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REDD+
SAFEGUARDS
UNDER THE UNFCCC

REDD+ ACADEMY

LEARNING JOURNAL

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Lead authors: Steven Swan (UNEP/UN-REDD), Judith Walcott (UNEP/WCMC)

Contributing authors and reviewers: Clea Paz (UNDP/UN-REDD), Elizabeth Eggerts (UNDP/UN-REDD), Kristin DeValue (FAO/UN-REDD) and the UN-REDD Safeguards Coordination Group members

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ABOUT US

UN-REDD

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.

REDD+ACADEMY

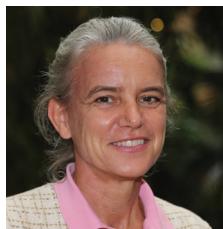
The REDD+ Academy is a coordinated REDD+ capacity development initiative led by the UN-REDD Programme and the UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit, which seeks to match the scale of the global climate change mitigation challenge and enable systematic, focused capacity development to deliver REDD+ on the ground.

The REDD+ Academy is a comprehensive response to capacity building needs identified by the countries receiving support from the UN-REDD Programme. The main aim of the REDD+ Academy is to empower potential “REDD+ champions” with the requisite knowledge and skills to promote the implementation of national REDD+ activities.

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METTE L. WILKIE

DIRECTOR,
ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION,
UN ENVIRONMENT

Dear Learner,

Welcome to the second edition of the REDD+ Academy Learning Journals. The journals provide you with state of the art knowledge on REDD+ planning and implementation, developed by some of the world's leading experts at the UN-REDD Programme.

The journals have been designed to accompany you in your learning journey and equip you with the necessary knowledge to understand the various components of REDD+, from the basics to the finer points of setting reference levels, monitoring, allocation of incentives and stakeholder engagement.

With deforestation and forest degradation being the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions globally, action to reduce deforestation and to rebuild forests globally is vital. By realizing social and economic benefits, REDD+ is also fundamental to delivering on the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the focus of many developing countries is now firmly on REDD+ implementation. I encourage you to take the REDD+ Academy online course, and apply your knowledge to make REDD+ a national and a global success!

Mette L. Wilkie

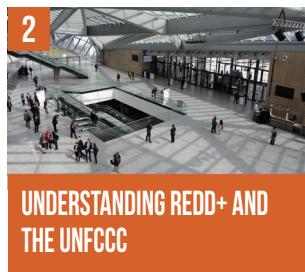
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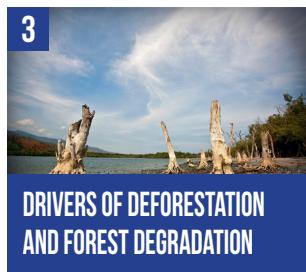
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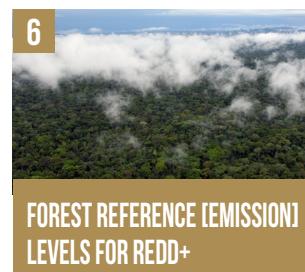
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8

REDD+ Safeguards under the UNFCCC

This module will discuss safeguards requirements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), how countries could go about meeting these requirements, as well as some of the UN-REDD tools available to support country approaches to safeguards.



The module contains sections about:

- REDD+ safeguards requirements under the UNFCCC, including the seven 'Cancun' safeguards
- A conceptual framework for country approaches to meeting these (and other) safeguards requirements
- Considerations and generic steps in designing a safeguard information system (SIS)
- Considerations for the content of summaries of safeguards information
- UN-REDD tools available to support countries in designing and applying their country approaches to REDD+ safeguards



What do you already know about this topic?

8. REDD+ SAFEGUARDS UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

REDD+ SAFEGUARDS

'Safeguards' usually refer to processes or policies designed to mitigate risks. The seven safeguards (Box 8.2) associated with REDD+, as agreed under the UNFCCC, are broad aspirational principles that not only help to ensure that REDD+ policies and measures (PAMs) 'do no harm' to people or the environment, but also 'do good' and enhance social and environmental benefits.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, REDD+ implementation has the potential to deliver important social and environmental benefits (also called 'co-benefits', 'multiple benefits' or 'non-carbon benefits' of REDD+). There is, however, also the potential for risks to communities and to the environment. These benefits and risks will vary depending on the REDD+ PAMs that a country implements to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as where and how they are implemented. Table 8.1 summarizes some of the potential social and environmental benefits and risks of REDD+.

Table 8.1: Potential benefits and risks of REDD+ implementation

	Benefits	Risks
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthened livelihoods and improved access to natural resources ● Improved forest governance and law enforcement ● Protection of territories and cultures of indigenous peoples and local communities ● Increased community voice and participation in decision-making ● Clarified/secured tenure and resource rights ● Advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women and other marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land/resource speculation and land conflicts ● Conflicts among stakeholders or resource users ● Exclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities from decision-making ● Contested land and resource rights ● Increased exclusion of, and inequalities for, women and other marginalized groups from decision-making processes and accessing opportunities and benefits of REDD+
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintenance and restoration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Biodiversity – forest species and ecosystems of conservation concern – Ecosystem services – e.g. water quality, erosion control, timber and non-timber forest products, pollination, local climate regulation, cultural values ● Intact and connected forests are more ecologically stable (resilient and resistant) to climate change impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Displacement of deforestation/degradation pressures to areas important for biodiversity or ecosystem services ● Intensified agriculture impacts on non-forest biodiversity ● Replacement of natural forest with plantation ● Planted forests with few tree species, or non-native species

UNFCCC REDD+ SAFEGUARDS REQUIREMENTS

To provide protection against risks, and promote potential benefits beyond climate change mitigation, Parties to the UNFCCC adopted broad guidance and a set of seven safeguards to be applied to

REDD+ activities at the sixteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 16) in Cancun, Mexico in 2010. These ‘Cancun safeguards’ (see Box 8.2) are to be “promoted and supported” when undertaking REDD+ activities, and information is to be provided on how they are being “addressed and respected” throughout REDD+ implementation.

Box 8.2: The Cancun safeguards

When undertaking [REDD+ activities], the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

- (a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
- (b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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 FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 27 protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;
- (f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;
- (g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

Source: UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix 1, paragraph 2¹

The UNFCCC guidance related to safeguards, and applicable to REDD+ national strategy/action plan (NS/AP) development processes, as well as the implementation of REDD+ PAMs, can be summarized as follows:

1. when **developing and implementing NS/APs**, address, *inter alia*, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the Cancun safeguards²;
2. **promote and support** the Cancun safeguards throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions, regardless of the source and type of funding³;

3. develop a **system for providing information** on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected (i.e. a “safeguards information system” (SIS)⁴; and
4. provide **summaries of information** on how all the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions⁵.

¹ The UNFCCC has gathered all of the COP decisions relevant to REDD+ in the [Decision booklet REDD+](#) (UNFCCC, 2014).

² UNFCCC Decision 1/CP. 16, paragraph

³ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP. 16, paragraph 69, Appendix I, paragraph 2

⁴ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP. 16, paragraph 71 (d); Decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 64; Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 2; Decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 3

⁵ UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 3; Decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 4; Decision 12/CP.19, paragraphs 1-5; Decision 17/CP.21, paragraphs 4-7

OTHER REDD+-RELEVANT SAFEGUARDS INITIATIVES

A number of international organisations and initiatives have their own sets of safeguards, which are relevant to the REDD+ safeguards agreed under the UNFCCC. There are also nationally determined safeguards frameworks or standards, such as those used in national forest certification systems. Some of the more important safeguard initiatives relevant to REDD+ include:

- World Bank: Operational Policies that apply, as contractual requirements, to REDD+ Emissions Reductions Programs that the World Bank supports or finances through the Forest Investment Program ([FIP](#)), Forest Carbon Partnership Facility ([FCPF](#)) and [BioCarbon Fund](#). The FCPF applies Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments and Environmental and Social Management Frameworks ([SESA](#) and [ESMF](#)) to ensure REDD+ readiness and demonstration activities comply with these World Bank Operational Policies.
- Green Climate Fund ([GCF](#)): established under, and guided by, the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC, GCF has, as an interim measure, adopted the International Finance Corporation (IFC) [Environmental and Social Performance Standards](#) as part of the framework for REDD+ results-based payments. An internal process, with stakeholder consultation, is on-going to determine the permanent safeguard provisions for REDD+ results-based payments. In addition to these, corporate safeguards frameworks of individual 'Accredited Entities'⁶ providing financial and technical assistance to countries in implementing REDD+ PAMs also apply. IFC Environmental and Social Performance Standards define voluntary private sector responsibilities in different industries, with particular focus on infrastructure, manufacturing, agribusiness, services, and financial markets, for managing their environmental and social risks. The IFC's Sustainability Framework, which includes the

⁶ GCF operates through a wide range of Accredited Entities to channel its resources to projects and programmes. Such entities can be private or public, non-governmental, sub-national, national, regional or international, and carry out a range of activities that usually include the development of funding proposals and the management and monitoring of projects and programmes. Countries may access GCF resources through multiple entities simultaneously.

