

WORKING TOGETHER TO GET FOREST MEASUREMENT RIGHT: A SOLUTION FOR REDD+

REDD+ challenge: Safeguards need stakeholder-based forest indicators

REDD+ is an incentive mechanism being developed under the UNFCCC for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and contributing to conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. It involves the development of policy approaches and positive incentives for developing countries to sustainably manage their forests and, indirectly, other land-based resources, and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. While there is not yet international agreement on all elements needed for full implementation and results-based financing of actions under REDD+, many countries and organizations are engaged in ‘readiness’ and demonstration activities and some countries (e.g., Brazil, Indonesia) have already implemented policies and/or measures.

There are concerns that REDD+ could fail to account for the full range of social and environmental values associated with forest resources, including biodiversity or respect for rights of Indigenous Peoples and interests of local communities. As a result, international guidelines for REDD+ safeguards have been developed to ensure that people and the environment are not adversely affected by REDD+ policies or programs.¹ The REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (SES) consist of generic principles and criteria that define the objectives and conditions for high social and environmental performance, as well as a process to develop country-specific indicators that demonstrate progress in achieving each criterion.

At the national level, the challenge will be for each country to develop, through broad stakeholder consultation, a set of indicators that will help them define and monitor the social and environmental performance of their policies or programs. At the international level, the challenge will be to develop guidelines for countries implementing REDD+ activities to measure and verify their results, demonstrating in a consistent manner how the safeguards are being addressed and respected, while allowing sufficient flexibility for country-specific circumstances.²

Solution: Use globally-recognized, stakeholder-based indicators of sustainable forest management

Comprehensive, internationally-recognized indicator frameworks are already widely used among forested countries to report on sustainable forest management

Sophisticated criteria and indicators (C&I) for reporting on forest condition, social and economic well-being and forest governance have been developed and used by the Montréal Process, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO, among others. Developed with broad stakeholder input and aligned with the seven internationally-recognized thematic elements of sustainable forest management (SFM),³ they are a basis for monitoring and reporting, and for revealing challenges and demonstrating progress on national forest conditions and SFM. They are a credible, reliable and transparent source of forest information. The way these SFM indicator frameworks were developed is consistent with the stakeholder-based process outlined in the Guidelines for the Use of REDD+ SES at Country Level⁴ and the content of the indicators is relevant to the REDD+ SES indicators framework (see Annex).² Some countries that are starting to use REDD+ SES (e.g., Mexico, Guatemala, Liberia, Brazil) are members of one of the C&I processes and, therefore, may find existing SFM indicators accessible and relevant.

Consistent, high-quality forest information is already available through national and global reporting on sustainable forest management

By working together, the Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO, along with the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) initiative and the UN ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, have developed a new Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) that will



greatly increase the consistency of data and the efficiency of its collection and dissemination. Effectively, countries that report to more than one of these bodies can now provide their data once to meet multiple reporting requirements. This questionnaire – which over 100 countries have agreed to use for their regional or local reporting on SFM, as well as for global reporting to UN FAO – could contribute to understanding how REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected. The first global datasets will be available by 2015.

A network of knowledge and expertise on the effective implementation of forest indicators already exists and has relevance to other processes, including REDD+

The Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO represent countries that contain virtually all global forests. For over 20 years, they have been monitoring, assessing and reporting on trends in forest conditions with advice and information that is well-attuned to stakeholder sensitivities. These four bodies are confident that their experiences and successes have relevance to other organizations and processes interested in tracking environmental changes and reporting on sustainable development.

Together, more can be done

The Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO recognize the value of working with other countries, organizations and processes involved in REDD+ to:

- avoid the proliferation of forest monitoring requirements and associated reporting burdens;
- share knowledge and experience in tracking and reporting on forest conditions and trends, which is of value and relevance to emerging issues such as climate change;
- streamline reporting by sharing information needs, agreeing on common terms, improving data collection and sharing mechanisms, sharing information management systems and online reporting tools, and sharing targets and common indicators; and
- gain greater insight into climate change and its impacts on SFM, leading to more robust national and international reporting on forest resources and sustainable development.

