



WWF's Submission to UNFCCC SBSTA 41

Addressing safeguards in REDD+: The need for further UNFCCC guidance

According to decision FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.12, the SBSTA has invited Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 24 September 2014, their **views on the type of information from systems for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected** that would be helpful and that may be provided by developing country Parties.

WWF welcomes this opportunity and wishes to share the following views and information, based on our experiences in REDD+ implementing and donor countries, including Cameroon, Colombia, Guyana, Japan, Malaysia, and Peru.

1. Introduction: The importance of REDD+ safeguards and what is still missing in terms of guidance

Safeguards can be viewed as the rules of the game for REDD+ implementation. They ensure that actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are sustainable in the long term, i.e. by promoting broader social and environmental benefits and avoiding harm. Parties have consistently recognized REDD+ implementation as an opportunity to promote sustainable development, such as through improved land-use planning and support to local livelihoods¹, and this requires embedding safeguards in line with the priorities and circumstances of countries and local stakeholders. Clear and strong safeguards increase civil society support, attract finance by building confidence in the quality of REDD+ investments, and can help implementing countries conduct a self-assessment of the socio-environmental performance of their actions.

Decisions 1/CP.16 (Cancun, 2010), 12/CP.17 (Durban, 2011), 9/CP.13 and 12/CP.13 (Warsaw, 2013) have set the existing guidance on safeguards. Amongst others, they have established that REDD+ actions need to ensure *“the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders”*, *“be consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity”*, and *“respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities”*.² REDD+ implementing countries are to develop a Safeguards

¹ See Decisions 17/CP.8, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 12/CP.17 and 12/CP.19.

² Appendix I, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1. “Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010”, p. 26.
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

Information System (SIS) for providing information on “*how the safeguards are being addressed and respected*”, in a manner that ensures “*transparency, consistency, effectiveness and comprehensiveness*”.³ Such information is to be periodically updated and shared through countries’ national communications, and voluntarily on the UNFCCC web-based information hub.⁴ In order to receive results-based payments, REDD+ implementing countries are to share their latest “summary of information”.⁵

However, there are two key gaps in the existing guidance on safeguards. First, **there is no specification of what type of information the summaries should contain**. Second, **there is no guidance on how to actually meet the SIS requirements of transparency, consistency, effectiveness and comprehensiveness**.

Further UNFCCC guidance would avoid that REDD+ financiers fill those gaps and request their own standards. It would thus avoid the duplication of efforts, the additional work of having to comply with different sets of requirements, and potentially confusion among investors, policy-makers and other stakeholders. In addition, given that Parties agreed on the need for adequate and predictable financial and technical support – particularly from developed country Parties – for safeguards implementation⁶, such guidance would help coordinate and focus this support.

2. Recommendations for further UNFCCC guidance on the provision of information on safeguards

First of all, if the UNFCCC existing guidance requires information on how REDD+ safeguards are being respected and addressed, it is important to unpack the meaning of these words, so as to give substance to this requirement. *Respecting* the safeguards can be understood as not violating those principles agreed upon in Cancun and thereafter.⁷ Rather, they are to be the framework for the design and implementation of REDD+ actions. *Addressing* safeguards, in turn, suggests that action may be needed to ensure that those principles are effectively fulfilled.

³ Decision 12/CP.17, “Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected and modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels as referred to in decision 1/CP.16”, paragraph 6, p. 17.
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf>

⁴ Decision 12/CP.19, “The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected”. <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=33>

⁵ Decision 9/CP.19, “Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70”, paragraph 4.
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf>

⁶ Decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 71 and 76.

⁷ Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I.

WWF therefore recommends that the UNFCCC request the following information for the countries' summaries on how safeguards are being respected and addressed:

- ✓ **An interpretation of the REDD+ safeguards in that particular country context**, i.e. how they are translated into the given national circumstances and priorities.
- ✓ A presentation of **the existing policy and legal framework** in the country (including other ratified international agreements that can support the implementation of REDD+ safeguards), explaining how they operate and support the REDD+ safeguards;
- ✓ The **criteria and indicators** utilized by the country to measure performance and progress;
- ✓ A description of **the methodology utilized** to assess how safeguards are being addressed and respected, for the sake of transparency (e.g. how and when information was collected, how this process was carried out in a socially-inclusive participatory manner, how the information was analyzed and made available);
- ✓ The **actions taken and next steps** to respect and address safeguards.

