

TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF REDD+ UNDER THE UNFCCC

A UN-REDD PROGRAMME DOCUMENT TO FOSTER A
COMMON APPROACH OF REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

UN-REDD PROGRAMME



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The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation 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.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) has emerged as a forest-based climate change mitigation approach for developing countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Guidance from the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) on REDD+ has been developed through successive agreements by Parties since 2007, with the most substantial guidance, comprising seven decisions, adopted through the 'Warsaw Framework for REDD+' at COP19 in November 2013. Taken with earlier COP decisions, the UNFCCC set out what can be considered as the 'REDD+ rulebook'.

Both the role of forests to mitigate climate change as well as the importance of Results-Based Payments (RBPs) / Results-Based Finance (RBF) for REDD+ were then strongly recognised in the Paris Outcome emerging from COP21 in December 2015. With REDD+ having been enshrined as a core element of the global climate regime going forward, there is renewed momentum for REDD+.

The UN-REDD Programme has been operational since 2008 as a multilateral REDD+ capacity building support programme for developing countries, yet because the UNFCCC guidance on REDD+ was not complete until the end of 2013, there has been no comprehensive guidance document on REDD+ for interested stakeholders and / or REDD+ practitioners to refer to. This detailed document is the first of its kind and addresses the absence of a common knowledge base as a reference for REDD+ practitioners. Its objectives are twofold, to:

1. Summarize the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC; and
2. Foster a common understanding of the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC.

Following a brief introduction and objectives section, the evolution and current status of REDD+ is set out in detail (Section 2), including an overview of relevant UNFCCC COP decisions¹. Section 3 then reviews important REDD+ concepts, including descriptions of the following:

- **Scope of REDD+:** Description of the five REDD+ activities (Section 3.1)
- **Phased approach to implementation:** The three non-discrete phases that allow for an iterative approach to REDD+ implementation (Section 3.2):
 - In Phase I (readiness);
 - In Phase II (implementation);
 - In Phase III (results-based actions);
- **Identifying the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and the barriers to conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks** (section 3.3):
- **Four REDD+ elements:** Countries are requested to have the following elements in place for REDD+ implementation and to access RBPs / RBF (section 5):
 1. A National Strategy or Action Plan (NS / AP) (section 3.4.1);
 2. A national Forest Reference Emission Level / Forest Reference Level (FREL / FRL) (section 3.4.2);
 3. A robust and transparent National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) (section 3.4.3);
 4. A Safeguards Information System (SIS) (section 3.4.4).

¹ This document will be updated periodically as new UNFCCC COP decisions related to REDD+ are agreed.

Section 4 sets out the information requirements for countries implementing REDD+ activities and seeking RBPs / RBF for REDD+ under the UNFCCC, as well as the assessment and analysis processes for this information. There are six required 'information streams' to be made available by countries and published by the UNFCCC Secretariat on the information hub:

- A link to the **national strategy or action plan**;
- **FREL / FRL**: The assessed FREL / FRL and a link to the final report of the technical assessment team;
- A **description of the NFMS** as provided in the technical annex of the Biennial Update Report (BUR);
- A summary of **information on how the REDD+ safeguards** are being addressed and respected;
- **Reported results**: the results for each relevant period expressed in tCO₂e/year and a link to the technical report of the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) LULUCF experts who have conducted the technical analysis of the BUR technical annex;
- Additional information on RBPs / RBF: the **quantity of results** for which payments were received, expressed in tCO₂e/year, and the entity paying for the results.

The final substantive section (Section 5) sets out the required systems and processes that countries should have in place to access REDD+ RBPs / RBF, as set out in the Warsaw Framework. REDD+ actions should be fully measured, reported and verified in order to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF. The key role of the Green Climate Fund in channelling financial resources to developing countries is also reviewed, including how ex-post RBPs / RBF for REDD+ may be distributed, including the accreditation process. This document also addresses the nature of emission reductions from REDD+ and the importance of engaging the private sector. Section 6 provides a summary and conclusion followed by a link to a comprehensive glossary of REDD+key terms.

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ACRONYMS

AD	Activity Data	LDCs	Least Developed Countries
AP	Action Plan	MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
BURs	Biennial Update Reports	LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
CCBA	Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance	M & MRV	Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism	NAMAs	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
CH₄	Methane	NC	National Communication
CO₂	Carbon Dioxide	NCB	Non-Carbon Benefits
CO₂e	Carbon Dioxide equivalent	NFI	National Forest Inventory
COP	Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC	NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
DDFD	Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DNA	Designated National Authority	NS	National Strategy
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
EF	Emission Factors	PLRs	Policies, Laws and Regulations
ER	Emission Reduction	PMS	Performance Management Framework
ER Programme	Emission Reduction Programme	RBAs	Results-Based Actions
ER-PIN	Emission Reduction Program Idea Note	RBF	Results-Based Finance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	RBPs	Results-Based Payments
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
FCPF CF MF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Carbon Fund Methodological Framework	REM	REDD+ Early Movers (KfW)
FIP	Forest Investment Program	R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent	SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
FREL	Forest Reference Emission Level	SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
FRL	Forest Reference Level	SES	Social and Environmental Safeguards
GOFC/ GOLD	Global Observation for Forest Cover and Land Dynamics	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
GCF	Green Climate Fund	SIS	Safeguards Information System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas	SLMS	Satellite Land Monitoring System
GRIF	Guyana's REDD+ Investment Fund	SMF	Sustainable Management of Forests
IAR	Institutional Assessment and Review	TA	Technical Assessment
ICA	International Consultation and Analysis	TTE	Technical Team of Experts
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project	UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IP	Indigenous peoples	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
IPCC GPG	IPCC Good Practice Guidance	UN-REDD	The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
ITMO	Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes	VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
JI	Joint Implementation	WFR	Warsaw Framework for REDD+
KfW	German Development Bank		
KP	Kyoto Protocol		



INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The target audience of this document are REDD+ practitioners.
- The two specific objectives of the document are to:
 1. Provide an overview of the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC;
 2. Set up a common understanding of REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

1

“Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action” or REDD (later evolving to REDD+) was first introduced into the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) agenda at its eleventh session in Montreal (December 2005)². As a result of the negotiations that followed, REDD evolved to become REDD+, a forest-based climate change mitigation approach that aims to incentivise developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserve forest carbon stocks, sustainably manage forests and enhance forest carbon stocks. REDD+ aims to provide incentives for developing countries to undertake actions to protect, better manage and sustainably use their forest resources. In doing so, developing countries will contribute directly to mitigating anthropogenic climate change and have the potential to enhance other forest-related ecosystem services.

The United Nations collaborative programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries, the UN-REDD 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 developing countries’ efforts to contribute to climate change mitigation through the implementation of REDD+ activities as agreed under the UNFCCC. The Programme does this by providing advisory and technical support services that are tailored to national circumstances and needs of developing countries, in order to promote adherence with UNFCCC guidance and requirements for REDD+.

REDD+ practitioners may benefit from a common understanding of the content and potential implications of the UNFCCC decisions on REDD+ to improve country implementation of the REDD+ process. This technical resource document is aimed at REDD+ practitioners and has two main objectives:

1. Summarize the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC;
2. Foster a common understanding of the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC.

The document is organized into four main sections:

1. Background Information on REDD+ under the UNFCCC;
2. Important REDD+ concepts;
3. REDD+ information requirements under the UNFCCC;
4. Accessing Results-Based Payments (RBPs) / Results-Based Finance (RBF) for results-based actions (RBAs).

2 More detail on the evolution of REDD+ under the UNFCCC is provided in Section 2.

The UN-REDD Programme has also released other publications which cover core areas of the Programme's work in more detail (with more in development). These include, for example:

- National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS): Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (M&MRV) in the context of REDD+ activities³;
- UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)⁴;
- Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities⁵;
- Emerging approaches to Forest Reference Emission Levels and / or Forest Reference Levels (FRELs / FRLs) for REDD+⁶;
- Technical considerations for FREL / FRL construction for REDD+ under the UNFCCC⁷;
- REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems (SIS): practical design considerations.⁸ Summaries of Information: How to demonstrate REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected⁹

For in-depth information on each of these work areas, these documents should be consulted. For other UN-REDD related documents, refer to the UN-REDD website under 'Technical Work Areas'¹⁰ and 'Joint Publications'¹¹.

There are a number of actors operating outside of the UNFCCC context that are implementing an approach to REDD+ which is not necessarily aligned with the UNFCCC REDD+ decisions, particularly in the private sector and voluntary carbon market. This adds complexity to the REDD+ landscape and can make the clear communication of concepts related to REDD+ under the UNFCCC and their implementation more challenging.

Other initiatives related to REDD+ under the UNFCCC are the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility¹² (FCPF) and BioCarbon Fund¹³, as well as the REDD Early Movers (REM) programme¹⁴, although these set out specific conditions to access REDD+ RBPs / RBF under each programme or initiative.. A comparative analysis focused on the REDD+ UNFCCC requirements and the requirements of the FCPF Carbon Fund, but also briefly covering REM as well, is currently being prepared by the UN-REDD Programme and will be available in 2016.

3 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=10305&Itemid=53

4 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=8717&Itemid=53

5 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=6862&Itemid=53

6 Available at http://unfccc.int/files/methods/redd/redd_web_platform/application/pdf/redd_20141113_unredd_frel.pdf

7 Available at https://unfccc.int/files/land_use_and_climate_change/application/pdf/

[redd_20150804_unredd_technical_considerations_frel_under_unfccc_en.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/land_use_and_climate_change/application/pdf/redd_20150804_unredd_technical_considerations_frel_under_unfccc_en.pdf)

8 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=document&alias=15043-technical-resource-series-1-redd-safeguards-information-systems-practical-design-considerations&category_slug=studies-reports-and-publications-1364&layout=default&option=com_docman&Itemid=134

9 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=document&alias=15299-info-brief-summaries-of-information-1-en&category_slug=safeguards-multiple-benefits-297&layout=default&option=com_docman&Itemid=134

10 Available at http://www.un-redd.org/PublicationsResources/tabid/587/Default.aspx#technical_work_areas

11 Available at http://www.un-redd.org/PublicationsResources/tabid/587/Default.aspx#joint_publications

12 Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/>

13 Available at <https://wbcarbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=BioCF&ItemID=9708&FID=9708>

14 Available at <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/33356.html>



Although this paper emphasizes the primacy of the UNFCCC context for REDD+, there are instances throughout the paper where we highlight other key actors and standards, such as prominent voluntary carbon market standards including those of the Verified Carbon Standard¹⁵ (VCS) and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance¹⁶ (CCBA), and REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES¹⁷), as these are in use by some countries supported by UN-REDD and can have important implications for the UNFCCC context.

This document seeks to be fact based, neutral and without prejudice to forthcoming negotiations in the UNFCCC process. The document has been through an extensive consultation process within the Programme. It will be updated on a periodic basis, as required, when further REDD+ decisions are adopted by the UNFCCC.

15 Available at <http://www.v-c-s.org/>

16 Available at <http://www.climate-standards.org/>

17 Available at <http://www.redd-standards.org/>



Photo: Doree Marmitis

REDD+ UNDER THE UNFCCC

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
- Overview of REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC.
- The 'REDD+ rulebook' collates all of the UNFCCC REDD+ decisions.

2

2.1 GENERAL CONTEXT

Anthropogenic climate change is a consequence of large volumes of GHGs being released into the atmosphere as a result of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and land-use change, including the destruction of forests. GHGs act to trap energy from the sun as heat, and this in turn affects the global climate system. The main anthropogenic GHGs and drivers of climate change are carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄).

Rising concern about the effects of these emissions on the climate led to the negotiation of the UNFCCC, which entered into force in 1994. It was one of three international conventions adopted in 1992 at the 'Earth Summit' to help set the planet on a more sustainable course. The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

All institutions involved in the international climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC are supported by a Secretariat based in Bonn, Germany. The Conference of the Parties (COP), comprised of country Parties, serves as the main forum to negotiate agreements to reduce human contributions to climate change and facilitate adaptation to the impacts of climate change. As of October 2015, the UNFCCC has 196 country Parties. Under the UNFCCC, developed countries are known as "Annex I Parties" while developing countries are known as "non-Annex I Parties"¹⁸.

In 1997, Parties to the UNFCCC adopted the Kyoto Protocol (KP), a landmark agreement to set internationally binding emission reduction targets, with the main burden falling on developed countries due to their emissions during more than 150 years of industrial activity.

The international community took another major step toward the goals of the UNFCCC in 2016 with the adoption of the Paris Agreement¹⁹ on climate change at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in the French capital. The agreement established the goal to "hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius."

The agreement recognized the important role of removals by sinks, including forests, in achieving this goal:

"Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, ... and to

18 Available at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php

19 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf>

undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century."

The Paris outcomes also recognized the role of forests and REDD+ specifically. This is covered in more detail below.

2.2 FORESTS AND THE UNFCCC

From the outset, the UNFCCC recognized the role of forests in climate change mitigation. Because trees and other plants are made up largely of carbon, it is released into the atmosphere as CO₂ as a result of forest degradation or clearance. Conversely, healthy forests absorb ('sequester') CO₂ from the atmosphere when growing, and store it while standing. Thus, forests and other terrestrial ecosystems can slow the build-up of GHGs in the atmosphere by sequestering CO₂ and accumulating carbon in vegetation and soils.

Specifically, Article 4 of the convention commits Parties to promote the sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of GHGs, including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems.

However, tropical deforestation was mostly excluded from the scope of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which provides Certified Emission Reduction units which may be bought and sold in emissions trading schemes.

In the period 2005-2010, the idea of establishing a global process to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries emerged and gained traction in the deliberations under the UNFCCC.