Performance Standards, applies to all investment and advisory companies whose projects go through IFC's initial credit review process.

- REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards ([REDD+ SES](#)): an international civil society led initiative, using voluntary best practice standards and multi-stakeholder processes to support effective implementation of and provision of credible information on safeguards, for government-led REDD+ programmes. Countries and subnational territories have participated in the initiative, using the content and process of the REDD+ SES in different ways, either as good practice guidance, as the basis for their SIS, or as a quality assurance standard.
- Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards (CCBS): developed by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance ([CCBA](#)) and managed by the Verified Carbon Standard ([VCS](#)), these are used to evaluate land management projects that will seek to sell carbon credits to a voluntary offset market. The CCBS are used to: a) identify projects that simultaneously address climate change, support local communities and smallholders, and conserve biodiversity; b) promote excellence and innovation in project design and implementation; and c) mitigate risk for investors and offset buyers and increase funding opportunities for project developers.
- Various forest certification schemes (e.g. [Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification](#)), agricultural commodity standards and emissions offset standards (e.g. Verified Carbon Standard Jurisdictional Approach), applied to certify sustainability of production and/or emissions reductions achieved through particular REDD+ projects and programmes.

Adherence to various donor and investor safeguards policies does not always necessitate application of different or additional sets of safeguards. Each country's 'clarification' or 'interpretation' (see below) of the Cancun safeguards, according to their national circumstances, presents an opportunity to cover all relevant safeguard requirements, including those of multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and voluntary standards – although harmonisation of these can pose an operational challenge. A number of countries have highlighted that they are attempting to align donor/investor safeguard-

related processes (e.g. SESA and ESMF of the FCPF) with their country approaches to safeguards (see next section). Box 8.3 summarizes the Democratic

Republic of the Congo's ongoing efforts to link FCPF and UNFCCC safeguards requirements.

Box 8.3 The Democratic Republic of the Congo's experience with attempting to link FCPF and UNFCCC safeguards requirements

DRC began its safeguards work in 2011, and developed national REDD+ standards, through a broad consultative process, involving civil society, based on a set of international normative standards. The national standards contain seven principles, 25 criteria and 43 indicators, covering issues of participation, governance, transparency, sharing of potential social and economic benefits, mainstreaming of gender issues, the promotion of rights and appeal procedures.

In a separate process, a SESA was planned and conducted under the FCPF, and began the important step of looking at risks and benefits of proposed REDD+ actions, policies and measures. The SESA was completed in 2015, with finalization of an ESMF consisting of six inter-related documents. Although the SESA process did not use the Cancun safeguards or DRC's national REDD+ standards, the completed ESMF does contain an assessment of the current legal framework, and proposes how the risks and benefits identified can be managed through existing legal instruments. Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and grievance redress mechanism (GRM) guidelines are also being developed.

A number of actions have been implemented to better link the processes for a more efficient and effective outcome. These efforts are aimed at producing a revised set of national standards drawing on the SESA-ESMF process and responding specifically to the Cancun safeguards. A matrix has been developed that compares the Cancun safeguards with the current set of principles and criteria of the national standards, in order to show coherence and fine-tune the standards for their applicability to all REDD+ actions, at project, jurisdictional and national levels. DRC has also decided to structure the proposed Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be conducted by REDD+ projects, as well as the associated risks management frameworks, around the national REDD+ standards.

Sources: DRC (2014); DRC (2015); UN-REDD Programme (2013)

COUNTRY APPROACHES TO SAFEGUARDS

As the Cancun safeguards are general statements of principle, individual countries will need to work out how the safeguards will be applied - or operationalized - in their own specific contexts.

A country approach to safeguards allows a country to respond to international safeguard frameworks by building on existing governance arrangements that, combined with national (and other international) policy goals, can be used to operationalize the Cancun safeguards. The governance arrangements targeted by the country approach comprise three core elements that together can ensure social and environmental risks from REDD+ are reduced and that benefits are enhanced:

- Policies, laws and regulations** (PLRs) - defining, on paper, what needs to be done in order to support REDD+ activity implementation in a manner consistent with Cancun (and other)

safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being addressed;

- Institutional arrangements** - the mandates, procedures and capacities of institutions responsible for ensuring that the relevant PLRs are implemented in practice, i.e. how safeguards are being respected; and
- Information systems and sources** - collecting and making available information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

A country approach to safeguards may be beneficial for several reasons:

- It can help countries to operationalize the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards, which aim to ensure social and environmental risks are minimized and benefits of REDD+ are enhanced, and to meet the UNFCCC safeguards requirements to access results-based payments (RBPs);

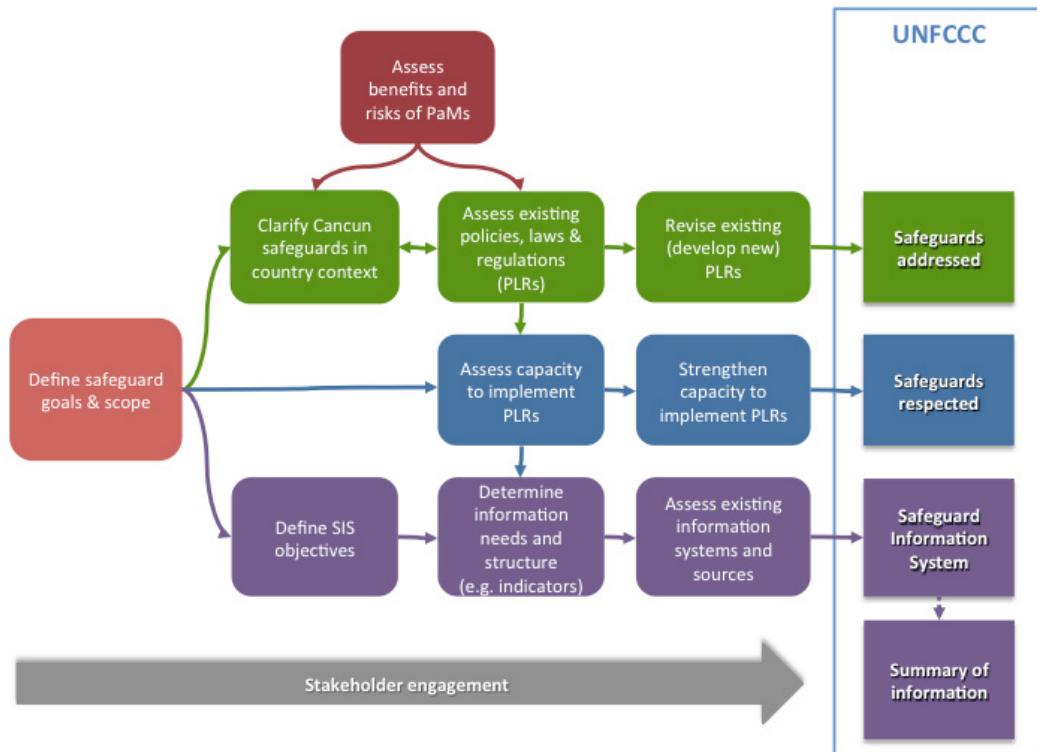
- It can help countries to assess and understand what the Cancun safeguards mean in their specific national context, and which benefits and risks are most relevant to the REDD+ PAMs planned under their evolving NS/AP;
- It can help countries to determine the safeguards goals that they wish to achieve, taking into consideration existing national policies and international commitments;
- It can contribute to the design of more sustainable REDD+ PAMs, by taking into account wider socio-economic⁷ issues and environmental concerns that are likely to be important in addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (as well as overcoming the barriers to more effective/extensive ‘plus activities’⁸);
- It can help engender country ownership and help ensure that the safeguards goals are appropriate to national circumstances and contribute to national sustainable development and green growth goals;
- It can help build domestic confidence in, and increase the legitimacy of, REDD+ by demonstrating commitment to treating safeguards in a comprehensive yet context-specific manner;
- It can serve as a cost-effective means to help countries achieve and keep track of long-term governance improvements, as it builds upon the existing governance arrangements (policies, institutions and information systems) of a country to address and respect REDD+ safeguards, rather than develop entirely new ones; and
- It can provide countries with the flexibility to explore applying the safeguards not just within the forestry sector, but also in other land-use sectors relevant to REDD+, such as agriculture and energy.