WWF thinks that further guidance on **safeguards should be supportive of developing countries efforts to implement REDD+, not a burden**. Data collection should be linked as closely as possible to existing requirements for monitoring and reporting on carbon. It should require capitalizing and seeking synergies on the ground for countries to collect, analyze, and provide information on safeguards. Countries should be able to rely on data that is already being collected under the REDD+ process, such as land cover and land cover change, carbon stocks and sequestration, and forest structure. It is important, however, that such information be specified in the periodical summaries, together with information on what may not have been captured in that process (e.g. on social safeguards).

With respect to guidance on how to ensure that the REDD+ SIS are transparent, effective, comprehensive and consistent with the agreed safeguards, a first important step is to recognize and explicitly adopt the principle of **free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)**.⁸ FPIC is essential to ensure full, effective and socially-inclusive stakeholder participation in program design and implementation wherever possible and appropriate. This requires special attention to groups that lack influence in land-use decisions but who play an important role in resource management, such as indigenous people, forest-dependent communities, women, and ethnic minorities. Providing transparent and accessible information requires that it be made available in **adequate language** and shared in a format that is socially and culturally appropriate to ensure accessibility to all stakeholders.⁹

⁸ See, for instance, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

⁹ This is especially relevant when working with indigenous people, see the submission from the *Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indigenas de la Cuenca Amazonica* (COICA) to SBSTA 41.

WWF recommends the UNFCCC to adopt requirements to ensure a **multi-stakeholder review process** to assess how safeguards are being addressed and respected. In tandem, there needs to be an accessible **grievance mechanism** in place. This would help countries ensure adherence to the safeguards by collecting information and recommendations on how to improve performance.

Finally, at international level, countries should be encouraged to share their best practices and lessons learned on operationalizing REDD+ safeguards, through workshops and/or at the REDD+ web platform.

Appendix – Practical examples for countries on how to operationalize REDD+ safeguards

Many countries have already started developing their REDD+ strategies and Safeguard Information Systems (SIS). In doing so, existing forest monitoring systems as well as established processes for Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) are also being successfully used to address safeguards. The following paragraphs describe some examples.

In **Guyana**, a community MRV (CMRV) system is being developed by WWF with community and government partners as part of Guyana's *Low Carbon Development Strategy*. Through CMRV, communities with titled lands have established systems to monitor their own resources, including forest cover and carbon content but also other resources that are important to them, such as water quality, biodiversity, fish and other wildlife stocks, timber and non-timber forest products, in addition to criteria for measuring community well-being. **This CMRV system integrates information generated on the ground with information obtained at the national level, linking the national MRV system with the SIS.** The active participation of local communities and the effective recognition of their rights over local natural resources are key to this process. Thus, the integration of CMRV into the SIS has increased engagement and knowledge in local forest communities. It has built both capacities and awareness and provided for a consistent use of information on forest carbon, livelihoods, and biodiversity.¹⁰

In **Nepal**, an SIS with national indicators is being developed through a wide and inclusive consultation process. It will be integrated into its **National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)** to report also on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected. As such, the NFMS is being designed to **report on the non-carbon aspects of REDD+ implementation**¹¹, too, such as quantitative and/or qualitative variables related to livelihood enhancement, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services provision, and governance issues related to

¹⁰ See "Guyana's CMRV model lauded by WWF", <http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2014/08/30/guyanas-cmr-model-lauded-by-wwf/>;

¹¹ See Bastos Lima, M.G., Braña-Varela, J., Gupta, A., Visseren-Hamakers, I., Huynh, T.B., Kleymann, H., Van Dexter, K., and Belecky, M. (2014). Promoting Non-carbon Benefits in REDD+ Actions. WWF-WUR brief no.1. <http://bit.ly/WWFWURREDBriefs>

REDD+ implementation. As a result, this can help provide a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of the country's REDD+ strategy on the forestry sector.¹²