Photo: Danae Maniatis

2.3 REDD+

The introduction of REDD to the UNFCCC agenda occurred at COP11, Montreal, in 2005 led to a two-year process under the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), including several technical workshops on the issue.²⁰

This led to the inclusion of REDD+ as part of the Bali Action Plan at COP13 in 2007 as: *"reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries"*²¹. A second decision adopted during the Bali COP provided some early methodological guidance for REDD+²². The discussions in Bali represented a shift in approach under the UNFCCC from the context where only Annex I countries implement mitigation actions to one where all Parties do so, laying the foundations for non-Annex I Parties to implement Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), that should be Measured, Reported and Verified (MRV'd).

REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC have been adopted progressively since COP13 in Bali (2007), with subsequent decisions constituting the set of provisions (guidance, rules and modalities) that guide the implementation of REDD+. During the COP15 in Copenhagen (2009), several principles and methodological guidelines were defined through the adoption of decision 4/CP.15²³: *"Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries"*.

At COP16 in Cancun (2010) Parties adopted the so called 'Cancun Agreements'²⁴, section C, entitled: *"Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries"*.

The five activities, or in other words, the scope of REDD+, was agreed in Cancun²⁵: *"Encourages developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances:*

- *Reducing emissions from deforestation;*
- *Reducing emissions from forest degradation;*
- *Conservation of forest carbon stocks;*
- *Sustainable management of forests;*
- *Enhancement of forest carbon stocks."*

The agreed scope allows broad participation, based on differing national circumstances. Through the Cancun Agreements²⁶, the COP requested the SBSTA to initiate work on methodological issues, including modalities for forest reference levels and national forest

20 Available at <http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/items/7377.php>

21 Decision 1/CP.13 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=3>

22 Decision 2/CP.13 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=8>

23 Decision 4/CP.15 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11>

24 Decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

25 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

26 Decision 1/CP.16 - <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

monitoring systems²⁷. The Cancun Agreements also include an important milestone in the UNFCCC with the adoption of seven safeguards that should be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities²⁸ (see section 3.4.4). Further progress was made at COP17 in Durban (2011), particularly on safeguards and forest reference levels.

At COP19 in Warsaw in 2013, most of the REDD+ work programme was finalised, pending further negotiation on safeguard information systems, methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits of REDD+, and the joint mitigation and adaptation approach to forests. The seven REDD+-related decisions adopted at COP19 are referred to as the 'Warsaw Framework for REDD+'²⁹. The UNFCCC has collected these and earlier key decisions concerning REDD+ in its 'Decision booklet for REDD+'³⁰. The Warsaw Framework includes a decision on enhancing coordination of support for the implementation of activities, including institutional arrangements, which resulted from the joint work of SBSTA and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). A first REDD+ decision on aspects related to finance for results-based actions was also adopted.

Three REDD+ decisions were adopted by Parties at COP21 in Paris in December 2015, alongside the Paris Outcome. These pertain to (i) safeguards, (ii) alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation (JMA) for the integral and sustainable management of forests and (iii) non-carbon benefits.³¹ With the adoption of these decisions, the negotiations on REDD+ methodological issues and guidance were closed.

Taken together, all these decisions constitute a 'REDD+ rulebook', providing the guidance and process for developing countries to have the results of their REDD+ activities recognised for RBPs / RBF.

The role of forests in the mitigation of climate change is strongly recognized in the Paris Outcome, mainly through Article 5 of the Paris Agreement but also through other supporting, complementary elements, particularly a provision recognizing the importance of RBPs / RBFs for REDD+ in paragraph 55 of the supporting, operational decision of the Outcome.

Within Article 5, Parties are called upon to adhere to previous REDD+ related COP decisions. These include the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ that outlines key UNFCCC requirements for developing countries to be eligible to receive RBPs / RBF for REDD+ RBAs.

The inclusion of REDD+ in the agreement, especially at the level of a dedicated article, cements REDD+ as a core element of the global climate regime going forward, and strongly reinforces the centrality of the Warsaw Framework and broader 'REDD+ rulebook'.

Table 1 presents an overview of the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC has created a dedicated webpage that provides a full overview of documents related to REDD+³². The REDD+ decisions represent the 'rulebook' for REDD+ implementation. Some decisions include technical methodological provisions (for example national forest monitoring systems), while others include non-methodological related types of provisions (such as: drivers of deforestation,

27 Decision 1/CP.16, appendix II – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=28>

28 Available at <http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/items/8180.php>

29 Available at <http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/items/8180.php>

30 Available at https://unfccc.int/files/land_use_and_climate_change/redd/application/pdf/compilation_redd_decision_booklet_v1.1.pdf

31 Available at https://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/meeting/8926/php/view/decisions.php (decisions 16 - 18/CP.21)

32 Available at https://unfccc.int/land_use_and_climate_change/lulucf/items/6917.php

coordination of support, work programmes on issues of RBPs / RBF etc.).

Table 1: Overview of REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC

Draft decision 16/CP.21	³³ Alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests
Draft decision 17/CP.21	³⁴ Further guidance on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected
Draft decision 18/CP.21	³⁵ Methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70
Decision 9/CP.19	³⁶ Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.
Decision 10/CP.19	³⁷ Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements.
Decision 11/CP.19	³⁸ Modalities for national forest monitoring systems.
Decision 12/CP.19	³⁹ The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected.
Decision 13/CP.19	⁴⁰ Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.
Decision 14/CP.19	⁴¹ Modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying.
Decision 15/CP.19	⁴² Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
Decision 1/CP.18	⁴³ Paragraphs 25 - 40: Agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali Action Plan.
Decision 2/CP.17	⁴⁴ Paragraphs 63 - 73: Outcome of the work under the AWG-LCA on financing options for the full implementation of the results-based actions referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73.

33 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a03.pdf>

34 See footnote 33

35 See footnote 33

36 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

37 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=28>

38 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

39 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=33>

40 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=34>

41 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

42 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=43>

43 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/eng/08a01.pdf#page=6>

44 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=14>

Decision 12/CP.17	⁴⁵ Decision 12/CP.17 provides guidance on systems for providing information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I are being addressed and respected. The decision also elaborates modalities relating to Forest Reference Emission Levels and / or Forest Reference Levels (FRELs / FRL) as referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b).
Decision 1/CP.16	⁴⁶ In paragraphs 68 - 79, Decision 1/CP.16 provides a framework for Parties undertaking actions relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. This decision also launched a process for further work to be undertaken by the SBSTA and the AWG-LCA.
Decision 4/CP.15	⁴⁷ Decision 4/CP.15 provides guidance to developing country Parties when implementing activities relating to decision 2/CP.13.
Decision 2/CP.13	⁴⁸ Decision 2/CP.13 acknowledges the contribution of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation to global anthropogenic GHG emissions. The decision provides a mandate for several actions by Parties relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries such as capacity building, technology transfer, exploring a range of actions and demonstration activities and mobilization of resources to support these efforts.
Decision 1/CP.13	⁴⁹ Bali Action Plan.

45 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

46 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

47 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11>

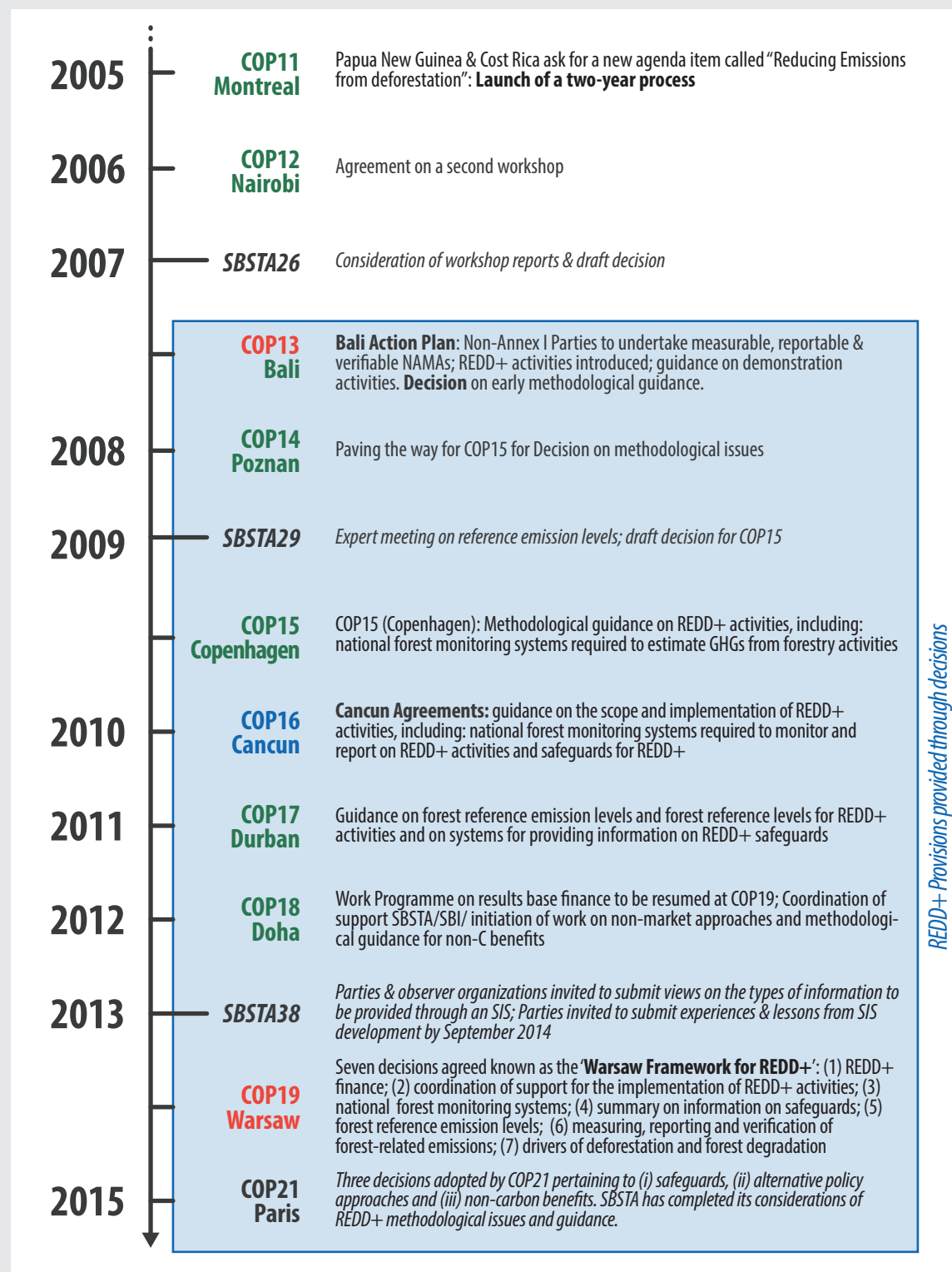
48 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=8>

49 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=3>

Figure 1 illustrates the timeline of the UNFCCC discussions on REDD+.

Figure 1: Progress of REDD+ discussions from COP11 to COP21.

COPs highlighted in red refer to the adoption of non-methodological aspects of REDD+, COPs highlighted in green refer to the adoption of methodological aspects of REDD+ and the COP highlighted in blue refers to the REDD+ framework decision



Decisions concerning international support for REDD+ under the UNFCCC can be summarised into three broad categories: (1) capacity building and Technical Assistance⁵⁰, (2) coordination of support and RBPs / RBF, and (3) RBPs / RBF for RBAs; as summarised in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Decisions on international support for REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

<p>Capacity building (CB) and technical assistance (TA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/CP.15: paragraph 5 • 1/CP.16: paragraph 2 (capacity building and technical assistance to improve, data collection, estimation), paragraph 73 (the three REDD+ phases), paragraph 76 (Parties to support, e.g. development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures, capacity building, demonstration activities and safeguards of Appendix 1), paragraph 79 (invites organisations / stakeholders to support the 4 design elements) • 10/CP.19: paragraph 3 (needs and functions of designated entities), paragraph 1 (designation of entities) • 13/CP.19: paragraph 6 (development and assessment FREL / FRL) • 14/CP.19: paragraph 14d (capacity building needs for the BURs annex)
<p>Coordination of support and RBP / RBF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/CP.15: UNFCCC secretariat to enhance coordination of the capacity building of the IPCC guidance and guidelines • 1/CP.16: paragraph 78 (Parties to coordinate when supporting the 5 REDD+ activities) • 1/CP.18: paragraph 29c; paragraph 34 (needs and ways to improve the coordination of the RBF) • 9/CP.19: several references to coordination RBF (paragraphs 6 & 7), Standing Committee on Finance forum (paragraph 20) • 10/CP.19: paragraph 1 (full implementation, including other approach), paragraph 3 (functions of Entities related to coordination of support), paragraph 9 (COP23 to consider if alternative governance for coordination of support is needed)
<p>RBP / RBF for RBAs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/CP.16: paragraph 73 (phases: results-based demonstration activities evolving into RBAs), paragraph 77 (LCA to explore RBF) • 2/CP.17: paragraph 64 (RBAs to be fully MRV-able), paragraph 65 (variety of sources for RBF: additional, predictable), paragraph 66 & 67 (references to markets and non-markets), paragraph 68 (encourages RBF for the three REDD+ phases) • 1/CP.18: work programme on RBF • 9/CP.19: some means and institutions identified, including the Green Climate Fund, information Hub, Standing Committee on Finance to explore



50 This type of international support is particularly important for phases 1 and 2 of REDD+ (paragraph 73 of decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>). See section 3.2 for more information on the three REDD+ phases.

IMPORTANT REDD+ CONCEPTS

3

There are a variety of technical and policy-related REDD+ concepts that have been established by the UNFCCC COP that could benefit from a common understanding in order to facilitate REDD+ implementation. This starts with the REDD+ activities themselves, and ranges from elements such as the phases of REDD+ implementation to policy instruments such as national strategies or action plans and technical elements such as FREL / FRL. As observed in section 2 of this document, the UNFCCC language and guidance has evolved considerably during the negotiations. This section, as well as the subsequent ones, is structured in line with the above-mentioned objectives: (i) summary of the relevant REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC; (ii) presentation of common UN-REDD Programme understanding of the REDD+ decisions under the UNFCCC; and (iii) the UN-REDD Programme approach based on the key decisions and the programme's interpretation of the decisions.