How to develop a country approach to safeguards

There is no blueprint for a country approach; each will be different and will reflect the specificities of national contexts as well as what the country defines as the overall goals and scope of safeguards application. However, drawing on [practical experiences over the past five years](#), some generic steps that may be useful for countries planning to develop their country approach to safeguards can be identified, as illustrated in Figure 8.4. Countries may decide to undertake any number of these steps, in any sequence, depending on their specific context. The development of a country approach to safeguards may benefit from being carried out in an iterative way, with outputs from one step being used to refine the results of previous steps and inform those that follow. Each key generic step is briefly explained below.

⁷ Including gender

⁸ Conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Figure 8.4 A conceptual framework for country approaches to safeguards

i. Defining safeguards goals and scope

In this context, defining safeguards **goals** refers to which safeguard framework(s) the country seeks to adopt and apply to REDD+ and whether the country chooses to develop and/or include safeguards beyond those of the UNFCCC. The requirements around the Cancun safeguards are basic preconditions to be eligible for RBPs under the UNFCCC, but a country may also want to consider other bi- and/or multi-lateral safeguards requirements, e.g. World Bank Operational Policies, as part of the FCPF Carbon Fund, in accordance with national and international policy and funding commitments and priorities. Consideration may be given to safeguards requirements and expectations of investors in REDD+ results-based actions, as well as buyers of verified emissions reductions/ enhanced removals. Defining safeguards goals could additionally mean considering what national policies could benefit from addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards.

Safeguards goals are likely to reflect a trade-off between a country's strategic policy objectives - e.g. what it hopes to achieve in terms of its ambition for REDD+ contributions to broader sustainable development and green growth - and budgetary and capacity constraints. This could mean a focus only on international requirements under the UNFCCC

to obtain RBPs for REDD+, or could also include the use of REDD+ to catalyse broader sustainable development and meet domestic policy goals.

Defining the **scope** of safeguards application refers to determining what, exactly, the safeguards will be applied to, and will depend on the strategic approach to REDD+, including the scale of implementation, the country intends to adopt. As a default requirement under the UNFCCC, the safeguards should be applied to all REDD+ PAMs to be implemented under the NS/AP. A country may, however, wish to integrate REDD+ into wider forestry sector strategies or, given that REDD+ actions are unlikely to be restricted to the forest sector but may also be cross-sectoral in nature, choose to include sectors that may be related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, such as agriculture and biomass energy.

Safeguard goal and scope setting have typically been conducted through a series of stakeholder consultations, led by national government REDD+ focal points (see Section IV on stakeholder engagement below). Box 8.5 presents a brief illustrative example of how Mexico has considered the questions of goals and scope of safeguards application during the development of its National REDD+ Strategy.

Box 8.5: Mexico's goal and scope of safeguards application

In terms of safeguards goals, Mexico has given express recognition to the Cancun safeguards in the draft National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+). In addition, in 2012, Mexico reformed its Law on Sustainable Forest Development, legally recognizing the Cancun safeguards as the set of safeguards to be consistent with, and further establishing a set of safeguards to be applied to PAMs related to environmental services regulated by this law.

The scope of the Cancun safeguards application in Mexico is linked to the country's approach to REDD+, which promotes a territorial and multi-sectoral approach, in order to reduce the pressures that lead to deforestation and forest degradation. Consequently, the scope of application of the Cancun safeguards is broadly multi-sectoral and the ENAREDD+ is based on inter-sectoral coordination.

Sources: CONAFOR (2014); CONAFOR (pers. comm., 2015)

ii. Addressing safeguards

What 'addressing' the safeguards means will vary by country, but is generally understood to mean that a coherent body of PLRs, and associated institutional arrangements, are in place that deal with the potential benefits and risks associated with REDD+ PAMs, and in doing so, enable the application of the Cancun safeguards in the country context and to meet country safeguards goals. Three generic steps have been identified and taken by various countries to address REDD+ safeguards:

1. 'Clarifying'⁹ - or 'interpreting' - the Cancun safeguards in the country context;
2. Documenting and assessing existing safeguards-relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs)¹⁰; and over time
3. Revising existing and developing new PLRs, as necessary, to ensure they cover the identified risks and potential benefits associated with REDD+ PAMs.

The first step entails clarifying the meaning of the seven Cancun safeguards, as well as other international safeguards frameworks the country may wish to apply, in its specific country context.

In some cases, this clarification process has led to the definition of country-specific national REDD+ safeguards or standards, the scope of which sometimes goes beyond what is required by the UNFCCC. Clarifying the safeguards can be an important entry point for stakeholder engagement, and can help a country to define a collective understanding of what the Cancun safeguards (and others, if applicable) mean to different domestic stakeholder groups (see Section IV). This is particularly true if the process of clarifying safeguards is based on or linked to a multi-stakeholder assessment of the potential benefits and risks associated with proposed REDD+ PAMs. Many countries have found it useful to have some degree of clarity on proposed REDD+ PAMs before starting to analyse how safeguards can be addressed. At the same time, a number of countries have determined that an assessment of benefits and risks should be carried out before the NS/AP is finalized, so that the results can inform the design and selection of PAMs and any risk mitigation measures to be included in the NS/AP. Box 8.6 provides an illustrative example of how Indonesia has clarified the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances.



REFLECTION POINT

What might the safeguard goals and scope be in your country?

⁹ Synonymous terms used in the literature and by practitioners include: 'contextualizing', 'elaborating', 'interpreting', 'specifying' and 'unpacking' the Cancun safeguards in accordance with national circumstances.

¹⁰ Note that PLRs are largely thought of as national state legislation, but could also encompass subnational ordinance in large federal countries where each state has some autonomy to legislate for its jurisdiction. There can be non-state PLRs too; the private sector typically operates by individual corporate social responsibility policies, as well as collective industry best-practice standards. Indigenous peoples' and local communities' cultural norms could also contribute to addressing and respecting safeguards, in addition to PLRs codified by government.

Box 8.6 Indonesia's experience of translating the Cancun safeguards into the national context as a key input to safeguards information system design

Indonesia's process of translating the Cancun safeguards into the national context revealed that REDD+ safeguards are not new to Indonesia's approach to sustainable forest management. A number of existing policies, laws, regulations (PLRs), and standards were identified within the forest sector that provided a basis for developing national principles, criteria and indicators (PCIs) for the Cancun safeguards.

An evaluation of the various existing mandatory PLRs and voluntary instruments was an important initial step in determining the content to be provided under each safeguard in the Indonesian safeguards information system (SIS). The evaluation was carried out using the following criteria:

- relevance to the Cancun safeguards with respect to how they could be applied taking into consideration technical feasibility, potential of effectiveness under ideal conditions, and current practices relating to implementation and effectiveness;
- limitations with regards to the scope of the existing instruments; and
- effectiveness of these instruments when applied at varying scales and subnational contexts.

The result of this evaluation process provided a strong and reliable basis for developing a set of PCIs for SIS-REDD+ in Indonesia. Clusters of emerging elements were identified, linked to the Cancun safeguards and mapped into a PCI framework, which made reference to the existing instruments for forest management. Seven principles, 17 criteria and 32 indicators have been identified for Indonesia's SIS.

Source: [CSE \(2013\)](#)

Table 8.7 presents illustrative examples of key issues that may come up when clarifying the Cancun safeguards and could inform country-specific descriptions of each safeguard in accordance with their national circumstances.

Table 8.7 Illustrative framework for clarifying the Cancun safeguards

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (a) - [REDD+] actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistency with international commitments on climate; contribution to national climate policy objectives, including those of mitigation and adaptation strategies; ● Consistency with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals; contribution to national poverty reduction strategies; ● Consistency with international commitments on the environment; contribution to national biodiversity conservation policies (including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans) and other environmental and natural resource management policy objectives; ● Consistency with State's human rights obligations under international law, including the core international human rights treaties¹¹ and ILO 169¹², where applicable; ● Consistency and complementarities with the objectives of the national forest programme; ● Coordination among agencies and implementing bodies for REDD+, national forest programmes and policies that enact the relevant international conventions and agreements; ● Consistency with other relevant international conventions and agreements.
Safeguard (b) - Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to information ● Accountability ● Land tenure ● Enforcement of the rule of law ● Adequate access to justice, including procedures that can provide effective remedy for infringement of rights, and to resolve disputes (i.e., grievance mechanisms) (NB: overlaps with Safeguard (c)). ● Gender equality ● Coherence of national/subnational legal, policy and regulatory framework for transparent and effective forest governance ● Corruption risks ● Resource allocation/capacity to meet institutional mandate ● Participation in decision-making processes (overlaps with Safeguards (c) and (d))

11 These include the following: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (2003), International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2010), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008).

12 The [Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 \(No. 169\)](#), the only international treaty open for ratification that deals exclusively with the rights of these peoples.