They invite other entities interested in forest-related data, evaluation or expertise to work with them to explore how existing C&I can be used to meet content and process requirements for developing country-specific REDD+ safeguards and understanding how those safeguards are being addressed and respected.

Contact one of these representatives to find out more about global reporting on sustainable forest management and explore opportunities for collaboration:

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Annex: Sample indicators for assessing REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards

The following table shows the seven Principles of the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards Initiative⁵ that provide the key objectives that define high social and environmental performance of REDD+ programs and policies. Also included is a sample of relevant indicators derived from the Montreal Process (MP), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and FOREST EUROPE (FE) criteria and indicator frameworks that could provide the content needed to assess performance under each of the principles and their associated criteria. The way these SFM indicator frameworks were developed is consistent with the process outlined in the Guidelines for the Use of REDD+ SES at Country Level.⁴

REDD+ SES Principles	Sample Indicators^a
1. The REDD+ program recognizes and respects rights to lands, territories and resources	Clarity and security of land and resource tenure and property rights (MP) Extent to which tenure and user rights of communities and indigenous peoples over publicly owned forests are recognized and practised (ITTO) Forest holdings (FE)
2. The benefits of the REDD+ program are shared equitably among all relevant rights holders and stakeholders	Distribution of revenues derived from forest management (MP) Existence and implementation of mechanisms for the equitable sharing of the costs and benefits of forest management (ITTO) Economic viability (FE)
3. The REDD+ program improves long-term livelihood security and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with special attention to women and the most marginalized and/or vulnerable people	Resilience of forest-dependent communities (MP) Area of forests upon which people are dependent for subsistence uses and traditional and customary lifestyles (ITTO) Cultural and spiritual values (FE)
4. The REDD+ program contributes to good governance, to broader sustainable development and to social justice	Legislation and policies supporting the sustainable management of forests (MP) Capacity and mechanisms for planning sustainable forest management and for periodic monitoring, evaluation and feedback on progress (ITTO) Legal/regulatory frameworks and international commitments (FE)
5. The REDD+ program maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services	Area and percent of forest whose designation or land management focus is the protection of soil and water resources (MP) Extent and percentage of total forest area managed exclusively for the protection of soil and water (ITTO) Protective forests-soil, water and other ecosystem functions (FE)
6. All relevant rights holders and stakeholders participate fully and effectively in the REDD+ program	Public participation and conflict resolution in forest-related decision making (MP) Public participation in forest management planning, decision-making, data collection, monitoring and assessment (ITTO) Public awareness and participation in forest management (FE)
7. The REDD+ program complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions and other instruments	Enforcement of laws related to forests (MP) Existence and implementation of policies, laws and regulations to govern forest management (ITTO) Legal/regulatory frameworks and international commitments (FE)

^a Note that each of the C&I frameworks (e.g., MP, FE, ITTO) contain a number of indicators that could potentially be used to assess each SES Principle, but for brevity only a small sample is provided here.

¹ UNFCCC, COP16, Cancun, 2011

² REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards, Version 2 (10 September 2012) . Accessed November 5, 2012 from: http://www.redd-standards.org/files/pdf/redd-docs/Standards/REDDSES-Version_2-10_September_2012.pdf

³ The seven thematic elements of SFM as recognized by UNFF4 (2004) are: extent of forest resources; biological diversity; forest health and vitality; productive functions of forest resources; protective functions of forest resources; socio-economic functions; and legal, policy, and institutional framework.

⁴ Guidelines for the use of REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards at country level, Version 2 (20 August 2012). Accessed November 5, 2012 from: <http://www.redd-standards.org/files/pdf/redd-docs/Guidelines/-REDD%20SES%20Guidelines%20Draft%20V2%20revised%2008-20-12.pdf>