3.1 WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF REDD+?

3.1.1 WHAT ARE THE FIVE REDD+ ACTIVITIES AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Scope of the five REDD+ activities:
 - Reduction of emissions from deforestation;
 - Reduction of emissions from forest degradation;
 - Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
 - Sustainable management of forests;
 - Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
- There are six main IPCC land-use categories (with corresponding conversion categories related to each) for estimating and reporting GHG emissions and removals from land use and land-use conversions: (1) forest land; (2) cropland; (3) grassland; (4) wetlands; (5) settlements; (6) other land.
- REDD+ is concerned with activities related to forest land: forest land remaining forest land (e.g. forest degradation), land converted to forest (e.g. afforestation) and forest to a non-forest land use (i.e., deforestation).

The Cancun Agreements set out the five REDD+ activities⁵¹, which are considered the 'scope' of REDD+:

- Reduction of emissions from deforestation;
- Reduction of emissions from forest degradation;
- Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- Sustainable management of forests;
- Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The REDD+ activities have not been further defined in the decision texts which allows for flexibility of implementation by developing country Parties. While this provides an opportunity for countries to define a national interpretation of these activities, it may also be difficult to frame what the activities may consist of in practice in their national contexts.

51 Paragraph 70 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

The UN-REDD Programme does not offer a definition of these activities. Rather, it supports countries to understand the nature, implications and potential relevance (or not) of applying the five activities in a specific country context.

Emissions from deforestation occur when forests are cleared for a variety of purposes, such as using the land for agriculture, or for building infrastructure such as roads. Reducing emissions from deforestation is an effort to mitigate GHG emissions resulting from the human-induced long-term or permanent conversion of land use from forest to other non-forest uses.

Emissions from forest degradation occur when human disturbances, such as logging or fuelwood gathering, directly reduce the carbon stock of a forest without changing the land use (i.e. it remains a forest).

'Enhancement' is generally understood to include afforestation and reforestation, and forest rehabilitation / restoration. Of the REDD+ activities, conservation is the only one without precedent under the UNFCCC. To date there is no experience with forest carbon stock conservation under the Convention, leaving this activity largely open to interpretation by countries. Conservation activities may be defined by certain countries as the preservation of existing carbon stocks, which in itself may not generate emissions or removals. Some countries may however argue that conservation activities increase removals, in their national circumstances.

Other useful definitions of land use, land-use change and forestry activities can be looked to within the UNFCCC context, as useful background information. Articles 3.3 and 3.4 of the KP require Annex I Parties to include afforestation, reforestation, deforestation, and forest management for GHG accounting purposes. Under Article 12 of the KP's CDM⁵² only afforestation and reforestation are eligible project activities in non-Annex I countries to meet KP Parties' emissions reductions commitments.

offers a general explanation of the five REDD+ activities. Explanations of the activities are also offered by the Global Observation for Forest Cover and Land Dynamics⁵³ (GOFCC / GOLD). This resource is cited by the UNFCCC on the REDD Web Platform⁵⁴, which can offer a useful starting point for countries engaging with REDD+.

52 The CDM allows a country with an emission-reduction or emission-limitation commitment under the KP (Annex B Party) to implement an emission-reduction project in developing countries. Such projects can earn saleable certified emission reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂, which can be counted towards meeting Kyoto targets (see UNFCCC webpage on CDM for further information, available at http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/clean_development_mechanism/items/2718.php).

53 Available at https://unfccc.int/land_use_and_climate_change/redd_web_platform/items/6736.php

54 Available at https://unfccc.int/methods/redd/redd_web_platform

Table 2: General explanations of the five REDD+ activities and practical examples (adapted from GOF-C-GOLD, 2013⁵⁵).

Activity	Explanation	Examples
Reducing emissions from deforestation	Deforestation is the conversion from forest land to non-forested land ⁵⁶	Reduce the rate of forest loss due to, e.g. industrial agriculture
Reducing emissions from forest degradation	Degradation is the human-induced loss of carbon stocks within forest land that remains forest land ⁵⁷	Reduce the rate and/or intensity of forest degradation due to, e.g. unsustainable logging or fire
Conservation of forest carbon stocks	Refers to any effort to conserve forests	Strengthen and/or expand the protected area network Establish long-term commitments to forest conservation by signing conditional payment agreements with stakeholders
Sustainable management of forests	Generally refers to bringing the rate of extraction in line with the rate of natural growth or increment to ensure near-zero net emissions over time	Increase area of forest land under sustainable management
Enhancement of forest carbon stocks	Refers to (1) non-forest land becoming forest land and (2) the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in forest land remaining forest land (e.g. in the case of recovering degraded forests)	Increase area under reforestation and afforestation Allowed degraded forests to regenerate Increase area of degraded forest under enrichment planting

55 Available at http://www.gofcgold.wur.nl/redd/sourcebook/GOF-C-GOLD_Sourcebook.pdf

56 This is the definition provided by the UNFCCC of 'deforestation' under decision 16/CMP.1 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cmp1/eng/08a03.pdf#page=5>

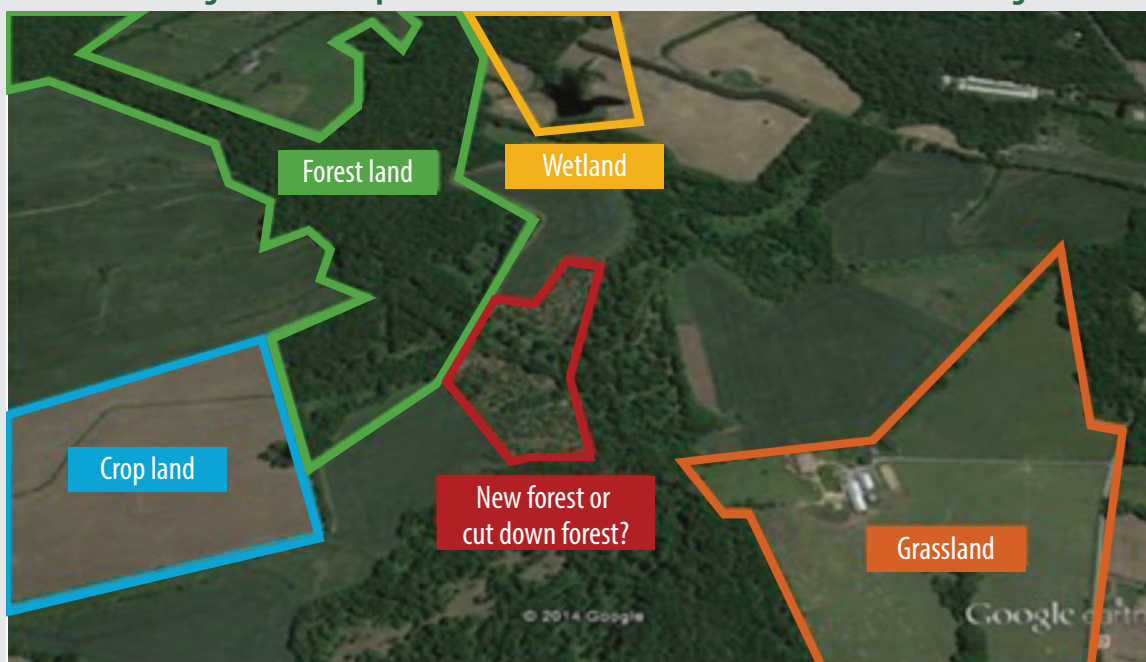
57 The IPCC special report on 'Definitions and Methodological Options to Inventory Emissions from Direct Human-Induced Degradation of Forests and Devegetation of Other Vegetation Types' (2003) presents five different potential definitions for degradation along with their pros and cons. The report suggested the following characterization for degradation: "A direct, human-induced, long-term loss (persisting for X years or more) or at least Y% of forest carbon stocks [and forest values] since time T and not qualifying as deforestation". Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gpplucf/degradation.html>

3.1.2 WHAT DO REDD+ ACTIVITIES MEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF IPCC LAND REPRESENTATION?

In decision 4/CP.15, developing country Parties were requested to use the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidance and guidelines in the context of REDD+ measurement and reporting. The use of the IPCC guidance for REDD+ was reinforced through decision 11/CP.19⁵⁸, in which Parties agreed that the development of national forest monitoring systems for the monitoring and reporting of REDD+ activities should take into account the guidance provided in decision 4/CP.15 and be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the COP, as appropriate, as a basis for estimating anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes. In addition, the annex to decision 12/CP.17 states that information provided in the FREL / FRL submission should be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines. It is therefore necessary to understand REDD+ activities in the context of the IPCC's guidance and guidelines.

The IPCC defines six broad land-use categories for estimating and reporting GHG emissions and removals from land use and land use conversions: (1) forest land; (2) cropland; (3) grassland; (4) wetlands; (5) settlements; (6) other land. The categories are broad enough to classify all land areas in most countries and to accommodate differences in national land-use classification systems, and may be readily stratified (i.e. further sub-divided, e.g. by climate or ecological zones). There are several ways to categorise land following these six broad land-use categories, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Example of stratification of land into various land-use categories⁵⁹



58 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

59 Iversen P., Lee D., and Rocha M., (2014) Understanding Land Use in the UNFCCC, available at http://www.fcmglobal.org/documents/Land_Use_Guide_Summary.pdf

The application of IPCC guidance requires estimation of land use conversions⁶⁰ that take place between data collection intervals. Applicable land uses and land-use conversions are shown below:

FF = Forest Land Remaining Forest Land	LF = Land Converted to Forest Land
GG = Grassland Remaining Grassland	LG = Land Converted to Grassland
CC = Cropland Remaining Cropland	LC = Land Converted to Cropland
WW = Wetlands Remaining Wetlands	LW = Land Converted to Wetlands
SS = Settlements Remaining Settlements	LS = Land Converted to Settlements
OO = Other Land Remaining Other Land	LO = Land Converted to Other Land

REDD+ is broadly concerned with activities related to forest land: forest land remaining forest land (e.g. forest degradation), land converted to forest (e.g. afforestation) and forest land converted to a non-forest land use (i.e. deforestation) though dependent on the scope of REDD+ activities being considered by a given country.

The five REDD+ activities can be separated into two broad land use categories:

- Conversions to and from forest land, for example:
 - Conversions resulting in emissions: conversion of forest land to other / non-forest land category (deforestation)
 - Conversions resulting in removals: conversion from other / non-forest land category to forest land (enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
- Forest land remaining forest land, for example:
 - Resulting in emissions: degradation of a natural forest due to logging
 - Resulting in removals: Management of forests without conversion to another land-use category: Increasing length of time between timber harvest cycles in productive forests, which leads to a greater sink capacity of forests (enhancement of forest carbon stocks)

60 A 'conversion' in land-use refers to change of one land-use into another (IPCC GPG 2003 – available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gpglulucf/gpglulucf.html>)

Table 3 illustrates how the REDD+ activities can be separated into the IPCC land use categories.

Table 3: Illustration of how REDD+ activities fall into IPCC categories⁶¹

UNFCCC identified REDD+ activities	IPCC categories
Reducing emissions from deforestation	Forests converted to other lands
Reducing emissions from forest degradation	Forests remaining as forests
Conservation of forest carbon stock	Forests remaining as forests
Sustainable management of forests	Forests remaining as forests
Enhancement of forest carbon stocks	Other lands converted to forests, Forests remaining as forests

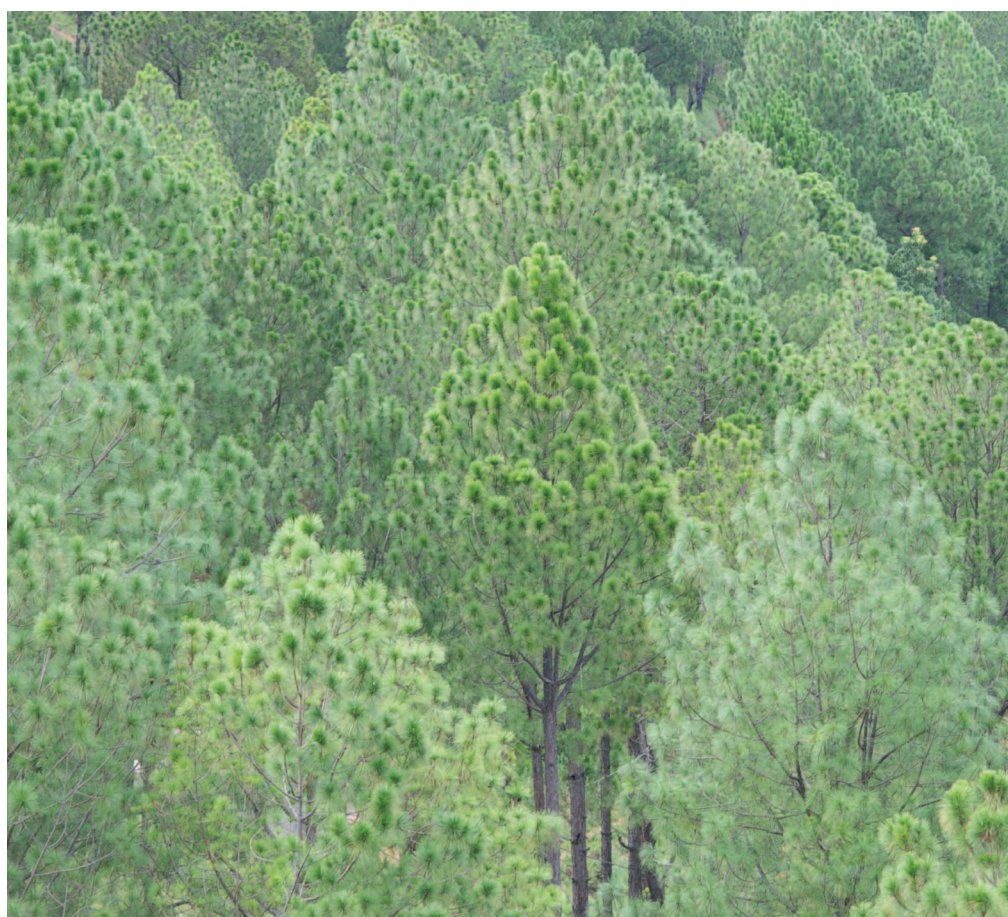


Photo: Danae Marniatis

⁶¹ This table was taken from Iversen P., Lee D., and Rocha M., (2014) Understanding Land Use in the UNFCCC – available at http://www.fcmglobal.org/documents/Land_Use_Guide_Summary.pdf

3.2 WHAT IS MEANT BY A 'PHASED APPROACH' TO REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION?

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The UNFCCC sets out a three-phased approach to REDD+ implementation (decision 1/CP.16).
- National circumstances are important for the implementation of the REDD+ activities.
- The phases are non-discrete and allow for overlap – particularly in terms of continuous capacity development.