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Definition/determination of indigenous peoples and local communities ● Recognition of rights to lands, territories and resources ● Right to compensation and/or other remedies in the case of involuntary resettlement and/or economic displacement ● Right to share in benefits when appropriate ● Right to self-determination ● Right to participate in decision making on issues that may affect them ● Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) ● Recognition and protection of indigenous peoples' and local communities' traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, intellectual property
Safeguard (d) - The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities [in REDD+ PAMs]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of relevant stakeholders - those who may affect, or be affected by, specific REDD+ PAMs ● Legitimacy and accountability of bodies representing relevant stakeholders ● Mechanisms or platforms to facilitate participatory processes during 1) design, implementation and monitoring of REDD+ architecture, particularly national strategies/action plans, and associated social and environmental safeguard measures ● Functional feedback and grievance redress mechanisms ● Recognition and implementation of procedural rights, such as access to information, consultation and participation (including FPIC) and provision of justice ● Transparency and accessibility of information related to REDD+ (NB: overlaps with Safeguard (b))
Safeguard (e) - [REDD+] actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that REDD+ actions 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Definition of natural forest (consistent across legal framework, forest reference/ forest reference emission levels (FREL/FRL), NS/AP) and understanding of the spatial distribution of natural forest ● Design, prioritization and implementation of REDD+ actions in a way that avoids or minimizes adverse impacts, including through indirect land-use change, on natural forests, carbon stocks, biodiversity and other ecosystem services, both within and outside forests, and that instead promotes their conservation ● Design, prioritization and implementation of REDD+ actions in a way that avoids or minimizes adverse social impacts and that promotes and enhances economic and social well-being, with special attention to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups ● REDD+ actions are not used for the conversion of natural forest, including conversion from natural to planted forest ● Where significant deforestation and forest degradation is ongoing, prioritization of REDD+ actions that incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and avoid or minimize degradation of natural forest, over other types of REDD+ actions ● Identification and use of opportunities to incentivize enhanced environmental and social benefits through the way REDD+ actions are designed, located and implemented; ● Promotion of actions that involve the management of planted and natural forests to maintain or restore biodiversity and ecosystem services
Safeguard (f) - Actions to address the risks of reversals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selection and design of REDD+ actions, taking into account the risk of reversals; this may involve consideration of the long-term financial and ecological sustainability of planned actions, legal and regulatory frameworks including tenure, support and ownership among stakeholders, and potential changes in environmental conditions and the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and the barriers to sustainable management, conservation, enhancement of forest carbon stocks; ● Design, prioritization and implementation of REDD+ actions that address the underlying and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and barriers to sustainable management, conservation, enhancement of forest carbon stocks and land use change rather than only addressing direct drivers at specific locations ● Analysis of the risk of reversals of emissions reductions, also referred to as 'non-permanence' ● National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) - including satellite land monitoring system, national forest inventory, GHG-inventory- designed, maintained and implemented with the appropriate frequency to detect and provide information on reversals and to perform the functions of monitoring, measuring and reporting results of REDD+ PAMs

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (g) - Actions to reduce displacement of emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preparation, endorsement and continuous updating of a REDD+ NS/AP covering the entire national territory; ● Plan to move towards national scale REDD+ implementation, including all significant REDD+ activities ● Design, prioritization and implementation of REDD+ actions that address the underlying and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and barriers to the conservation, enhancement, and sustainable management of forests, as well as other land-use changes, rather than only addressing direct drivers at specific locations ● Design, prioritization and implementation of actions to reduce displacement of emissions from specific REDD+ actions at the local, sub-national and national scales, taking into account the potential impacts of REDD+ actions on livelihoods, as well as the demand for and supply of forest and agricultural products ● Selection and design of REDD+ actions taking into consideration the risk of emissions displacement; displacement risk analysis for the selected REDD+ actions, including risk of emissions displacement to other ecosystems, e.g. through draining of peatlands for agricultural use or displacement of pressures on forests to another region or area ● NFMS designed, maintained and implemented with the appropriate frequency to detect and provide information on displacement (i.e. to detect land use changes) at national, subnational and local levels, and human resources and technical capacities institutionalized ● Analysis of possible reasons for displacement of emissions, such as ineffective implementation of REDD+ actions, or REDD+ actions that are not designed to address underlying (local, subnational, national) drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and the barriers to sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks

The breakdown of the broad *principles* embodied in the Cancun safeguards into country-specific themes or key issues, such as those illustrative examples included in Table 8.7, can be used to develop *criteria, indicators or narrative statements* as a means to document what the safeguards mean in the country context. A clarification of the safeguards can also be central to the design of a country's SIS (see determining information structure below and Box 8.6) and preparation of summaries of safeguards information.

In addition to clarifying the Cancun safeguards, another potential step in addressing the safeguards is documenting and conducting an assessment of how effectively the existing PLRs address, on

paper, the benefits and risks of planned REDD+ PAMs in a country, with findings being validated through stakeholder workshops. This assessment should identify any significant weaknesses, gaps and inconsistencies in the PLR framework that may need to be strengthened, filled or resolved in order to better address Cancun safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation. Based on the findings of such an assessment, existing texts of laws might be amended or new provisions drafted in order to strengthen the PLR framework, or new regulations drafted to support the operationalization of PLRs. These processes are often time-consuming, and as such it may be a good idea to build on ongoing reform processes.



REFLECTION POINT

How do the potential key issues shown in Table 8.7 relate to some of the proposed REDD+ PAMs in your evolving NS/AP? What are some of the priority benefits and risks associated with proposed REDD+ PAMs, and how could key PLRs address these?

REDD+ PAM	Potential benefit or risk	Relevant PLR	Relevant key issue(s) and safeguard(s)

iii. Respecting safeguards

As with ‘addressing’ the safeguards, what it means to ‘respect’ them will depend on the country. There is a growing consensus, however, that to respect safeguards means ensuring effective application of relevant PLRs, through associated institutional capacities, such that they are implemented in practice and effect real and positive outcomes on the ground. In the context of the conceptual framework for country approaches as illustrated in Figure 8.4 this may entail demonstrating: a) how well the PLRs identified under ‘addressing’ are actually being implemented in practice; and b) the environmental and social outcomes of PLR implementation. Do the PLRs put in place to mitigate, manage or remove environmental and social risks of REDD+, and enhance the benefits, actually work in practice? Generic steps identified and taken by various countries to assess whether – and how – they respect REDD+ safeguards are similar to those used for addressing the safeguards:

- a. Assessing institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to implement PLRs, and their operation in practice; and
- b. Strengthening those institutional arrangements to improve PLR implementation.

Assessing government institutional capacities to implement national and subnational PLRs may, ultimately, involve collecting information on the outcomes of REDD+ implementation in terms of social and environmental benefits and attempting to link them to the institutions’ effectiveness in supporting PLR implementation.

Assessing institutional capacities is likely to be more challenging than identifying how PLRs address safeguards on paper, but periodic assessment should be able to demonstrate incremental improvements in respecting safeguards, which can help assure those entities providing REDD+ RBPs that the risks are being avoided, or mitigated, and the benefits enhanced. As with PLR assessments, the results of institutional capacity assessments for respecting safeguards might best be shared and validated through a multi-stakeholder consultation process (see Section IV below).

Box 8.8 summarises how Mexico has assessed existing governance arrangements (both PLRs and institutional capacities to implement them) as a key step to addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards.

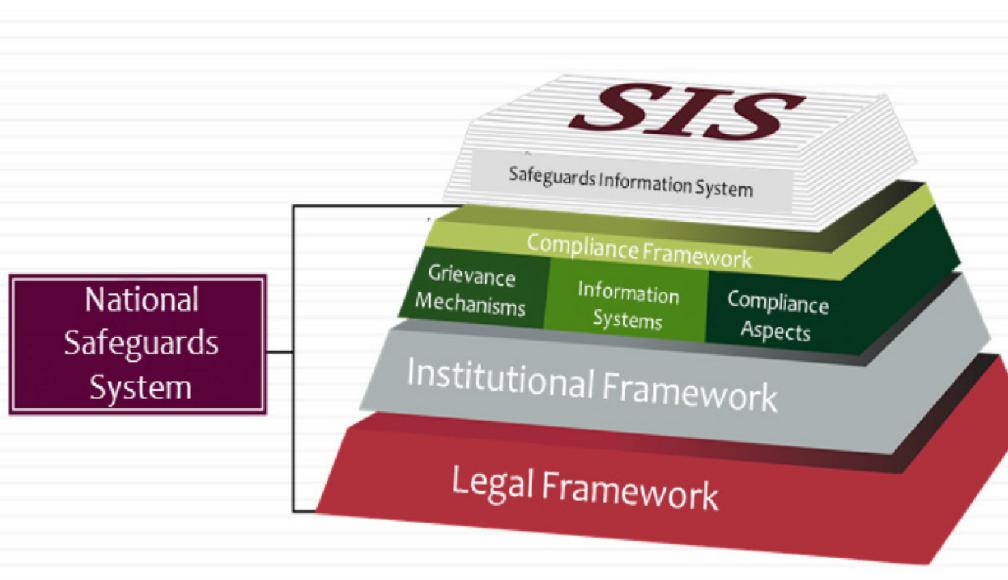
Box 8.8 Mexico’s experience with identifying and assessing existing governance arrangements to address and respect safeguards

Mexico’s draft National REDD+ Strategy outlines the development of a National Safeguard System (NSS). The three elements that make up Mexico’s NSS are the:

1. legal framework: serves to define how safeguards are to be adhered to when implementing REDD+ activities;
2. institutional framework: serves to define who will be responsible for ensuring safeguards are adhered to when implementing REDD+ activities; and
3. compliance framework: serves to ensure compliance with the safeguards, and is composed of three sub-elements:
 - information systems;
 - grievance redress mechanisms; and
 - non-compliance mechanisms.