In **Colombia**, interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards is being carried out at **both the national and local levels**. This ensures alignment with national legal frameworks, helps identify gaps and to define safeguards in accordance with forest dependent communities' livelihoods and well-being – recognizing that implementation of safeguards may vary across different socio-ecological and geographic areas. At the national level, an assessment was made of the country's existing legal framework to identify synergies and gaps with the Cancun Safeguards and identify a draft set of principles and criteria. In a parallel process, WWF worked with Afro-Colombian communities in Colombia's Pacific region to identify social and environmental safeguards that fully reflect their values and worldview, and which protects their ancestral lands and traditional rights. Multiple workshops were designed to, first, ensure full and effective participation of all community members; and second, that information was accessible and disseminated in a manner that took into account gender and other social dynamics within the communities. This participatory and transparent approach has built a sense of trust between the government and communities. The communities' vision for REDD+ safeguards and policies is an ongoing process that will inform the REDD+ safeguards at the national level and help to define the rules of the game for REDD+ implementation at the subnational level.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, participatory mapping has proven a successful process in strengthening social safeguards with regard to customary lands. It has served as a useful tool to address forest community rights. In the Mai Ndombe Province WWF has been working on developing such **community maps deriving from participatory mapping** processes with forest communities. These maps not only provide clarity on the boundaries of customary lands and a basis for community forest emission reduction actions, but they have also reduced land use conflicts between community members. As a next step, and building on this momentum, the DRC is planning to embed these community maps into a provincial framework endorsing customary land use rights. This has been successfully inserted in the country's Emission Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN), accepted for consideration under the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in 2014.¹³ Thus, land use planning and management processes with a high level of local stakeholder engagement have at the same time addressed social safeguards with regard to the rights of forest communities and free prior and informed consent. Participatory mapping has been identified as an "enabling activity" in the ERPIN, and it is serving as an indicator for the successful implementation of the "rights" objective – one of the five objectives of that

¹² Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (2012). National REDD-plus Strategy of Nepal. <http://mofsc-redd.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/REDD-Strategy-Framework.pdf>

¹³ See Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (2014), DRC Emission Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN), <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/February/DRC%20ER-PIN%20CF9.pdf>

ER Program, aimed overall at developing “a model provincial green development program”.¹⁴

Synergies with other international Conventions

Countries implementing or wishing to implement REDD+ actions should also look for synergies with other signed international agreements, such as the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** or the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C.169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Countries’ efforts to implement and report on these other conventions can offer lessons and potentially be streamlined with safeguard fulfillments under REDD+.

For instance, lessons on biodiversity safeguards could be learned from the methodologies applied for developing the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans that ensue from the adoption of the CBD Aichi Targets. Streamlining could build synergies, reduce transaction costs of implementation and generate internationally accepted standards. Aichi Targets **5** (*reduce the loss of natural habitats, including forests*), **7** (*areas under agriculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity*), **11** (*equitable area-based conservation areas*), **14** (*restore and safeguard ecosystems and their services, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable*) and **15** (*ensure ecosystem resilience for better adaptation to climate change and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks*) bear direct connection with REDD+.¹⁵

Similarly, ILO’s Convention 169, a legally-binding agreement which many UNFCCC Parties have already ratified, sets a number of rules on respecting Indigenous Peoples rights that can be streamlined with the REDD+ safeguards. For instance, **Article 6** determines that consultation and participation of indigenous people should ensure *representativity*, i.e. it should occur through their representative institutions and organizations. **Article 7**, in turn, makes clear that indigenous peoples should actively participate in governance, strategy building, and have their own development priorities respected. This implies meaningful participation in both the design and implementation of REDD+ actions on their lands.¹⁶

For further information, contact: Josefina Brana-Varela, WWF Forest and Climate Programme Policy Director, Josefina.Brana-Varela@wwf.panda.org.

For additional information on WWF’s REDD+ related work, visit: www.panda.org/forestclimate

¹⁴ See WWF (2012). REDD+ for People and Nature: A case study of an integrated approach to REDD+ readiness in Mai-Ndombe, DRC. <http://www.panda.org/?206843/REDD-for-People-and-Nature-A-case-study-of-an-integrated-approach-to-REDD-readiness-in-Mai-Ndombe-DRC>

¹⁵ See <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>; and Miles, L., Trumper, K., Osti, M., Munroe, R., and Santamaria, C. (2013). REDD+ and the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets: Promoting synergies in international forest conservation efforts. UN-REDD Policy Brief 05.

¹⁶ See <http://www.ilo.org/indigenous/Conventions/no169/lang--en/index.htm>