The phasing of REDD+ implementation, as stipulated in the Cancun Agreements, can facilitate an iterative approach. In the Cancun Agreements, the COP decided that⁶²:

*"the activities undertaken by Parties [...] should be implemented in phases, beginning with the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures, and capacity-building, followed by the implementation of national policies and measures and national strategies or action plans that could involve further capacity-building, technology development and transfer and results-based demonstration activities, and evolving into results-based actions that should be fully measured, reported and verified".*⁶³

The phased approach recognises that⁶⁴: "... the implementation of the [REDD+] activities ... including the choice of a starting phase as referred to in paragraph 73 above, depends on the specific national circumstances, capacities and capabilities of each developing country Party and the level of support received".

This approach can be reasonably assumed to reflect UNFCCC countries' convergence around the need for a flexible, learning-by-doing approach to REDD+ implementation, which is important given that REDD+ is a relatively new climate change mitigation approach. While the phases are defined flexibly enough to allow for country-level interpretation, the UN-REDD Programme deems them to be non-discrete and that there will be some overlap between them – particularly in terms of continuous capacity development. As the boundaries between the phases are not clearly demarcated and may overlap, it is expected that REDD+ countries will move fluidly through these phases. The phased approach to REDD+ implementation is illustrated in **Figure 4**.

62 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

63 Colour coding is added to paragraph 73 for interpretation to distinguish between the three phases.

64 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 74 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

Figure 4: Description of the three phases of REDD+ implementation based on decision 1/CP.16.



As of late 2016, most UN-REDD partner countries are in the REDD+ readiness phase (or phase 1). REDD+ readiness relates to the efforts a country is undertaking to develop the capacities needed to implement REDD+. REDD+ readiness support is currently being provided to developing countries through bilateral and multilateral initiatives.

The two main multilateral readiness initiatives are the UN-REDD Programme and the FCPF of the World Bank. They are actively coordinating their efforts in assisting countries in their readiness efforts. This has led to the harmonization of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) format, a framework document which sets out a clear plan, budget and schedule for a country to achieve REDD+ readiness.

The second phase of REDD+ implementation foresees 'demonstration activities'⁶⁵. An annex to a decision adopted during the Bali COP in 2007⁶⁶ contains indicative guidance for undertaking and evaluating a range of demonstration activities designed to address the drivers of deforestation relevant to national circumstances, with a view to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and thus enhancing forest carbon stocks due to sustainable management of forest. This guidance is listed below:

65 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

66 Decision 2/CP.13, paragraph 4 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=9>



Photo: Danne Marnatis

1. *Demonstration activities should be undertaken with the approval of the host Party.*
2. *Estimates of reductions or increases of emissions should be results based, demonstrable, transparent and verifiable, and estimated consistently over time.*
3. *The use of the methodologies described in paragraph 6⁶⁷ of this decision is encouraged as a basis for estimating and monitoring emissions.*
4. *Emission reductions from national demonstration activities should be assessed on the basis of national emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.*
5. *Subnational demonstration activities should be assessed within the boundary used for the demonstration, and assessed for associated displacement of emissions.*
6. *Reductions in emissions or increases resulting from the demonstration activity should be based on historical emissions, taking into account national circumstances.*
7. *Subnational⁶⁸ approaches, where applied, should constitute a step towards the development of national approaches, reference levels and estimates.*
8. *Demonstration activities should be consistent with sustainable forest management, noting, inter alia, the relevant provisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.*
9. *Experiences in implementing activities should be reported and made available via the Web platform.*
10. *Reporting on demonstration activities should include a description of the activities and their effectiveness, and may include other information.*
11. *Independent expert review is encouraged.*

Table 4 shows examples of where some countries stand in the phased implementation of REDD+. The examples illustrate the diversity of REDD+ implementation modalities. Although these do not necessarily follow the UNFCCC process, it is important to be aware of this diversity when thinking about the REDD+ phases. As of mid-2016, no country can be characterised as Phase 3 (full implementation).

67 "Encourages the use of the most recent reporting guidelines as a basis for reporting greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation, noting also that Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention are encouraged to apply the Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry".

68 "Activities carried out within the national boundary" (a distinction between sub-national and jurisdictional is made later in this document).

Table 4: Examples of support for REDD+ implementation through REDD+ phases

Phases	Phase 1 Readiness	Phase 2: Implementation
Country / Action	<p>21 UN-REDD Programme countries with National Programmes and 75 Targeted Supports approved⁶⁹</p> <p>36 Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) countries⁷⁰</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Forest Investment Programme (FIP) countries⁷¹ • Vietnam Phase 2 supported by the UN-REDD Programme⁷² • 12 FCPF Carbon Fund Emission Reduction Payment Agreements have been signed⁷³ • Ecuador REDD+ Early Movers (REM) and Green Climate Fund⁷⁴ • Costa Rica FCPF Carbon Fund Emission Reduction Programme⁷⁵ • Guyana's REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF)⁷⁶ • Brazil Amazon Fund (sub-national level)⁷⁷

69 Available at http://www.un-redd.org/Partner_Countries/tabid/102663/Default.aspx

70 Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/redd-countries>

71 Available at https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/fip_pilot_programs

72 Available at <http://vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?tab=project&zoneid=110&lang=en-US>

73 Available at https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2016/Feb/FCPF%20CF%20Dashboard_Master_033116.pdf

74 Available at <http://www.europe.undp.org/content/geneva/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/10/20/green-climate-fund-approves-the-first-proposal-to-reduce-emissions-from-deforestation-and-support-forest-conservation-in-ecuador.html>

75 Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/er-pins-fcpf-pipeline>

76 Available at <http://www.guyanareddfund.org/>

77 Available at http://www.amazonfund.gov.br/FundoAmazonia/fam/site_en

3.3 DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- It is important for countries to develop an understanding of, and build consensus around, the direct and underlying Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation (DDFD), as well as the barriers to forest conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management (or barriers to the '+').
- It is important to have a clear terminology of the 'direct' and 'indirect' drivers, as well as 'barriers' to REDD+ at the country level and understanding the linkages between them.
- The analysis of DDFD and barriers to the implementation of the '+' activities may include:
 - Reaching consensus on a national level through appropriate stakeholder engagement;
 - A continuous and iterative analytical process;
 - Spatial and socio-economic factors;
 - Linking to the scope and scale of REDD+ implementation;
 - Quantifying emissions and removal potential.

3.3.1 TERMINOLOGY

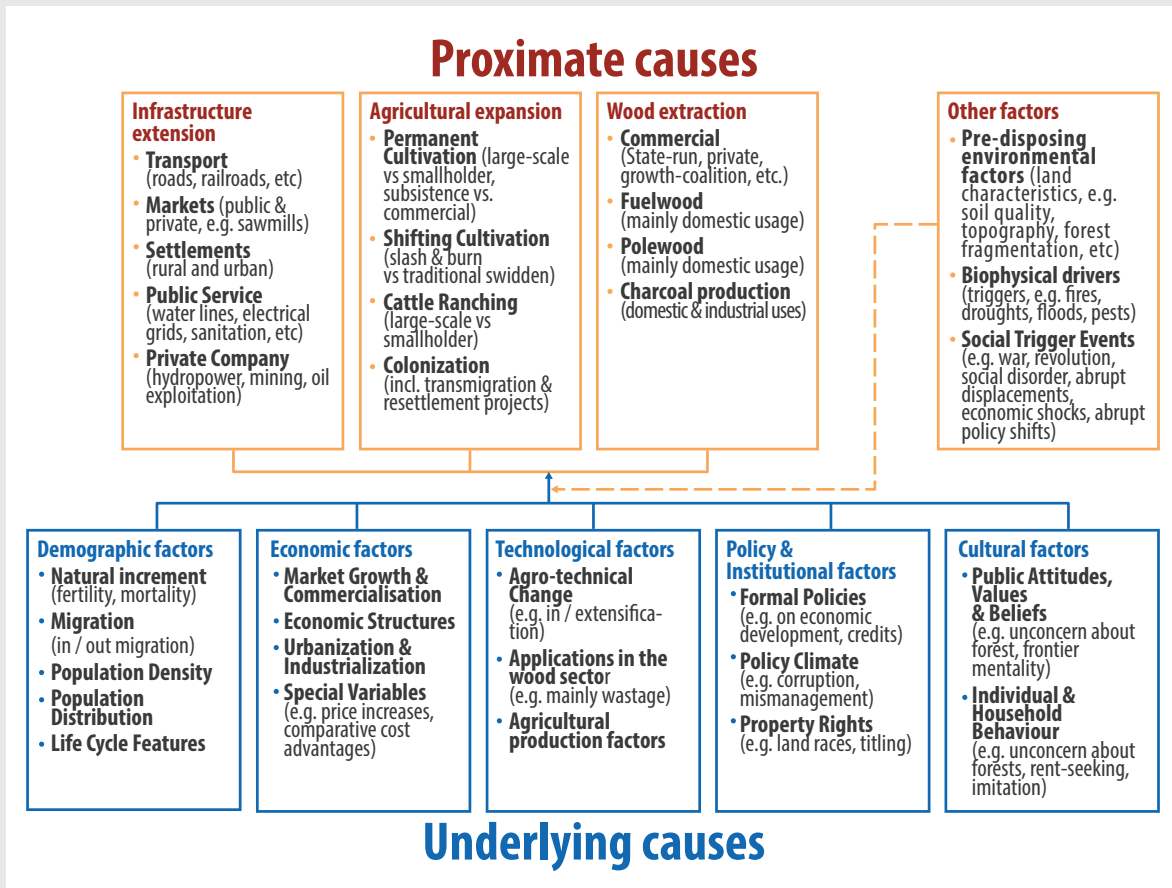
'Drivers' are the various processes that result in deforestation and forest degradation. Drivers may be separated into:

- (i) '**direct drivers**' (also called 'proximate causes'), which are the human activities or immediate actions that directly impact forest cover and loss of carbon, such as agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, fire and wood extraction; and
- (ii) '**indirect drivers**' (also called 'underlying causes' or 'driving forces') consist of complex interactions of fundamental social, economic, political, cultural & technological processes. They may be of very diverse nature, related for example to the regulatory, policy or fiscal framework, inadequate or adverse incentives, market pressure, corruption, local practices, etc. They may interact at various levels such as international (e.g. markets, commodity prices) or national factors (e.g. population growth, domestic markets, national policies, fiscal framework, governance) and local circumstances (e.g. change in household behaviour).

Figure 5 illustrates how these direct and indirect drivers may act on forests⁷⁸.

78 Adapted from Geist & Lambin (2002) Proximate causes and underlying drivers of tropical deforestation, *BioScience*, Vol. 52, 2 – available at <http://bioscience.oxfordjournals.org/content/52/2/143.full>

Figure 5: Causes of forest decline.
Five broad clusters of underlying driving forces (or fundamental social processes) underpin the proximate causes of tropical deforestation, which are immediate human actions directly impacting forest cover (cf. footnote 78).



'Barriers' to the '+' activities of REDD+ (forest conservation, enhancement of forest carbon stocks and sustainable management of forests), refer to the various obstacles to the implementation of these activities. They will be of the same nature as indirect drivers, and will often overlap directly with direct and indirect drivers though may be linked to different sections of legal documents and / or associated with different institutional actors and agents. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) the current land tenure regulatory framework may be considered both a driver of deforestation and a barrier to the enhancement activity. Indeed, on the one hand this law recognizes forest clearing as a way to demonstrate economic use of the land, which in turn facilitates the process of entitlement to that land. On the other hand, lack of access to tenure security linked to this inadequate legislation inhibits reforestation.

Examples of barriers may include:

- (i) **Enhancement of carbon stocks:**
 - Inside forests: repeated and uncontrolled use of fire to clear grassland for agriculture which prevents natural or assisted regeneration of forests; dependence on fuelwood with demand exceeding regeneration capacity; legal or fiscal frameworks that do

not support the sustainable management of forest resources.

- Outside forests: tenure insecurity, fiscal frameworks that promote plantations and/or the marketing of timber products, legal frameworks restricting access to forest products.
- (ii) **Conservation of forest carbon stocks**: population dynamics, lack of alternatives to land use and/or forest resources, weak law enforcement, fiscal and regulatory framework leading to inefficient land use
- (iii) **Sustainable management of forest carbon stocks**: barriers may include those mentioned for the Conservation activity, as well as cost of low impact logging and / or certification measures, lack of tools, training and technical capacities – among government staff and / or forestry companies.

'Agents' of deforestation and forest degradation are the group(s) of actual persons or legal entities directly or indirectly responsible for deforestation and forest degradation.

3.3.2 UNDERSTANDING DRIVERS AND BARRIERS: AN ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION FOR REDD+ READINESS

Several references are made to DDFD in COP decisions⁷⁹, and the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ includes a specific decision on DDFD⁸⁰. The decision encourages Parties, organisations and the private sector to take action to address drivers and to share information; and encourages developing country Parties to take note of the information shared by other Parties⁸¹.