To design the NSS it was important to carry out the identification and analysis of the existing legal, institutional and compliance frameworks in order to identify which aspects of these frameworks are relevant to REDD+ safeguards, i.e. what specific aspects exist in the legislation, procedures and institutions to ensure compliance with the safeguards and facilitate their reporting. The analysis of the legal framework for REDD+ safeguards was conducted in 2013. In 2014, Mexico started analysis of existing information systems, which might contribute to design of a SIS, with initial focus on the reporting mechanism provided for in the existing Planning Act (which aims to systematize information reported at the federal level).

Mexico has subsequently developed an inventory of existing information systems and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, derived from and linked to, the national and international legal framework to see if these are relevant to the SIS. The results of analysis of the relevant legal framework were used as a key input to determine which systems and mechanisms would be explored.

Figure 8.9 Mexico's National Safeguards System

Sources: [CONAFOR \(2014\)](#); CONAFOR (pers. comm. 2015)

iv. Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders - and facilitation of their informed participation in REDD+ processes - is essential for developing inclusive and transparent country approaches to safeguards (see also **Module 11: Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+**). The success of a country's approach to safeguards and its resulting products (e.g. SIS, summaries of information, any other domestic reporting) will, to a large extent, depend on stakeholder engagement and ownership across a wide range of constituencies, particularly national and subnational government, private sector, civil society, and women, men and youth of indigenous peoples and local communities. Consulting with a diverse range of stakeholders in this process, ensuring all relevant groups are represented and free to express their ideas and opinions, can also contribute to respecting Cancun safeguard (d) itself. Furthermore, targeted and gender-responsive¹³ involvement of stakeholders at different steps of a country approach to safeguards process, such as during the review of technical assessments, presents opportunities for ongoing improvement.

¹³ Gender-responsive approaches proactively identify, understand, and implement interventions to address gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. Gender responsiveness in application attempts to re-define women and men's gender roles and relations and contributes pro-actively and intentionally to the advancement of gender equality. More than 'doing no harm', a gender-responsive policy, programme, plan or project aims to 'do better'.

Two main issues are emerging from countries' initial experiences from engaging stakeholders in their country approaches to safeguards. These are the need to:

1. **Raise awareness and build capacities** on UNFCCC (and other, as relevant) safeguards requirements, thematic issues and stakeholder responsibilities, to engage stakeholders in safeguards processes. Awareness raising, capacity building and dissemination activities are critical throughout the entire process of a country approach to safeguards, and require dedicated human, financial and time resources to yield effective results.
2. **Ensure consultation and participation** in decision-making processes in a cost-effective way throughout country approaches to safeguards. Key consultative or participatory steps in country approaches to safeguards can encourage broad stakeholder ownership and support for safeguards, and REDD+ in general. Relevant stakeholders will, in part, be determined by the REDD+ PAMs comprising the evolving NS/AP (e.g. at national, subnational local level). Experience indicates that the presence of national government-led technical and/or political coordinating bodies is highly conducive to advancing multi-stakeholder safeguards processes.

An example of how one country - Tanzania - has engaged stakeholders as part of a country approach to safeguards is given in Box 8.10.



REFLECTION POINT

Select two or three PLRs from the previous reflection point. How are these PLRs implemented? Do they work in practice?

Box 8.10 Tanzania's experience in stakeholder consultation and capacity building as an integral part of a country approach to safeguards

Under the National REDD+ Task Force, a technical working group was established to take part in the REDD+ safeguards development process. The National REDD+ Task Force oversees the country safeguards approach and provides guidance to the technical working group on how best the process could be accomplished. Members of both teams (i.e. technical working group and National REDD+ Task Force) were trained on the subject of safeguards prior to engaging in the process.

Consultations were held at the subnational level, while stakeholders attending these meetings were trained on REDD+ safeguards and the country's approach before engaging in discussions on the principles, criteria and indicators framework. This framework encompasses the risks that would need to be mitigated, and the benefits that could be enhanced, when implementing all proposed REDD+ actions, irrespective of financing source.

In addition, consultations were held at the sectoral level with actors and agents in forestry, agriculture, livestock, lands, environment, local government and local communities, as well as with bodies such as the Members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Standing Committee of the Parliament and that of the National Climate Change Steering and Technical Committees.

The process of developing REDD+ safeguards has not yet been completed and it is envisaged that more stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, will have their capacity built in order to embark on development of the country's SIS. Stakeholders will also be part of a process to discuss how REDD+ is mainstreamed into the sector plans and programmes in Tanzania.

v. Safeguard information systems and summaries of safeguards information

Key elements and expected outputs of a country approach to safeguards include the development of a safeguards information system and summaries of safeguards information, both of which are requirements for countries under the UNFCCC. These elements are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

SAFEGUARD INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A SIS is one of the four core elements for REDD+ implementation, agreed under the UNFCCC (COP 16), that need to be in place in order for a country to access RBPs.

Further guidance on SIS design was provided at COP 17 in Durban (see Box 8.11) and at COP 19 in Warsaw.

Box 8.11 Guidance on SIS design from COP 17, held in Durban in 2011

“[The COP] Agrees that systems for providing information on how the safeguards ... are addressed and respected should ...

- a. Be consistent with the [Cancun guidance for policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to REDD+];
- b. Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;
- c. Be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;
- d. Provide information on how all of the [Cancun safeguards] are being addressed and respected;
- e. Be country-driven and implemented at the national level;
- f. Build upon existing systems, as appropriate”

Source: UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 2

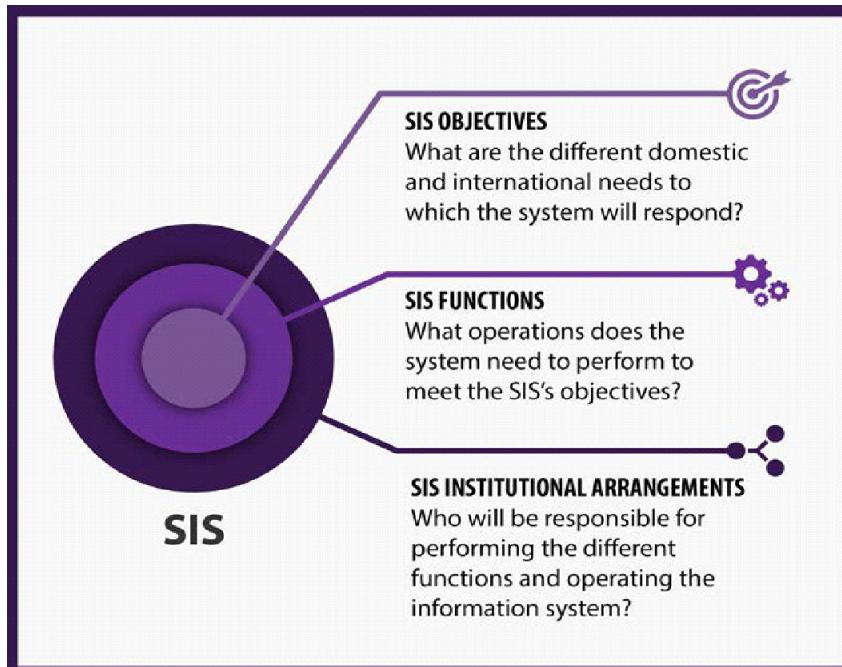
The broad nature of the principles in the UNFCCC guidance does not answer three priority questions typically asked by countries when considering design of a SIS:

- What does a SIS look like?
- How do we go about designing one?

- How much will a SIS cost to build and operate?

A number of key [SIS design elements](#) have, however, begun to emerge from initial country experiences and stakeholder perspectives on this issue (Figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12 Key safeguards information system design elements



Potential steps to develop a safeguards information system

An iterative approach to developing a country approach to safeguards is advisable. This should take into consideration the country's goals and scope for REDD+ safeguards, and consider what is already in place, building on the results of each successive step. The same is true for the development of a SIS; each country's SIS will differ according to its national circumstances, including other elements of its broader approach to safeguards.

