest reference level** to measure forest area change combined with the change in carbon stocks and corresponding change in emissions or removals;
- A **forest reference emission level** to measure the emissions and removals from forests being deforested, degraded, managed or enhanced;

Switzerland favors using just the term **forest reference level** because it encompasses and is more comprehensive than a forest reference emission level.

(a) Scope and/or purpose

- a **forest reference level** encompasses a system that will measure deforestation, forest degradation, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks by accounting for:
 - forest area change, distinguishing between natural forests and plantations;
 - carbon stock changes and the emissions or removals from the forests being deforested, degraded, managed or enhanced;
- drained peat is a special case as very significant emissions are ongoing until the area is rewetted or all the peat is depleted;
- forest reference levels must be established at the national level;
- if sub-national forest reference levels are set, this is an interim measure and these should eventually aggregate toward one national level as soon as capacity and respective capability allow.

(b) Characteristics, including elements listed in paragraph 1 of appendix I to decision 1/CP.16

Reference levels are established according to country-specific technical and policy factors. In assessing the environmental integrity of the levels these differences must be taken into consideration:

- in developing countries with high deforestation rates, reference levels should reflect an intent to reduce emissions, conserve and sustainably manage forests, tackle drivers of deforestation, and improve the livelihood of forest-dependent peoples;
- in the particular case of developing countries that have high forest cover and low deforestation, baselines might be constructed to reward maintenance of carbon stocks;
- other factors that indirectly put pressure on forests should also be taken into account, such as population growth, increases and changes in food consumption patterns, changes in food production patterns, changes in energy demand and supply, etc.

(c) Guidance for the construction;

- The construction of forest reference levels in developing countries should follow a process through which:
 - the modalities for establishing them should respond directly to their ecological circumstances and sustainable management policy;
 - be transparently constructed and communicated;
 - be independently reviewed and updated periodically;

- be approved by the COP.
- A forest reference level should be based on:
 - historical emissions and removals,
 - the state of forests, i.e. forest cover (high or low), forest carbon stocks relative to carbon carrying capacity,
 - usage patterns (high or low deforestation) and rate of loss of forest carbon and their causes/drivers.
 - future projected use of forests and development plans;
- short and long-term climate, social and national forest management goals should influence the setting of baselines to create positive incentives that will orient them ambitiously;
- baselines should ensure that all Parties collectively are meeting the objective of the REDD+ mechanism to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss.

(d) Process for communication;

- forest reference levels should be independently reviewed and updated periodically, as is the case for Annex I;
- involve the participation of relevant stakeholders.

(e) Other relevant issues.

- support for developing countries to develop reference levels is required in the form of developed country finance (common but differentiated responsibility) as is provision of capacity building, sharing experience, IPCC methodological guidance, south-south cooperation and other forms of practical support;
- definitions for degradation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks need to be developed.

3. Guidance on modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying, as referred to in appendix II to decision 1/CP.16:

(a) Characteristics, including elements listed in paragraph 1 of appendix I to decision 1/CP.16;

- the emissions reductions achieved through REDD+ activities must be measured through transparent, consistent, and accurate monitoring of anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks and forest area changes;
- modalities for the reporting of the non-carbon impact of REDD+, i.e. respect for the safeguards, should be compatible with and complementary to the enhanced reporting guidelines;
- full and effective participation of stakeholders including indigenous peoples and local communities at all stages of MRV
- developing country national forest monitoring systems, which combine remote sensing and ground-based inventory, are in differing states of capacity and capability, however national forest monitoring systems should be transparent and robust;
- taking into account the limited financial and logistical capacity of many developing countries, in particular LDCs and SIDs, simplified reporting requirements should be considered;
- particularly in the first phases of REDD+, temporary simplification might include:
 - interim sub-national monitoring,
 - when full MRV is not possible, the use of conservative estimations of emission reductions: (use of tier 1 approach, use of default emission factors),
- monitoring and reporting at the sub-national level is permitted as an interim measure. In this

case the system should provide information on how sub-national information is integrated into national reporting and under which circumstances interim monitoring should be permitted;

- measuring, reporting and verifying REDD+ activities should be entirely compatible with MRV of other sectors under the UNFCCC, i.e. NAMAs.
- guidance should be developed including on data sources and using methodologies that are transparent, clearly defined and easy to verify objectively;

(b) Elements

- IPCC guidance: the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines adopted or encouraged by the COP should be used to estimate emissions and removals from forests, changes in forest carbon stocks, and forest area changes, as specified in decision 4/CP.15;
- the COP should encourage the use of the latest version of the IPCC guidelines as adopted by the IPCC (currently the 2006 IPCC guidelines);
- with regards to estimating emissions from peatlands, it should be noted that credible estimates can only be derived from the revisions to the 2006 guidelines that are currently in progress;
- simplified reporting requirements will in some cases be necessary and appropriate modalities need to be developed, i.e:
 - tier 1 accounting for certain pools (default values, emission factors),
 - sub-national reporting as an interim measure
- recognition of the beneficial contribution that could be made to MRV by indigenous peoples and local communities;
- FAO categorisation of forests as currently used for reporting on forests should be integrated and used to distinguish between categories of forest and associated activities such as plantation conversion and forest degradation in support of more precise reporting under the UNFCCC.

(c) Process for reporting

- MRV of REDD+ should be integrated into national reporting efforts and published in National Communications. How this information will be integrated in biennial reports is still to be determined;
- the modalities for NAMA reporting and International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) should apply to REDD+ reporting;
- REDD+ reporting must be linked to financial reporting of both fast start funds and the Green Climate Fund.

(d) Other relevant issues.

At SBSTA 32 guidance was provided to “increase the number of experts trained in the use of the IPCC guidance and guidelines, by organizing and facilitating activities such as training of trainers workshops, and to work with the IPCC on promoting the use of the IPCC Emission Factor Database, and report on its progress to the SBSTA at its thirty-fourth session”.