In order to implement REDD+ effectively, it is crucial to (i) identify the past and current dynamics of change in forests and likely future trends (decline and recovery), as well as (ii) understand the various forces behind them, so as to define adequate ways to address them. An important starting point for countries to engage in a nationally-appropriate REDD+ readiness process is therefore the development of an understanding of, and building consensus around, the direct and underlying DDFD, as well as the barriers to conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management (or barriers to the '+'). It may in this way contribute to the identification of:

- The significance of each driver and barrier;
- The relationships / interactions between the drivers or barriers and the REDD+ activities;
- The potential entry points to address them; and
- The feasibility (e.g. political, financial, technical) of addressing these drivers and removing barriers.

Linking this work to the estimation of forest carbon stocks, forest carbon stock changes, forest area and forest area changes (including land-use and land-use change, see section on National Forest Monitoring Systems **3.4.3**), should provide countries with important

79 Decision 4/CP.15, paragraph 1 and decision 1/CP.16 – respectively available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11> and <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

80 Decision 15/CP.19 available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=43>

81 Indigenous peoples (IPs), Philippines and Bolivia raised concerns with the decision text and requested clarification that traditional livelihoods should not be negatively affected when addressing DDFD, thus ensuring that traditional livelihoods will not be required to change in light of addressing DDFD.

elements on which to build a country vision for REDD+ and a strategic pathway to achieve it. It may indeed provide valuable preliminary information on the climate change mitigation potential associated with REDD+ in the country and its possible role in a country's wider climate change portfolio of actions (mitigation & adaptation). It will also contribute to assessing the numerous interactions with the country's development framework and priorities, and the ways in which REDD+ may contribute to it.

The analysis of these drivers, and barriers to the '+', is therefore a critical step of the REDD+ readiness process and is strongly interconnected with other key elements of the REDD+ process such as the development of the National Strategy and / or Action Plan (see section 3.4.1), a first iteration of the national (or interim subnational) Forest Reference Emissions Level / Forest Reference Level (see section 3.4.2), the National Forest Monitoring System (see section 3.4.3), and a countries' approach to safeguards, including a safeguard information system (see section 3.4.4).

Currently the UN-REDD Programme has no formally structured approach to dealing with these DDFD and barriers to '+' activities. Nonetheless, this section (i) draws upon lessons learnt from supporting countries in developing a better understanding of these elements and (ii) illustrate how these analyses demonstrate the importance of the interconnectedness of the various technical and political elements.

Specific examples of country-level analyses of DDFD supported by the UN-REDD Programme can be found for Ecuador⁸², Democratic Republic of Congo⁸³, Nepal⁸⁴, Zambia⁸⁵, Mexico⁸⁶, and Costa Rica⁸⁷.

3.3.3 LINKING INDIRECT DRIVERS TO DIRECT DDFD AND BARRIERS

While the primary direct drivers are often known, indirect drivers are usually less obvious and understood, yet may have a strong influence on direct drivers (e.g. rising and falling commodity prices – a rise in price of a commodity, such as for example soy bean, often increases deforestation)). Understanding interactions between the indirect and direct drivers is critical to identify the range of policies and measures required to tackle the various direct drivers, as well as evaluate the technical, financial and political feasibility of it. This may require a range of analytical approaches (e.g. analysis of fuelwood value chain, decision-making in land allocation, policy, legal and fiscal framework, etc.).

The identification of the various agents of deforestation and forest degradation is key to designing appropriate policies and measures and adequate models for implementation. This includes direct on-site agents (e.g. local communities or logging companies) and indirect remote

82 Available at http://www.academia.edu/28726217/Estrategias_Regionales_REDD_en_la_Amazonia_y_Costa_Centro-Norte_del_Ecuador_Reducci%C3%B3n_de_emisiones_y_co-beneficios_potenciales_bajo_tres_escenarios_de_deforestaci%C3%B3n_futura

83 Available at <http://www.unredd.net/documents/global-programme-191/corporate-communications-brochures-press-releases-thematic-80/newsletters-349/10136-un-redd-programme-newsletter-issue-35-printable-10136.html> and scroll to page 7 to access the various studies

84 Available at <http://www.tinyurl.com/nepal-drivers-redd>

85 Available at <http://www.unredd.net/documents/global-programme-191/corporate-communications-brochures-press-releases-thematic-80/newsletters-349/8059-un-redd-programme-newsletter-issue-31-printable-8059.html>

86 Available at <http://www.conafor.gob.mx/web/temas-forestales/bycc/redd-en-mexico/estrategia-nacional-redd-enaredd/>

87 Available at <http://www.reddcr.go.cr/es/acciones-estrategicas>

agents (e.g. a commodities trader in the capital city), as well as influential actors (e.g. political and customary authorities, business elite). As an example, approaches to address drivers in the agriculture sector are likely to take very different forms if targeting: i) local communities practicing shifting agriculture for subsistence; ii) commercial operators producing for the national market; or iii) multinational companies involved in international commodity markets. The various types of actors involved in informal timber logging, or along the charcoal value chain, all with different interests, opportunities and constraints, is another example.

In the agent identification process, particular attention should be given to marginalized groups (i.e. women, indigenous peoples, and youth) as well as to gender dynamics. This may often yield a more acute understanding of forest dynamics as well as potential solutions, and may have strong implications for safeguards. It may also be useful to map out the various decision-makers and other influential actors and the formal or informal ways in which they influence the drivers. This can be done through an “institutional context analysis”.

3.3.4 ANALYSING DDFD AND BARRIERS TO THE ‘+’

Considering the direct correlations between barriers and drivers (especially underlying drivers), many considerations given below apply to both, and parts of the analytical process could and should be combined.

3.3.4.1 Building consensus on drivers and barriers

To be able to develop a national vision for REDD+ as well as design appropriate policies and measures, drivers and barriers must be known, understood and agreed upon by relevant stakeholders. While consensus is generally easy to achieve on the main direct drivers, engagement of stakeholders may be necessary to reach consensus on their impact (and therefore respective importance), their trends and the related underlying drivers.

Studies of drivers and barriers are most effective when based on existing engagement with different sectorial actors (civil society, private sector, NGOs, etc.), and / or represent an opportunity to engage with them. In the case of the DRC⁸⁸, such a process was an opportunity to foster an inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue with the goal of reaching national consensus, and incorporated studies led by civil society. Without this consensus at the national level, it may have been very difficult to identify and prioritise, and then effectively implement, REDD+ activities and associated policies and measures. The analysis of drivers is also an opportunity to identify important stakeholders that may not yet be involved in the REDD+ process but who will be crucial for its effective implementation.

3.3.4.2 A continuous and iterative analytical process

A number of countries, such as Colombia and the DRC⁸⁹, have interpreted the analysis of drivers and barriers as an iterative process rather than a ‘one-off’ study. Building on existing knowledge and information, further analytical work will be undertaken at different points in time, depending on the available resources and needs identified. A preliminary overall

88 This country example, as well as other ones in the text, do not pretend to establish a comprehensive list, but rather highlight examples that are known to the authors. We welcome additional examples of good practices.

89 For DRC see <http://www.unredd.net/documents/global-programme-191/corporate-communications-brochures-press-releases-thematic-80/newsletters-349/10136-un-redd-programme-newsletter-issue-35-printable-10136.html> and scroll to page 7 to access the various studies. For Colombia, SINCHI institute 2014.



Photo: Dancie Mamiatis

study may facilitate the building of consensus and help prioritize needs for more detailed information, and thereby optimize the use of available resources and seek convergence with other initiatives. More specific, analytical work focused on a specific thematic and / or a geographical area may then be carried out to inform the strategic vision as well as the design of Policies and Measures (PAMs) at the appropriate level (national or subnational). For example, charcoal production was identified in the DRC as one of the major drivers of deforestation. A thorough analysis of the charcoal value chain supplying two major cities (carried out separately to the readiness process) provided very valuable additional information that was integrated into national REDD+ strategy and directly informed the development of REDD+ programmes.

While an understanding of (past and) current drivers and barriers is essential for the design of REDD+ policies and measures in the near- to medium-term future, drivers and barriers are not static. Historical trends of existing drivers should be considered (working closely with the NFMS process), their likely evolution in the near- to medium-term assessed, as well as the potential for shifts and emergence of future drivers. It is likely that future drivers with high potential impact (e.g. palm oil development) should be taken into account in the design of REDD+ PAMs, so as to prepare a smoother transition while moving from REDD+ readiness to implementation, especially as the dialogue on necessary policy and reforms may take time.

In the same way, countries may already have ‘+’ activities going on outside the REDD+ context, of which they may or may not have information. An important entry point for the identification of barriers is an analysis of past and current interventions (PAMs) associated with the ‘+’ activities, to identify and analyse examples of effective interventions in various contexts.

3.3.4.3 Spatial and socio-economic factors

Consideration of spatial and socioeconomic factors is key to identifying drivers and barriers. Qualitative and quantitative spatial and socioeconomic studies can help uncover a wide range of drivers and barriers including: population growth; fuelwood use; forest-related policies and tenure systems; fiscal frameworks (e.g. Ecuador and Indonesia⁹⁰) pressure from agricultural, including commodities like soy and oil palm production; construction of dams, roads and urban areas⁹¹; mining and oil and gas development; government land concessions; and governance failures including weak capacity and corruption⁹².

Identifying the spatial distribution of the direct and indirect drivers, including geographical areas where one or multiple drivers are at work (‘hotspots’), along with their intensity, can guide strategic decisions regarding the location and scale of REDD+ implementation. The factors that influence spatial distribution will be important to understand as they will

90 Available at <http://www.landscapes.org/fiscal-incentives-for-agricultural-commodity-production-options-to-forge-compatibility-with-redd/>

91 For example in Nepal, available at <http://www.tinyurl.com/nepal-drivers-redd>

92 See a study in Kenya for example, available at <http://www.kenyaforestservice.org/documents/redd/Analysis%20of%20Drivers%20of%20Deforestation%20&forest%20Degradation%20in%20Kenya.pdf>

condition risks for forest conversion and are key in defining appropriate PAMs to address them. They may include biophysical or tenure considerations (e.g. soil aptitude for particular crops, tenure clarity), population migration dynamics, legal frameworks and law enforcement, sectorial economic incentives and political motivations.

3.3.4.4 Linking to REDD+ activities (scope) and scale

Analysis of how each direct driver and / or barrier relates to the five REDD+ activities can inform decisions on the scope of REDD+. Indeed, some drivers may mostly lead to deforestation while others instead primarily cause forest degradation (e.g. commercial agriculture causes deforestation, while localized fuelwood collection rather causes degradation). A driver's linkage to REDD+ activities may vary according to the context (e.g. agents involved, geographic location, local practices, etc.), and such elements should be considered in the analysis of drivers (e.g. large-scale agriculture versus shifting agriculture, or clear-cut logging versus selective logging).

The assessment of forest carbon stocks and area using the NFMS is an opportunity to identify drivers. This is particularly true for large-scale drivers such as cattle ranching or industrial soy production because large-scale land use changes can be more easily detected, but may be more difficult with smaller-scale drivers, especially when they partially overlap (e.g. shifting cultivation and fuelwood extraction). In such cases, additional studies (e.g. field surveys) are required to develop a better understanding of the situation.

This may help target REDD+ efforts (e.g. more detailed study on drivers, forest inventory, and / or local-level consultations) and resource allocation in strategic areas for optimal effectiveness and efficiency of emissions reductions and / or removals enhancement. This is relevant both within the framework of national-scale or interim sub-national REDD+ implementation.

3.3.4.5 Quantifying emissions and potential removals

Countries may find it useful to quantify the GHG emissions associated with (at least) the most significant direct drivers. Quantification of emissions from some drivers may however not always be feasible due to a lack of data, limited capacity, complex interrelations between drivers, or other factors, and may then be a longer-term objective as part of a step-wise approach.

The quantification of direct drivers may be done partly or fully through the NFMS (see section 3.4.3). When such quantification is difficult, at least the **relative** weight of the various **direct** drivers in terms of emissions should be assessed, using relevant proxies and estimates (e.g. estimating the relative weight of the charcoal driver using data on charcoal consumption from the main urban areas, coupled with data on production sources – natural forests or plantations – and their sustainability). This will contribute to the process of prioritizing drivers a country decides to address.

The capacity to evaluate the relative weight and impact of **indirect** drivers may depend on the nature of the driver examined: quantifying the impact of a specific policy may be much easier than that of a particular corrupt practice, which may have to rely on the use of proxies.

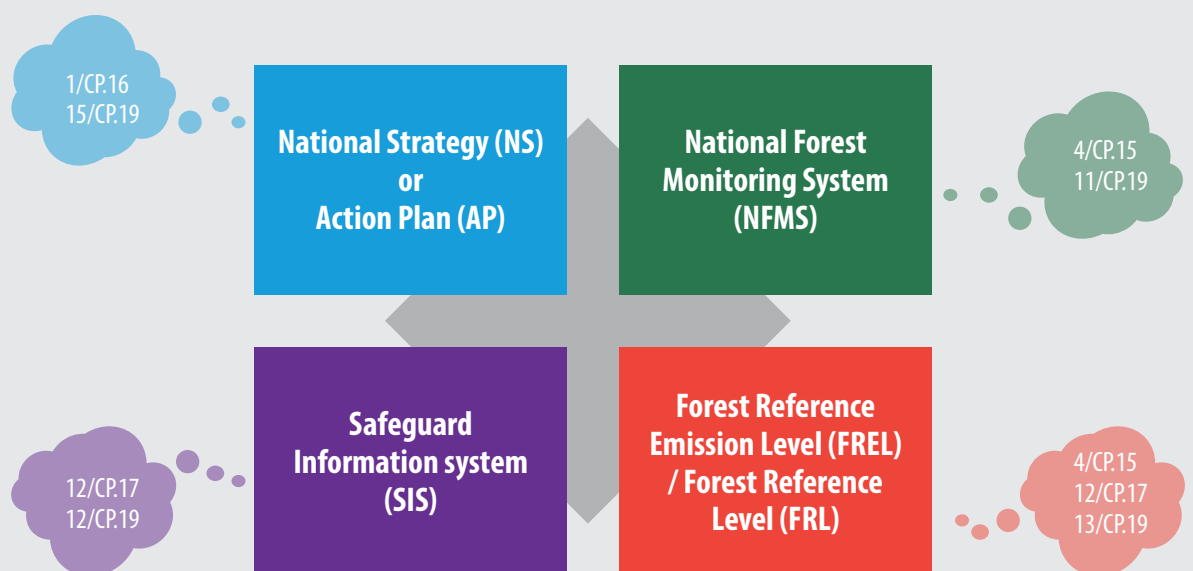
Countries may also find it useful to assess the carbon mitigation potential of the '+' activities. For the enhancement activity, this may, for example, include an estimate of degraded (non-forest) land that may be suitable for afforestation / reforestation, as well as degraded forests suitable for regeneration. As much as possible, the potential should be assessed spatially as well as in terms of emissions and / or potential removals.