While the specifics of SIS design and operation will necessarily vary country by country, three key elements of SIS design are identified based on initial country experiences as outlined in Figure 8.11 above. Throughout the process, stakeholder engagement, with state and non-state actors (see Section IV above), will be important. The three elements are: defining SIS objectives; determining information needs and structure; and assessing existing information sources or systems relevant to safeguards. They are discussed in turn below.

Defining SIS objectives

This may entail the different domestic and international information needs to which the SIS should respond, and at a minimum would include the UNFCCC requirement of providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ PAMs. Information on how environmental and social benefits and risks are being managed in forestry and other land-use sectors could also contribute to a range of other domestic objectives, such as:

- providing information to address reputational risk for donors funding readiness and demonstration phases of REDD+;
- attracting financing by demonstrating reduction in risks for (both private and public sector) investment in results-based actions for REDD+;
- meeting safeguards requirements of international entities that are likely to make RBPs for REDD+;
- enabling access to funding sources for safeguards-related policy goals, such as sustainable rural development, biodiversity conservation, etc.;

- improving existing information systems' functioning and resultant improvements in information quality;
- improving NS/AP implementation by informing the design of more environmentally sustainable and socially equitable REDD+ PAMs;
- enhancing domestic legitimacy of REDD+ by increasing transparency through full, effective and gender responsive stakeholder engagement in various aspects of SIS design and operations, as well as provision of available and accessible information to domestic stakeholders;
- contributing to evidence-based policy reform in various sectors – forestry, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, etc.;
- contributing to demonstrating compliance with other international conventions beyond that for climate change; and strengthening institutional capacities of existing or planned information systems

An example of how SIS objectives have been identified in Costa Rica is given in Box 8.13.

Box 8.13 Costa Rica's proposed objectives for its safeguards information system

Costa Rica's SIS is expected to serve national objectives first and foremost. The national SIS will require institutional structures responsible for compiling, adding and packaging information for these various reporting objectives:

1. **Collect and submit relevant information to show the UNFCCC how the safeguards adopted by COP 16 are addressed and respected during the implementation of REDD+ PAMs;**
3. **Allow for taking timely decisions on risks that must be addressed;**
- a. **Contribute to the preparation of country reports related to the state of the environment through the National System of Environmental Information (SINIA) official platform and ensuring the use of its protocols to generate quality information; and**
4. **Offer information accessible to different relevant REDD+ stakeholders, including agencies that constitute sources of funding and cooperation.**

Source: [FONAFIFO \(2015\)](#)

Determining information needs and structure

This could include identifying key issues from the national clarification of the Cancun safeguards, and deciding on a framework for structuring and aggregating the information within the SIS. This step comprises two inter-related sub-steps that need to be considered together:

- **Information needs** – what specific information is needed, in relation to the specific benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ PAMs, to demonstrate appropriate PLRs are in place (addressing safeguards) and are being adequately implemented (respecting safeguards); and
- **Information structure** – how will this information be aggregated and organized in the SIS?

Safeguards information needs will be determined by the identified benefits and risks of REDD+ PAMs, together with the PLRs required to mitigate these risks and maximize the benefits. A country need not attempt to compile information on all possible aspects of each safeguard, but can focus efforts on compiling the information most relevant to priority benefits and risks associated with key REDD+ PAMs comprising the NS/AP. Of course, those PAMs and priorities may change over time, and safeguards information needs can be expected to evolve with a phased implementation of the NS/AP as different REDD+ PAMs are implemented.

Based on identified information needs, existing sources of information should be identified and assessed, and if necessary, means of collecting new information should be accommodated to help fill information gaps, and in order to demonstrate that all Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected.

The information structure will depend on many factors including, among other things:

- The scope of safeguard application chosen by the country;
- The scale¹⁴ of REDD+ intervention (national, subnational or local);

¹⁴ The UNFCCC calls for a national-level SIS, but the NS/AP may be operationalized through a variety of different modalities of differing scales, e.g. national-level policy intervention; subnational land-use planning; registry of site-based projects; hybrid of these and other modalities; etc. Information for the SIS may be generated/available at a subnational level; aggregation of information from different geographic scales will be an important consideration when determining the information content and structure of the SIS.

- The specific objectives of the SIS and the different end users of the information; and
- The capacity and resources available to existing institutions that will comprise the SIS.

Two basic options present themselves on how to structure information in a SIS:

- i. A narrative description of how the key elements of each safeguard have been addressed and respected, through policies, laws, regulations and their implementation on the ground. This would likely rely on the clarification of the safeguards; or
- ii. A hierarchical structure of principles, criteria and/or indicators.

Although not required by any UNFCCC COP decision, some countries working towards articulating their SIS have chosen to structure information in a hierarchical form, comprising one or more of the following components (which are sometimes collectively referred to as PCIs):

- **Principles (P)** – broad aspirational statements of intent, i.e. statements of objective. A number of countries are choosing to adopt, or adapt and augment, the Cancun safeguards as national REDD+ safeguard principles.
- **Criteria (Cl)** – more specific statements of thematic content that elaborate the principles. The step of clarifying the Cancun safeguards, in effect, could establish sets of criteria for each safeguard.
- **Indicators (I)** – detailed information used to demonstrate changes over time. Wherever possible, identification of indicators should be based on existing sources of information. Novel indicators may be considered in cases where a distinct information need to demonstrate safeguards are being respected is not met by existing sources¹⁵.

When taking decisions on what exactly to assess, in terms of demonstrating safeguards have been addressed and respected, (e.g. how many indicators to use, or the extent of any field-based research), it is important to take into account capacity and resource limitations or needs, keeping

in mind that developing an SIS is likely to be a stepwise process. An example of how information has been structured in Malaysia's SIS design is given in Box 8.14.

Box 8.14 Structuring safeguards information using existing systems and sources in Malaysia

The scope of Malaysia's national REDD+ strategy, at least in its first iteration, is focused on the 'plus' activities of REDD+, specifically sustainable management of forests and carbon stock conservation. Given this intended scope, an existing framework of principles, criteria and indicators (PCIs), based on the existing Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS), will be applied so as to structure information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected. Malaysia is also considering incorporating the relevant Aichi Targets (for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity) into their safeguards information structure.

The MTCS comprises nine principles, 47 criteria, 97 indicators and 307 verifiers of sustainable forest management (SFM). Five of the existing SFM principles under this certification scheme have been assessed to be directly related to the Cancun safeguards:

Principle 1: Compliance with laws and principles

Principle 2: Tenure and use rights and responsibilities

Principle 3: Indigenous peoples' rights

Principle 4: Community relations and worker's rights

Principle 5: Benefits from the forest

Periodic reviews of the PCIs, with the engagement of civil society and grassroots stakeholders, have already taken place; the most recent review was in 2012. The PCIs of the existing SFM certification scheme are expected to be revised again in 2017 to be more REDD+-relevant (in terms of safeguards as well as measurement, reporting and verification of emissions reductions and enhanced removals).

The approach to structuring for information contained within the SIS, which is currently in the final stages of stakeholder consultation, is envisaged to have three main components:

1. narrative descriptions of the interpretation of each Cancun safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;
2. progress against PCIs drawing largely from the existing MTCS (which includes third party audits) for subnational information on environmental and social safeguard processes and outcomes, coupled with national-level information on policy implementation; and
3. feedback from the public to foster transparency and more reliable information.

Sources: UN-REDD Programme (2015)

¹⁵ Some countries, however, have chosen to establish large numbers of novel indicators for their SIS; and there is growing concern about the sustainability - due to a lack of institutional mandate and operational budget to collect information against these novel indicators - of this approach.



REFLECTION POINT

How might information be structured in your country's SIS?

Assessing existing information sources or systems relevant to safeguards

In order to make best use of the country's existing information systems and sources, and ensure sustainability, countries should, to the extent possible, 'build upon existing systems' in order to meet their safeguards information needs. The mandates and reporting responsibilities (e.g. to international conventions) of institutions involved in REDD+ can help identify systems and sources of relevance to the SIS. As mentioned above, undertaking an assessment of PLRs related to safeguards can help map out these institutional mandates and responsibilities.

An assessment of information systems and sources should not only identify existing information, but also information gaps and analyse whether modifications to accommodate new information needs are feasible, such as adding or amending indicators, or adjusting information collection methods. An important consideration in the compilation of safeguards information to enable an assessment of how safeguards have been respected in practice, is the scale and resolution at which the information is generated and whether this scale and resolution is commensurate with that of REDD+ implementation. A number of countries, for example, are opting to design national REDD+ registries in such a way that project-level initiatives are required to document how they address and respect safeguards; these could constitute a valuable source of site-specific information for a SIS. Another evolving information system of potential relevance to the SIS is the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS); the extent to which it can contribute information relevant to safeguards will depend on country circumstances, and the design of the NFMS, including for instance whether it tracks changes in natural forests. Given the array of themes covered by the safeguards, one information system (or source) is unlikely to be able to provide all of the information needed for a SIS.

Examples of information systems and sources that may provide relevant contributions to an SIS include, but are by no means limited to:

- National or subnational policies, laws and regulations;
- National and subnational population censuses;
- Land registries and cadastral databases;
- National forest monitoring processes, including remote sensing/satellite monitoring, forest inventories, and greenhouse gas inventories;

- National and alternative reports to human rights conventions;
- Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMS);
- Sustainable forestry, biofuel, land use and agricultural commodity standards or certification schemes (including auditing reports);
- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA), Timber Legality Assurance Systems (TLAS), etc.;
- Grievance redress mechanisms¹⁶;
- Other government institutions' statistical data;
- Information sources used to assess SFM;
- Systems supporting national implementation of other international conventions, e.g. biodiversity data centres and networks;
- Other sources of relevant nationally validated information, collected by non-state actors such as indigenous peoples, local communities or civil society (e.g. community-based or collaborative forest monitoring); and
- Registries of site-based projects, e.g. expansion of sustainable management of forests through certification of production forest management units.

In assessing existing information sources and systems, two key aspects will be critical:

- i. What **functions** will the SIS need to perform to meet the desired country objectives?
- ii. What **institutional arrangements** are - or need to be - in place to ensure these functions are adequately operational?

Each of these two core aspects is described in more detail here:

- i. What **functions** will the SIS need to perform to meet the desired country objectives?

An effective and operational SIS may perform some or all of the following generic key functions, as decided by the country (Figure 8.14):

- **Information compilation and management**
– primarily concerned with determining what information is to be included in the SIS, where this information will come from and how it will

¹⁶ Grievance redress mechanisms could be a particularly cost-effective source of safeguards information, in particular for safeguards related to social issues and stakeholders' rights, as they can demonstrate how problems have been tackled and resolved, rather than trying to present a more costly comprehensive assessment of how safeguards are being addressed and respected (particularly in terms of demonstrating outcomes on the ground).

be brought together. Also includes identification or selection of information collection and management methods, in addition to assessing the advantages and disadvantages of modifying existing systems to include new information and methods of collection and management;

- **Information analysis and interpretation** – making sense of the information, particularly important if primary/secondary (unprocessed) data are to populate the SIS. Different analyses and interpretations will serve the different objectives of the SIS, including the preparation of a summary of information for submission to the UNFCCC, as well as other domestic information products for different stakeholders at national, subnational and local levels;
 - **Information quality control and assurance** - two entirely optional SIS functions¹⁷, which can also be considered as information verification (at the point of collection – making sure information is accurate) and validation (post-analysis – making sure interpretation of that information is accurate). It should be noted, however, that the quality of the SIS, and the robustness of its information can be significantly improved with inclusion of quality control and/or assurance functions¹⁸; and
 - **Information dissemination¹⁹ and use** – once analysed and interpreted, information should be communicated to, and may be used by, the different target audiences – both international (e.g. donors) and domestic (e.g. local communities) - indicated in the SIS objectives. Information dissemination may involve exploration of a range of technological solutions (such as existing and novel web portals, local radio, mobile telephones, etc.), which provide access to information to different users.
- Assessing safeguards-relevant PLRs can help determine which government (and possibly non-government) institutions are mandated and capacitated to carry out the desired functions of the

SIS (and prepare the summary of information on safeguards).

FIGURE 8.15 Generic safeguards information system functions



The role of non-state actors – such as civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, and the private sector – in complementing government institutional mandates and capacities, could be considered during the process of assigning functional responsibilities within the SIS, e.g. private forest and agricultural landowners, together with indigenous peoples and local communities, could contribute or validate information on outcomes of implementation of REDD+ PAMs; third party verification of practices adhering to sustainable forestry and agricultural commodity standards could provide information on whether the safeguards are being respected; etc.

Compilation, analysis, validation and dissemination of information have all been identified by various countries as important functions to include in SIS design. Countries have also highlighted that, in many cases, the existing information systems and sources they intend to utilize for their SIS already encompass internal analysis and external assessments of the information they collect and provide, and that this should be considered in designing the SIS. Box 8.16 outlines the functions identified by Ecuador for their SIS.

17 There is no UNFCCC requirement to verify or validate safeguards information.

18 Particularly as these functions, compared to others, lend themselves to greater levels of civil society or local community participation (resulting in greater stakeholder trust) in the SIS's operations. To further promote the inclusiveness of quality control and assurance process, countries may wish to ensure more marginalized stakeholders (e.g. women, youth, disabled, poor, etc.) are equitably involved and can effectively contribute to these functions.

19 Information dissemination is the only SIS function required under the UNFCCC. All other potential SIS functions, with the exception of quality control and assurance, are implied, i.e. information cannot be disseminated if it has not first been collected, managed, analysed and interpreted.



REFLECTION POINT

What existing information systems and sources may be able to provide information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected for your SIS?

Box 8.16 Ecuador's safeguard information system functions

Ecuador's SIS is expected to be a flexible and multipurpose system, which provides information on the design and implementation of REDD+ measures and actions. The SIS functions that Ecuador envisions are:

1. **Compilation:** of primary and secondary information, collating information from different sources in relation to the country specific safeguards approach and scope;
2. **Analysis:** of information, which includes processing and synthesizing information;
3. **Revision and validation:** of the safeguard-related environmental and socio-economic information that has been compiled and analysed; and
4. **Report:** on addressing and respecting safeguards, which will entail dissemination of information required under the UNFCCC and for national purposes.

Source: Ministry of Environment of Ecuador et al. (2015)

- ii. What **institutional arrangements** are - and need to be - in place to ensure these functions are adequately operational? The existing PLR framework will define the mandates and functions of existing public institutions that might contribute to the SIS. Consideration should be given to how those mandates and functions operate in practice to see what institutional (financial, human, technological) capacities could be strengthened to improve SIS functioning. This will be particularly relevant when attempting to demonstrate how the safeguards have been respected, which ultimately may necessitate information on outcomes of national PLR implementation.

New institutional arrangements, such as information sharing arrangements, might be considered horizontally, across government line ministries and between departments, and also vertically up (and down) administrative hierarchies, to feed subnational information, from multiple localities, into a single national SIS. Lastly, the role of non-state institutions and actors should also be considered. Industry standards, certification schemes and corporate social responsibility policies, and provision of information on the state of a country's forests and related livelihood outcomes by indigenous

peoples and local communities, could contribute to SIS functions as well as being valuable sources of safeguards information.

Where the assessment of existing information sources or systems has highlighted that some information requirements cannot be met on the basis of what is already available, suitable arrangements may need to be found for closing those gaps. This may involve building the capacity of relevant institutions to collect and manage information on PLR implementation, as well as expanding, changing or creating mandates and protocols for information collection and management.

SUMMARIES OF SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION

Provision of summaries of information on how all the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation is one of the three key safeguards requirements that countries need to meet under the UNFCCC to access RBPs. Summaries of information should be submitted to the UNFCCC via National Communications (or, voluntarily, directly to the UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform) and starting when REDD+ activities are first implemented²⁰. Guidance on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected through the content of summaries of information has subsequently been agreed²¹.

Countries should provide information on which REDD+ activity or activities are included in the summary of information, and are strongly encouraged to include the following elements, where appropriate:

- a. Information on national circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards;
- b. A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;
- c. A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting safeguards, including the SIS, in accordance with national circumstances; and

²⁰ [UNFCCC Decision 12/COP.17, paragraphs 3 and 4](#)

²¹ [UNFCCC Decision 17/COP.21](#)

- d. Information on how each of the safeguards has been addressed and respected, in accordance with national circumstances.

Countries are also encouraged to provide any other relevant information on safeguards in the summary of information, and to improve the information provided over time, taking into account a stepwise approach.

Elements of country approaches to safeguards, including for example a country-specific clarification of the Cancun safeguards, PLR assessment and SIS, can complement the UNFCCC guidance and help countries meet requirements for the summary of information. Similarly to a SIS, a summary of information might take the form of a simple narrative summary, of information summarized according to indicators, or of a detailed PCI framework, or any combination of these structures.