3.4 WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR REDD+?

The Cancun Agreements request countries to have the following four elements in place for REDD+ implementation and to access RBPs / RBF⁹³ (**Figure 6**):

- a. A National Strategy (NS) or Action Plan (AP);
- b. A national (or subnational as interim) Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) and / or Forest Reference Level (FRL);
- c. A robust and transparent National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) for the monitoring and reporting of the five REDD+ activities, including for measurement, reporting and verification results;
- d. A Safeguard Information System (SIS).

Figure 6: Overview of the four elements and where the respective methodological guidance (also known as rules and modalities) can be found in the UNFCCC decisions



This section provides a brief overview of **how the UN-REDD Programme approaches** these four REDD+ elements. The section shows that strategic choices made on each the four required REDD+ Cancun elements may have strong repercussions on the others. Ensuring regular communication and feedback loops in the development and implementation of these elements is therefore critical, as has been highlighted by several countries.

93 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

3.4.1 REDD+ NATIONAL STRATEGIES (NS) AND ACTION PLANS (AP)

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Decision 1/CP.16 requests countries to:
 - Develop a national REDD+ strategy (NS) or action plan (AP);
 - Address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender consideration and safeguards when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans.
- When seeking RBPs / RBF, a link to the NS / AP must be provided, as appropriate, through the information hub. No specific assessment or analysis of the NS / AP is required.
- REDD+ NS / APs should be developed and implemented within the context of a country's national development planning process, and in line with other national and international efforts that are related to REDD+.
- The 'scope' and 'scale' of REDD+ actions may be identified through analytical work and multi-stakeholder engagement that is undertaken during the first iteration of the NS / AP.
- Strong links exist between the development of the NS / AP, the FREL / FRL and the NFMS.
- Cross-cutting issues for countries to consider when developing a NS / AP are:
 1. National institutional clarity, leadership and coordination;
 2. Stakeholder engagement;
 3. Multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder process; and
 4. Gender considerations.

Countries aiming to undertake REDD+ activities are requested to develop a national REDD+ strategy (NS) or action plan (AP) to describe how emissions will be reduced and / or how forest carbon stocks will be enhanced, conserved and / or sustainably managed⁹⁴. The terms NS and AP are used interchangeably in the UNFCCC COP decisions. NS / APs are products of the readiness phase (phase 1), drawing on various strands of analytical work, stakeholder engagement and strategic decisions undertaken to prepare for REDD+ implementation (Phase 2).

The UNFCCC COP decisions highlight the central role that national governments have in designing and implementing REDD+ programmes, i.e. a NS / APs is to be developed and implemented by national governments. For this to succeed, national-level policy reforms and measures that tackle the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are essential to efficiently catalyse, coordinate and support subnational efforts and public and private actors, as well as to ensure the overall coherence of policies and measures. REDD+ should be designed and implemented with the full engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including those who benefit from forests or whose activities impact forests, as well as their political and customary leaders at various levels of governance. These strategies should also identify who will be responsible for implementing the policies and measures.

This section will look at the existing guidance for NS / AP in the UNFCCC, good practices and lessons learnt relevant to supporting countries in the development of a NS / AP and cross cutting issues.

94 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71 (a) – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

3.4.1.1 Existing UNFCCC guidance

While countries are requested by decision 1/CP.16 to develop a NS/AP, there is no direct requirement in the decision texts regarding the actual content of a NS / AP. Nonetheless, the Cancun Agreements indicate that the COP “Also requests developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, *inter alia*, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of annex I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, *inter alia*, indigenous peoples and local communities;”⁹⁵

The Cancun Agreements include a specific paragraph⁹⁶ which sets out general guidance that should be followed when implementing REDD+ activities, and should therefore be kept in mind while developing a NS / AP:

- a. *Contribute to the achievement of the objective set out in Article 2 of the Convention⁹⁷ (to stabilise GHG concentrations to avoid dangerous interference with the climate system⁹⁸);*
- b. *Contribute to the fulfilment of the commitments set out in Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention (common but differentiated responsibilities and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances on new and additional resources⁹⁹);*
- c. *Be country-driven and be considered options available to Parties;*
- d. *Be consistent with the objective of environmental integrity and take into account the multiple functions of forests and other ecosystems;*
- e. *Be undertaken in accordance with national development priorities, objectives and circumstances and capabilities and should respect sovereignty;*
- f. *Be consistent with Parties’ national sustainable development needs and goals;*
- g. *Be implemented in the context of sustainable development and reducing poverty, while responding to climate change;*
- h. *Be consistent with the adaptation needs of the country;*
- i. *Be supported by adequate and predictable financial and technology support, including support for capacity-building;*
- j. *Be results-based;*
- k. *Promote sustainable management of forests.*

95 Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 72 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

96 Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I, paragraph 1 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=26>

97 Available at http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

98 Available at

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

99 See footnote 98

3.4.1.2 Good practices and lessons learnt on NS / AP development

The UNFCCC decisions leave full flexibility to countries on both the NS / AP design process and the contents of NS / AP documents, provided that guidance provided in UNFCCC REDD+ decisions are addressed. This allows each country to determine how best to implement REDD+ in the context of their national circumstances.

The NS / AP document may take many forms: as a comprehensive document or a short one supplemented by one or more (i.e. sectoral and / or subnational-based) investment plans; as a specific 'REDD+ strategy', or integrated into a wider climate and / or green economy framework (e.g. Ethiopia, Mexico), or part of various sectoral and multi-sectoral development strategies. Accordingly the NS / AP design process may be organized in very different ways, within the wider readiness process as well as in relation to other relevant national sectoral and multi-sectoral planning processes.

Other than supporting the use of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) format (designed to lead to a "readiness package" that includes a NS / AP), the UN-REDD Programme currently has no documented NS / AP guidance that countries are able to use as a reference document. Nonetheless, the UN-REDD Programme is promoting south-south exchanges of experiences between countries, and has facilitated regional learning workshops in 2014 in Ecuador (August 2014), Kenya (October 2014) and Bangkok (July 2015) to gather good practices and lessons learnt from countries on REDD+ NS / APs. Furthermore, the UN-REDD Programme organized a Pre-Policy Board Information and Knowledge Sharing Session on NS / AP with the same objectives in Tanzania (November 2014).

Insights from the NS / AP events have been incorporated into a UN-REDD Academy 'learning journal'¹⁰⁰ on REDD+ NS / APs (module 4) and one on PAMs (module 7), which countries can use to inform their national processes. Some of the key lessons learnt from countries, which directly inform the UN-REDD Programme's approach for NS / AP, can be summarised as follows:

- **Developing a REDD+ NS / AP is about both process and product.** In particular, an emphasis on the process of inclusive and equitable consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders will ensure a more robust and wider support-base for the strategy and will facilitate its endorsement and subsequent implementation. For example, Costa Rica has conducted over 150 information and consultation meetings over the course of designing its NS / AP.
- **The NS / AP design process should be planned early on in the REDD+ readiness process,** rather than be considered an output at the end of the readiness phase. The sequencing of the various work streams (e.g. analytical work, consultations) can be challenging but is essential in ensuring efficiency in the NS / AP design process (and overall readiness).
- **Strategic choices made on each of the four Cancun required elements of REDD+ (NS / AP, FREL / FRL, NFMS and SIS) may have strong implications for the others as they are often interdependent and / or related to one another.** Ensuring regular communication and feedback loops in the development and implementation of these required elements all along the readiness process is therefore critical and may contribute to a more efficient readiness process. The NS / AP document is an opportunity to strengthen the links between these required elements of REDD+ and demonstrate the overall coherence in the country approach to REDD+ as well as its capacity to achieve results.

100 UN-REDD Programme (2016). REDD+ Academy Learning Journals, Edition Two. Available at http://bit.ly/REDD_Academy

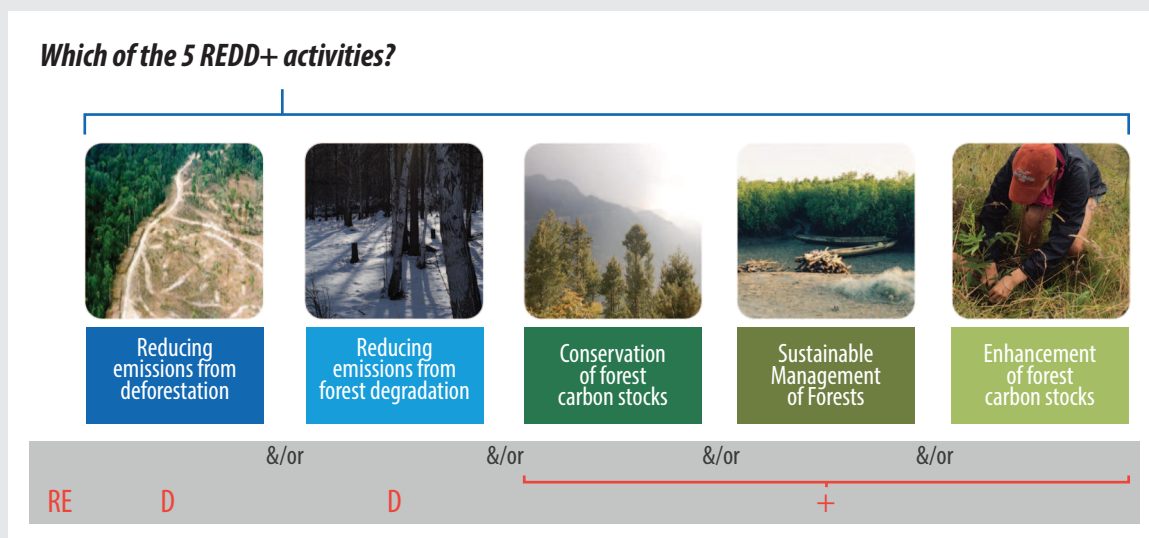
- **Designing a NS / APs is an iterative step-wise process**, as NS / APs are documents that continue to be expanded and improved upon in a cyclical manner as countries progress towards more comprehensive REDD+ responses: initial strategies may for example only address the most significant REDD+ activities and / or drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, while planning for subsequent improvements following a pragmatic stepwise approach, as well as adapting to a dynamic context. For example, Brazil decided to only start addressing deforestation in the Amazon region, while already preparing to include forest degradation as well as expanding the scale to include the Cerrado biome.
- **NS / APs should not be regarded as stand-alone documents.** Countries may find it useful to ensure they are developed and implemented, are relevant (e.g. REDD+ potential, political commitment, etc.), within the context of a country's national development planning process, and in line with other national and international efforts that are related to REDD+ (e.g. Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity COP, Sustainable Development Goals). Country ownership of the process and therefore the product, and careful integration with other development plans are key elements for success. Mongolia, for example, is integrating REDD+ into its Green Development Strategy, ensuring coherence with its broader development agenda.

3.4.1.3 Developing a country vision of REDD+

A country vision of REDD+ should include considerations of:

- The scope of REDD+ implementation in a country (i.e. which of the five REDD+ activities the country decides to undertake, see **Figure 7**),
- The scale of REDD+ implementation (i.e. at which scale and where the country decides to start implementing REDD+, see section 3.5 for more information),
- The specific drivers and barriers that will be prioritized to implement the selected REDD+ activities, and
- How REDD+ implementation relates to a country's wider development framework and objectives and may contribute to it.

Figure 7: Understanding which REDD+ activities, or combination of, can be implemented in a country in a phased approach



Ensuring a quality NS / AP document through a quality design process

While NS / APs may take many different forms, the NS / AP document is an opportunity to demonstrate to conformity with UNFCCC guidance to stakeholders, and present the country vision for REDD+, and the proposed approach, actions, tools and processes towards results. A quality NS / AP document developed through a quality design process is an opportunity to:

- Make REDD+ more tangible to all stakeholders;
- Build trust and buy-in from the international community, as well as national stakeholders (i.e. high-level political support and a wide support base);
- Build confidence in a country's capacity to deliver REDD+ results to receive RBPs / RBF;
- Increase chances of attracting financial support from the international community (bilateral or multilateral sources) for its implementation; and
- Contribute to an effectively coordinated and efficient readiness process.

While there are no explicit criteria to assess the quality of a NS / AP (and no technical review mechanism to do so under the UNFCCC), below are a few elements that have been shown to be: (i) particularly helpful in some countries that have already engaged in this process; and (ii) important factors by some donors in financially supporting countries for REDD+ implementation:

- Being evidence-based (i.e. derived from or informed by objective evidence);
- Addressing the main direct drivers of deforestation and degradation, as well as their underlying causes (indirect drivers), and possible barriers to the '+' activities of REDD+ (as well as their potential);
- Presenting a credible yet ambitious strategic vision for REDD+, with transformative policies and measures;
- Demonstrating country commitment;
- Backed by (high-level) political support;
- Building or strengthening effective multi-sectorial coordination and cooperation mechanisms;
- Ensuring a transparent and participatory design process; and
- Articulating how the NS / AP differs from 'business as usual' actions.

This will obviously be very different according to each country's specific context and is by no means a checklist.