Countries may provide a basic summary of information on how they are respecting and addressing the Cancun safeguards; however, a more detailed summary of information may do more to assure investors in REDD+ activities and buyers of verified emissions reductions/enhanced removals that any social or environmental risks associated with their investments have been mitigated or avoided, and benefits enhanced. REDD+ countries may consider viewing the submission of information on safeguards as an opportunity to showcase what is underway as well as planned (rather than a risk if all Cancun safeguards are not yet comprehensively addressed and respected).²² Summaries of information provide an opportunity for countries to demonstrate to the international community - including donors, civil society and other stakeholders interested in the environmental and social integrity of REDD+ implementation - that safeguards are being addressed and respected. Although domestic stakeholders are likely to have interest in more detailed information than that provided in the summary of information to the UNFCCC, the summary may be of value to some in-country (particularly national-level) stakeholders as well. Furthermore, summaries could form the basis of domestic safeguards information products tailored to specific stakeholders' needs (e.g. subnational government agencies tasked with implementing REDD+ PAMs, private companies investing in results-based actions, or local communities).

Summaries of information can also be viewed as key tools to ensure legitimacy of (and possibly greater levels of financing for) REDD+ as a viable policy option contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of the key steps emerging as good practice from collective experiences of country approaches to safeguards – such as benefit and risk assessments, clarification of Cancun safeguards, and assessments of existing systems, processes, etc. – can be drawn upon to inform the contents of summaries of information.

The only example available to date of a first summary of information submitted to the UNFCCC is that of Brazil, which is described in Box 8.17. Note that Brazil's first summary was submitted before the UNFCCC agreement setting out guidance on contents of summaries of information in 2015 (COP 21).

Box 8.17 Brazil's first summary of safeguards information

Brazil's first summary of information presents how the Cancun safeguards have been applied throughout the implementation of actions for reducing emissions from deforestation in the Amazon biome (through the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Amazon - PPCDAm), and the projects funded with REDD+ RBPs received through the Amazon Fund, between 2006 and 2010. The summary explains how REDD+ Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria, a product of a civil society-led, multi-stakeholder process in 2010, served as a reference for defining the Amazon Fund safeguards, which are then compared to the Cancun safeguards.

The summary of information also describes the existing legal and institutional frameworks that are relevant to addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards, as well as listing some existing environmental information systems that are expected to be relevant in the future development of Brazil's SIS.

This first summary presents itself as a non-exhaustive preliminary assessment of the implementation of the Cancun safeguards by Brazil. The goal is to take the first step towards the creation of an effective dialogue process with Brazilian society about the implementation of Cancun safeguards and about the creation of the SIS, acknowledging that its effective implementation should rely on a gradual and participatory approach.

Source: Brazil Ministry of the Environment (2015)

22 For details about how different elements of a country approach to safeguards could contribute to the contents of summaries of information, see UN-REDD (2016) [Info Brief - Summaries of information: How to demonstrate REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected](#)

UN-REDD SAFEGUARDS TOOLS

The UN-REDD Programme has developed a pair of tools that can support the development of country approaches to safeguards:

Country Approach to Safeguards Tool (CAST)

CAST is an Excel-based, flexible and process-oriented tool, designed to help countries to:

- Make an informed assessment of /plan for development and application of their country approach to safeguards;
- Identify, prioritize and sequence relevant steps in a country approach;
- Identify available information resources; and
- Clarify how the processes under various safeguards initiatives correspond.

CAST can be used at any stage of safeguards planning.

Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT)

BeRT – and its accompanying workshop facilitator's kit – is designed to help countries to:

- Identify benefits and risks associated with REDD+ PAMs, in the context of the Cancun safeguards;
- Determine how the country's existing PLRs already address the risks or promote the benefits identified;
- Identify gaps in the PLR framework that may need to be addressed in order to address and respect the Cancun safeguards in REDD+ implementation;
- Utilize information on the benefits and risks of specific REDD+ PAMs/options to inform decisions on which PAMs to include in the REDD+ NS/AP; and
- Provide content for use in the summary of information on how countries are addressing and respecting the safeguards through existing PLRs.

BeRT is Excel-based, and contains three modules (Table 8.18):

Table 8.18 Three modules of Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT)

Module 1	Objective: Documenting REDD+ PAMs that are anticipated in the country (or if this is not clear yet, REDD+ PAMs that might be feasible) and how these fall under the 5 REDD+ activities listed by the UNFCCC. Output: Table of REDD+ PAMs
Module 2	Objective: Identifying the potential benefits and risks of the REDD+ PAMs documented in Module 1. Output: Table of potential benefits and risks under each of the Cancun safeguards, with a qualitative assessment of the impact and probability of benefits and risks identified.
Module 3	Objective: Identifying existing PLRs that address the benefits and risks; identifying gaps in coverage; and whether there are any PLRs that conflict with the safeguards. Output: Table of existing PLRs that address the Cancun safeguards, an assessment of how well they address the benefits and risks identified and a list of gaps in PLRs.



EXERCISE 15

What are the three fundamental safeguard-related requirements developing countries are required to meet to be eligible for RBPs and what are some possible challenges countries might face in meeting each of these requirements?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.



EXERCISE 16

In the space below write down some examples of benefits and risks of possible REDD+ PAMs specific to your own country context.

REDD+ policy or measure:	
Potential benefits	Potential risks

REDD+ policy or measure:	
Potential benefits	Potential risks



KEY MESSAGES:

- The seven Cancun safeguards are broad aspirational principles that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities “do no harm” to people or the environment, as well as “do good” and enhance social and environmental benefits;
- Developing countries seeking to implement national REDD+ NS/APs under the UNFCCC should meet three fundamental safeguard-related requirements in order to be eligible for RBPs:
- Operationalizing safeguards - countries should ensure REDD+ PAMs, regardless of the source and type of funding, are implemented in a manner consistent with the Cancun safeguards;
- Safeguards information system (SIS) - countries should develop a system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected; and
- Summaries of information - countries should provide summaries of information to the UNFCCC on how all the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ PAMs.
- Individual countries will need to work out how the safeguards will be applied - or operationalized - in their own specific contexts. There is no blueprint for a country approach; each will be different and will reflect the specificities of national contexts as well as what the country defines as the overall goals and scope of safeguards application.
- There are two main areas of synergy between safeguards work and other pillars of the Warsaw Framework: the NS/AP and the NFMS. Early on in both NS/AP and safeguards processes, an assessment of environmental and social benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ PAMs can serve to sharpen the scope of both work areas and strengthen the selection and design of strategic options comprising the NS/AP. PLRs identified as addressing the safeguards may also contribute to REDD+ implementation overall, i.e. they might constitute some of the PAMs described in the NS/AP. The NFMS may contribute information relevant to some of the Cancun safeguards, notably (e – natural forest), (f - reversals) and (g - displacement), for example on forest cover change resulting from REDD+ PAMs, including whether natural forests are being converted.



WHAT FURTHER QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THIS TOPIC?



NOTES



NOTES

References and resources

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Key Resources:

- The following key resources are available from the UN-REDD Programme’s Collaborative Online Workspace, at <http://www.unredd.net/>:
- Technical Brief 2: Conceptual framework for country approaches to safeguards ([English](#)). Overview summary of generic, good practice approaches to safeguards using existing, in-country governance arrangements.
- Technical Resource Series 1 - REDD+ Safeguards Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations ([English/Français/Español](#)). Provides a synthesis of stakeholder perspectives on SIS design considerations, complementing and elaborating on the guidance provided by the UNFCCC.
- Technical Brief 1: REDD+ Safeguards Information Systems: practical design considerations ([English/Français/Español](#)). Summarises the above.
- Technical Resource Series 2 - Country Approaches to REDD+ Safeguards: A global review of Initial Experiences and Emerging Lessons ([English/French/Spanish](#)). Presents an overview of progress towards meeting UNFCCC safeguards requirements; includes country factsheets and case studies.
- Info Brief 4 - Country Approaches to Safeguards: Initial Experiences and Emerging Lessons ([English/Français/Español](#)). Summarises the above.
- Info Brief 5 - Summaries of information: How to demonstrate REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected ([English](#)). Elaborates on UNFCCC guidance, indicating possible content of summaries of information by drawing on key elements of country approaches to safeguards.
- Benefit and Risk Tool ([BeRT](#)). Helps REDD+ countries to: a) assess the social and environmental risks and benefits associated with potential REDD+ PAMs; and b) analyse how existing policies, laws and regulations address the Cancun safeguards.
- Country Approaches to Safeguards Tool ([CAST](#)). An interactive tool that supports REDD+ countries to plan and review their country approach to safeguards via multi-stakeholder processes; CAST is designed to be broadly applied to the full scope of a country’s safeguards-related activities and help countries identify tools and resources available to support each activity or area of work.

Other web resources:

- REDD+ Web Platform, at <http://redd.unfccc.int/>. The UNFCCC's hub for sharing information and lessons learned about REDD+ activities.
- UNFCCC website, at <https://unfccc.int/2860.php> (not unfccc.int). A source of background information on the convention and REDD+.

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International Environment House,
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CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland.

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Website: www.un-redd.org

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