Guiding questions for NS / AP development

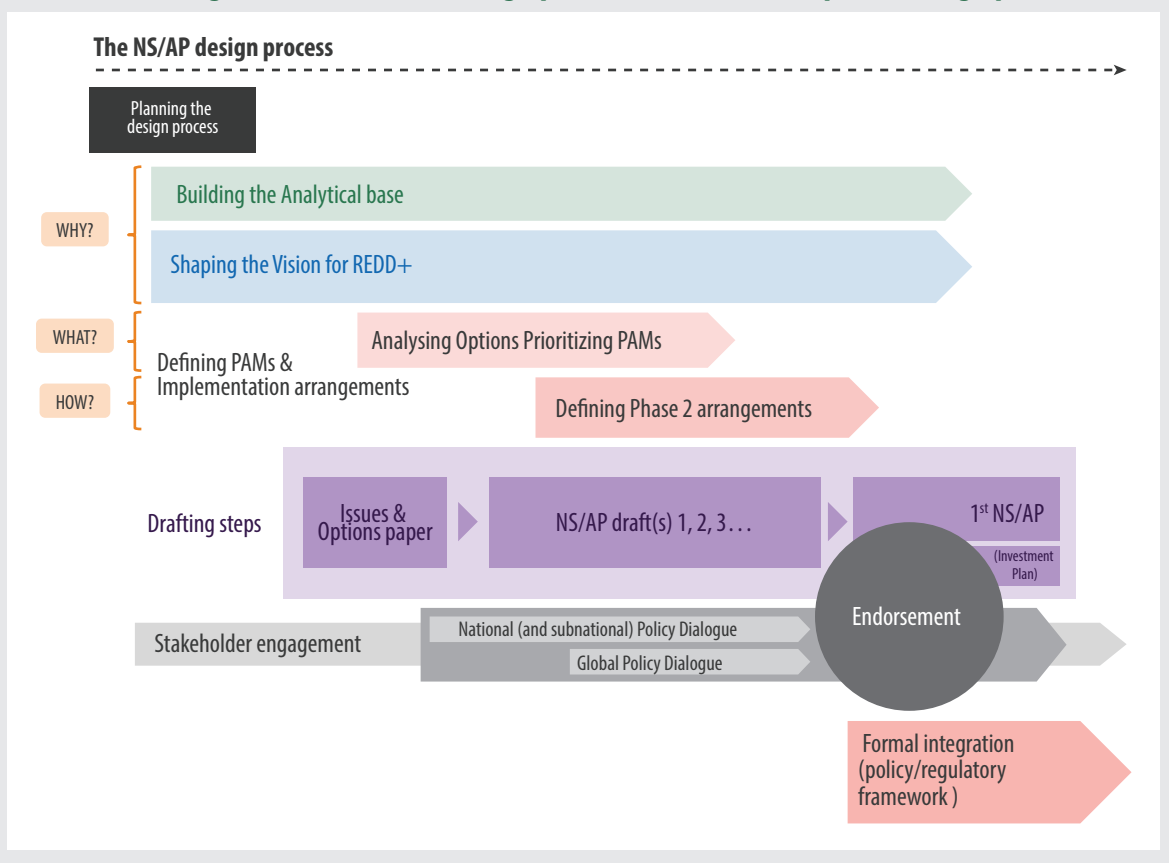
Although the UNFCCC does not provide guidance on the structure or template for a NS / AP, many countries have articulated their NS / AP document around the broad 'why', 'what' and 'how' questions, as a logical and flexible guiding structure:

- **'Why' (or 'what for')**: what is the overall context of the country, including its development framework? How does that relate, positively or negatively, to REDD+? What is its forest context (i.e. carbon stocks and fluxes, DDFD and barriers to the '+' activities, trends in land use change and carbon loss)? Considering all this, what is the vision for REDD+ and its contribution to national objectives? Or, put simply, what can REDD+ do for my country?
- **'What'**: what are the PAMs and approaches envisioned to achieve the REDD+ vision and results? How is this transformational?
- **'How'**: how will the NS / AP be implemented and results ensured: what are the legal,

institutional and financial arrangements as well as tools required for an effective implementation, management and monitoring of REDD+?

Building on the analytical work (existing and new data) and various strategic considerations depending on a country's vision for REDD+, the same underlying questions structuring the document may guide the sequencing of the overall NS / AP design process, as shown in **Figure 8**. The actual process will strongly depend on specific country circumstances (including existing relevant data, strategies and policies or planning processes, capacity).

Figure 8: The NS / AP design process: an iterative step-wise design process



Developing a NS / AP

Although the process followed will be highly dependent on national circumstances, it may be broken down into wide non-prescriptive key processes (**Figure 8**). These processes are by no means fully sequential, and many should actually progress in parallel, with regular interactions and feedback loops ensured:

- **Planning the NS / AP design process:** Countries may find it useful to develop an explicit overall roadmap of the NS / AP design process that may be shared and discussed with relevant stakeholders.
- **Building the analytical base:** Evidence-based data, built with contributions from various sectors and stakeholders, will be required to enable informed decision-making and policy design and ensure the validity of NS / APs. Countries should start with existing information while improving the knowledge base along the way, rather than wait for the best data. Depending on the national context and decisions made, the relevant analysis and tools may vary greatly. A pragmatic roadmap of analytical work

may be developed to ensure that necessary information will be available in a timely manner, taking into account financial and technical capacity.

- **Shaping the Vision for REDD+:** Building on existing information, visions, strategies and plans as well as the results of the analytical work, countries may consider defining their long-term vision for REDD+ and the strategic pathway for achieving it, including in its initial stages (i.e. 1st iteration of the NS / AP). This may include reflecting on the concrete goals that REDD+ may support achieving in the country (e.g. integrated rural development), in terms of the five REDD+ activities as well as wider national objectives and priorities. Such a vision for REDD+ is likely to be shaped gradually along the readiness process (and beyond), depending on, for example, the opportunities and constraints identified, the “business case” made for REDD+, capacity for securing high-level political support and actively engaging the various relevant stakeholders (including relevant land-use sectors and the private sector). Strategic decisions will need to be taken regarding the scope and scale of REDD+ and the priority drivers to be tackled.
- **Analysing options and prioritizing PAMs to implement:** In the context of REDD+, PAMs can be understood as actions taken and / or mandated by a government in order to implement REDD+ activities, potentially in combination with other objectives (such as integrated rural development or sectoral transformation). As such, the presentation of PAMs represents a central section of the NS / AP document.
- **Defining implementation arrangements (financial, legal and institutional):** Countries should define how they will ensure the efficient and effective implementation of REDD+ in Phase 2. This includes the institutional, legal and financial arrangements to oversee, coordinate, implement, monitor and report on REDD+ implementation. Institutional arrangements for the readiness phase may indeed have to be reconsidered in the implementation phase to be more in line with the drivers addressed and PAMs selected.
- **Drafting processes:** The drafting process of the NS / AP document is an opportunity for further consultation, both with in-country as well as international stakeholders, building up to a full version of the NS / AP. The length of this process will highly depend on the way it is conducted and the extent of consensus desired on the various elements of the documents.
- **Political and stakeholder endorsement:** Countries might consider undertaking an exercise of political endorsement or validation of their NS / APs. This refers to a formal ‘stamp of approval’ by the Government (including key ministries related to direct and underlying drivers of deforestation) as well as validation by relevant stakeholders. This will add weight and legitimacy to the document, especially if looking for financial support for REDD+ investment.
- **Formal integration of the NS / AP in the policy / regulatory framework:** Once the NS / AP has been endorsed, depending on the approach followed, countries might consider integrating it formally into the national policy and / or regulatory framework through various instruments, such as a Presidential or Ministerial Decree, or incorporated into national laws (e.g. climate change regulatory framework), according to national circumstances. Also, to the extent possible, the content of the NS / AP should be integrated into relevant cross-sectoral and sectoral plans at the national and subnational levels (e.g. agricultural plan or land-use plan, depending on the drivers addressed and strategic options selected). This may be a lengthy process but essential for the strategy to have a real transformational impact.

More information about these processes can be found in modules 4 (on NS / AP) and 7 (on PAMs) of the REDD+ Academy learning journal¹⁰¹.

3.4.1.4 Cross cutting issues throughout the NS / AP development process

1. National institutional clarity, leadership and coordination, and cross-sectoral implementation

The NS / AP design process is likely to require the convergence of information and efforts from many actors, sectors, thematic and geographical areas, at various levels of governance. Strong leadership from a unique governmental body over the whole readiness process, backed by an adequate legal framework and budget, is key to facilitate the effective functioning of the readiness and strategy design processes.

The government entry points for REDD+ in the readiness phases are often environment and / or forestry institutions. They are indeed most often the designated national entities or Focal Points on REDD+ to the UNFCCC¹⁰². However, a number of REDD+-relevant PAMs may lie outside of the mandate of forest / environment agencies, depending on the DDFD and context of forest conservation, enhancement and sustainable management. Considering the cross-sectorial requirements for REDD+ implementation and the higher-level political support necessary to achieve this, the original institutional arrangements that were set up for the REDD+ readiness phase might need to be adapted in the implementation phase. This depends on the country context, but may prove to be particularly politically sensitive, requiring careful strategic planning and sufficient political will.

It is therefore important for the UN-REDD Programme to work across ministries (including for example, Forestry, Environment, Agriculture, Planning, and Finance) to ensure broad understanding of, and support for, REDD+ and, as relevant, alignment of government actions, policies and measures to achieve REDD+ results. The institutional arrangements for REDD+ should be country-driven, and could be further supported by guidance from the UN-REDD Programme if and when appropriate.

2. Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is essential for the success of the identification, prioritisation and implementation of REDD+ activities. The UN-REDD Programme approach is that the development of the NS / AP should be supported by a multi-stakeholder platform. While each country will develop its own stakeholder engagement strategy depending on its specific context and needs, the strategy design process should involve a wide range of stakeholders, within and outside the government, across the various key sectors and levels of governance, including private sector actors (specifically those that are directly or indirectly driving deforestation and forest degradation), civil society organisations, indigenous peoples and others. Adequate consultation and the active participation of multiple actors will be key in creating a consensus around the NS / AP and its subsequent validation and implementation. Various means and channels can be used to fit the country situation, balancing between the need to ensure broad high-level support on the one hand, and time and cost effectiveness on the other.

Although not specific to the development of a NS / AP, the UN-REDD Programme and the FCPF

101 See footnote 100

102 Available at http://unfccc.int/land_use_and_climate_change/redd/items/8231.php

have collaboratively developed 'Guidelines on stakeholder engagement in REDD+ readiness with a focus on Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities'¹⁰³. These Guidelines should be taken into consideration during stakeholder engagement in the NS / AP development process. The Guidelines provide background and context on the inclusion of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities in REDD+ implementation.

Though not mentioned per se in the UNFCCC decisions, a key component of effective stakeholder engagement and consultation is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Building on the Joint Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines referred to above, the UN-REDD Programme developed 'Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent'¹⁰⁴. The FPIC Guidelines go one step further by outlining a normative, policy and operational framework for the UN-REDD Programme partner countries to apply UN-REDD Programme guidelines and principles, undertake effective consultations and obtain consent as and when appropriate, as determined by the partner country in consultation with relevant rights-holders and consistent with their duties and obligations under international law.

3. Multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder process

Since most DFDD and barriers to the '+' activities have their cause outside the forestry sector, it is important to build understanding, consensus, support and collaboration from the various productive sectors and cross-sectorial institutions from the readiness phase. Multi-sectorial engagement and coordination (including Forestry, Environment, Agriculture, Planning, and Finance, for example) are thus crucial, both in the readiness and implementation phases. The NS / AP design process is a good opportunity and medium for making REDD+ more tangible to other sectors. **Figure 9** provides an example of sectorial ministries and their possible input in the NS / AP development process.

Adequate cross-sectorial dialogue and coordination mechanism may need to be strengthened or created to facilitate subsequent alignment of government actions, policies and measures in the implementation phase to achieve REDD+ results. Higher-level political support is particularly critical in achieving this, which itself requires a robust business case for REDD+.



Photo: Damae Maniatis

103 Available at <http://www.unredd.net/documents/global-programme-191/stakeholder-engagement-295/key-documents-1095/6862-final-joint-guidelines-on-stakeholder-engagement-april-20-2012-6862/file.html>

104 Available at <http://www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/un-redd05.pdf>

Figure 9: Example of sectorial ministry engagement.



4. Gender considerations

Women and men's specific roles, rights and responsibilities, as well as their particular use patterns and knowledge of forests, shape their experiences differently. As such, gender-differentiated needs, uses and knowledge of the forest are critical inputs to policy and programmatic interventions that will facilitate the long-term success of REDD+ on the ground. To ensure that NS / APs are inclusive and resilient, specific attention must be paid to the specific roles, requirements and contributions of women and men at every stage of policy and programme development, from design through implementation and evaluation. Gender-responsive REDD+ NS / APs and policies and measures should therefore recognize the role of women as (oftentimes) primary users of forests with valuable knowledge and experience; clearly communicate the potential benefits to women; and include enforceable measures that ensure those benefits are both protected and delivered¹⁰⁵.

The UN-REDD Programme has developed two notes in relation to gender and REDD+: 'The business case for mainstreaming gender in REDD+'¹⁰⁶ and 'Guidance note on gender sensitive REDD+'¹⁰⁷. The objective of the Guidance note is to promote gender sensitive REDD+ processes and support UN-REDD Programme partner countries and stakeholders in the preparation, development and implementation of gender sensitive NS / APs for REDD+.

105 Available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/Low_Res_Bus_Case_Mainstreaming%20Gender_REDD+.pdf

106 See footnote 105

107 Available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/Guidance%20Note%20Gender%20Sensitive%20REDD%20English_FINAL.pdf

3.4.2 FOREST REFERENCE EMISSION LEVEL OR FOREST REFERENCE LEVELS (FREL / FRL)

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- A FREL / FRL for REDD+ is a benchmark for assessing a country's performance in implementing REDD+ activities (decision 12/CP.17).
- A FREL / FRL will be expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.
- FRELs / FRLs can be elaborated at a subnational scale as an interim measure while transitioning to the national level.
- FRELs / FRLs should maintain consistency with a country's GHG inventory (as reported to the UNFCCC), and if not, explanation needs to be provided.
- FREL / FRL may reflect one or more of the five REDD+ activities, and significant pools and / or activities should not be excluded, and reasons for omitting a significant activity or pool need to be provided in the submission.
- Key technical elements to be considered when developing a FREL / FRL are:
 1. Forest definition;
 2. Scope;
 3. Scale;
 4. Data and methodologies;
 5. National circumstances.
- Data and information needed to develop a FREL / FRL include historical activity data, emission factors, and national circumstances.
- A stepwise approach to national FREL / FRL development may be useful (decision 12/CP.17), as it allows countries to improve their FREL / FRL over time.
- The REDD+ NS / AP and the FREL / FRL are two of the four 'design' elements of REDD+ that are closely linked, particularly in relation to the scope of activities and scale of implementation.

A forest reference emission level / forest reference level (FREL / FRL) for REDD+ is a benchmark for assessing a country's performance in implementing REDD+ activities¹⁰⁸. It is to be expressed in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year. The UNFCCC does not provide distinct definitions for a FREL versus a FRL. A common interpretation of the terms is that FREL refers only to emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; whereas FRL can be applied to the enhancement of forest carbon stocks (i.e. to account for removals as well as emissions). Given the lack of an explicit differentiation under the UNFCCC, the abbreviation FREL / FRL is used throughout this document.

FRELs / FRLs can be established at a subnational scale as an interim measure – representing less than the country's entire national territory of forest area – while transitioning to the national level. They may reflect one or more of the five REDD+ activities, and significant pools and / or activities should not be excluded. If a significant pool or activity is excluded, reasons for omission need to be provided in the submission.

108 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

Given that measured, reported and verified REDD+ results will be compared against the FRELs / FRLs, there is a critical linkage between FREL / FRLs and MRV for REDD+. Maintaining consistency in methodologies, definitions, comprehensiveness and the information provided between the assessed FREL / FRL and the results of the implementation of REDD+ activities, as referred to in decision 14/CP.19, is essential. This helps to ensure that reductions are credible and not an artefact of inconsistent methodologies.

For ease of reference, **Figure 10** presents an overview of decisions relevant to FREL / FRL and a brief summary of the key points they contain.

Figure 10: Summary of UNFCCC decisions related to FREL / FRL for REDD+

4/CP.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FREL / FRL to be developed transparently • Taking into account historical data • Can be adjusted for national circumstances
1/CP.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests that FREL / FRL are developed as one of the four main elements to undertake REDD+
12/CP.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarks for assessing performance • Step-wise approach to develop FREL / FRL is recommended • Consistency with national GHG inventories submitted to the UNFCCC • Non-significant carbon pools may be excluded • Sub-national FREL / FRL may be used as an interim measure • Should be periodically updated to include new knowledge etc.
13/CP.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and procedures for technical assessment • Parties & relevant international organisations invited to support capacity building • Process for technical assessment described in the Annex • Annex provides detailed information on: objective, scope, procedures for technical assessment, the composition of the assessment team and timing

The UN-REDD Programme has released the following two publications to provide such support to countries: “Emerging approaches to Forest Reference Emission Levels and/or Forest Reference Levels for REDD+”¹⁰⁹, and “Technical considerations for Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level construction for REDD+ under the UNFCCC”¹¹⁰. The remainder of this section is based on these two publications, which readers are referred to for more detailed information.

¹⁰⁹ Available at http://unfccc.int/files/methods/redd/redd_web_platform/application/pdf/redd_20141113_unredd_frel.pdf

¹¹⁰ Available at https://unfccc.int/files/land_use_and_climate_change/application/pdf/redd_20150804_unredd_technical_considerations_frel_under_unfccc_en.pdf

3.4.2.1 What are the key technical elements to be considered?

There are several key technical elements, decision points or design features that need to be considered when establishing a FREL / FRL for REDD+. These are: (1) forest definition; (2) scope of activities; (3) forest carbon pools included; (4) scale (national or sub-national); (5) data and methodologies used, including the selected historical reference period, and (6) consideration of national circumstances and adjustments.

Forest definition: A forest definition typically includes minimum thresholds for crown area, tree height and land area, however different definitions of forest can exist and this is a country-determined decision. Threshold selection may be informed by several factors including predominant forest type in the country as well as other country-specific circumstances. According to the REDD+ FREL / FRL guidance agreed in Durban, the definition of forest used in the construction of the FREL / FRL will need to be provided in the reference level submission. If there is any difference between that definition and the one applied by the country in its national greenhouse gas inventory reported through a NC or BUR, or in reporting to other international organizations (e.g. FAO Forest Resources Assessment), then an explanation of why and how the definitions used are different will need to be provided. The forest definition used for the FREL / FRL should also be consistent with that applied for the NFMS.

Scope:

- **Activities:** FREL / FRL may reflect one or more of the five REDD+ activities, noting that all significant activities should be included in the scope. Although “significant” is not defined in the context of activities or REDD+ specifically, an explanation for the omission needs to be provided in the submission if a “significant” activity is omitted.¹¹¹
- **Pools and gases:** There are five IPCC forest carbon pools: aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, deadwood, litter and soil. According to the UNFCCC Durban decision on FREL / FRL, significant pools and gases should not be excluded from the construction of a FRL and Parties should give reasons for omitting any pool or gas. In terms of GHGs, CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O are those gases to be considered.

Scale: FREL / FRLs may be established at a subnational or national scale. If at national scale, a FREL / FRL can be a combination of subnational FREL / FRLs, according to UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16 (see **Box 1** for an illustration). If elaborated at a subnational scale, covering less than the entire national territory of forest area, this is to be an interim measure, while transitioning to a national FREL / FRL. While REDD+ is intended to be implemented at national scale, starting at a subnational scale may help countries test approaches and tools. Setting of the scale could be influenced by the types of actions, the scale of the DDFD, as well as by the administrative arrangements of a country.

Data and Methodologies: The Durban guidelines for REDD+ FREL / FRL submissions make it clear that the data, methodologies and procedures used in the construction of the FREL / FRL should be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the COP. In order to be consistent with IPCC methodologies, forest-related emissions by sources and / or removals by sinks should be estimated by combining activity

¹¹¹ The IPCC 2003 GPG notes that in the context of estimating emissions and removals, a sub-category (a pool or gas) is deemed significant if it accounts for at least 25- 30% of emissions / removals for the overall category.

data with emission factors (see section 3.3.3). For activity data in the context of REDD+ this implies looking at historical data to assess change in forest land use over a given time period. Emission factor estimates are typically obtained from country or region-specific literature or forest ground measurements. All data and information used to estimate tCO₂e per year should be consistent with that used in the national GHG inventory, for the purpose of MRV. If not consistent, an explanation needs to be provided in the submission. A historical reference period will need to be selected. This is the span of time over which historical emissions are estimated. This time period will likely be based on a combination of factors including data availability and the relevance of the past as a predictor of the future.

Consideration of National Circumstances: The FREL / FRL for some countries may be accurately and most appropriately based solely on historical data such of emissions from deforestation and / or forest degradation. For others an adjustment to the historical data may be required to more accurately reflect emissions from forest land that would occur in the absence of REDD+ implementation. The extent and type of eligible adjustments is not defined in the UNFCCC decisions, and there are no specific guidelines for countries to follow to account for national circumstances, if they opt to do so. UNFCCC guidance only states that adjustments should be justifiable and transparent.

Box 1: Illustration of multiple sub-national FRELs / FRLs

Mexico mentions in its draft REDD+ strategy that one of its key objectives is to “build the national reference level as an aggregation of state reference levels so that the performance of REDD+ activities undertaken can be measured at the state level, and the incorporation of other sub-national levels, including projects for carbon sequestration which are all mitigation actions of the forestry sector. This is a consistent and transparent nested approach” (Mexico draft national strategy¹¹²). Mexico’s submission to the FCPF Carbon Fund is consistent with this nested approach as it proposes a FREL for five states which will be ‘nested’ into national accounting (Mexico ER-PIN¹¹³). Nevertheless, Mexico – following considerable deliberation and discussion – will submit a national FREL / FRL to the UNFCCC as announced at COP 20 in 2014.

3.4.2.2 Types of data and information needed to develop a FREL / FRL

In order to conduct the data analysis involved in the development of a national and / or subnational FREL / FRL the following information needs to be collected:

- The established (or agreed) forest definition;
- Historical changes in forest area and land-use change data (activity data derived from the ‘M’ (measurement) of the MRV component of the NFMS). The historical period is to be decided by the country, in most cases a minimum of 10 years of historical data would be most appropriate; noting that higher frequencies of historical data (e.g. annual) will provide greater accuracy of changes over time);
- Forest carbon stock and carbon stock changes data (emission factor data derived from the NFMS);

112 Available at <http://www.conafor.gob.mx/web/temas-forestales/bycc/redd-en-mexico/estrategia-nacional-redd-enaredd/>

113 Available at <http://forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/February/Mexico-ER-PIN-CF9-English.pdf>

- Information on national circumstances (potentially including the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation as well as the barriers to the ‘+’ activities). Despite the lack of specific guidance, countries can look to the national circumstances considered in National Communications reports to the UNFCCC as one input into determining which circumstances may be relevant in the context of setting a REDD+ FREL / FRL. These are summarised in the UNFCCC user-manual for the guidelines on National Communications from non-Annex I Parties¹¹⁴. Specific circumstances that may be relevant to the future rate of forest emissions and removals include the DDFD, stage in forest transition, development plans and policies, and expected population changes.

The above steps should be carried out in a way that ensures consistency between the development of a FREL / FRL and the MRV component of the NFMS, as highlighted earlier in this section.

3.4.2.3 A step-wise approach

Decision 12/CP.17¹¹⁵ provides ‘modalities’ for FREL / FRL supported by an Annex on ‘Guidelines for submissions of information on forest reference levels’. The decision agrees that a stepwise approach to national FREL / FRL may be useful, as it would allow countries to improve their FREL / FRL over time. Countries should update their FREL / FRL periodically to reflect new knowledge, new trends and any modification of scope and methodologies. Importantly, the decision acknowledges that subnational FRELS / FRLs may be elaborated as an interim measure, covering less than the entire national territory, while transitioning to a national FREL / FRL.

Such an approach provides Parties with a starting point from which they can improve over time by incorporating better data, improved methodologies and additional activities, forest carbon pools and GHG gases, as part of their capacity development for REDD+ implementation. Countries are encouraged to develop and submit a FREL / FRL once they feel they have ‘adequate’ data and information to do so. A step-wise approach to developing FRELS / FRLs is also linked to determining the scope and REDD+ activities, and can therefore be considered to be an iterative process.

This idea is similar to the IPCC ‘tiered approach’ for GHG inventory estimates, which helps a country to deal with data availability and uncertainty, and thus allows for broad country participation. This ‘tiered approach’ is proposed in the IPCC Good Practice Guidance¹¹⁶ (GPG. 2003) for LULUCF as a mechanism for addressing, and progressively improving, uncertain and incomplete national-level data to estimate and report on forest carbon stocks and changes. This tiered approach can be considered a specific example (and is in itself a sub-component) of how to



114 Available at http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/application/pdf/userman_nc.pdf

115 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=17>

116 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gpplulucf/gpplulucf.html>

apply a step-wise approach for the development of a FREL / FRL, as it is a way to improve methodologies over a time, moving from regional or global defaults to more accurate country-specific data, decreasing uncertainty as the tier increases.

Point 2 above lists the steps and basic data requirements to develop a FREL / FRL. It is clear that the quality of data (with regard to historical changes, activity data, emission factors, drivers of forest change and national circumstances) should determine the methods used in developing FRELs / FRLs. A concrete example of developing a national FREL / FRL through a step-wise approach is presented in **Box 2**.

Box 2: Country example of using a step-wise approach to developing a FREL / FRL

Brazil's submission of its initial FREL in June 2014 is a concrete example of the step-wise approach, particularly in terms of scope of the FREL. Section 2c of the submission states the following: "The forest reference level proposed by Brazil in this submission includes only the activity 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation' in the Amazonia biome [...]." It then goes on to explain some of the data it is collecting in terms of forest degradation through a system known as DEGRAD. Subsequently, the submission states the following: "It is expected that this understanding [degradation process] improves with time, as new data becomes available, allowing for the future submission of a FREL for degradation".

If a country changes its forest definition between two submissions, an explanation should be provided of why and how the definition used is different to the previous submission, as well as details of any changes in data, methodology and/or scope (as mentioned in point 1 above).

3.4.2.4 Linking the FREL / FRL to a REDD+ NS / AP

The REDD+ NS / AP and the FREL / FRL are two of the four required elements of REDD+ that are closely linked, particularly in regards to scope of activities and scale of implementation. Determination of the scope of activities should be based on several considerations expected to be part of the REDD+ strategy process, such as analysis of DDFD, mitigation potential, the operational capacity of the NFMS and availability of historical data (i.e. for FREL / FRL). Determination of scale may be influenced by factors such as location and scale of drivers as well as implementation capacity at varying scales.

The NP / AP should inform the development of the FREL / FRL, the NFMS and the SIS – and vice versa. The REDD+ NP / AP may be updated with new information as a country gains more REDD+ implementation experience through a learning-by-doing process.

The FREL / FRL is also a benchmark by which the cumulative implementation effectiveness of PAMs can be assessed.

3.4.2.5 FREL / FRL submissions to the UNFCCC to date

Countries that have made FREL / FRL submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat which are posted on the REDD+ Web platform are¹¹⁷: Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Guyana, Malaysia, Mexico, Chile, Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru, Viet Nam and Zambia.

117 Available at <http://redd.unfccc.int/fact-sheets/forest-reference-emission-levels.html>

3.4.3 NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING SYSTEMS (NFMS)

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The primary function of the NFMS is the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of REDD+ activities (decision 11/CP.19).
- The 'monitoring' function of the NFMS can be primarily considered a domestic tool to allow countries to assess a broad range of forest information, including in the context of REDD+ activities.
- The NFMS decision of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (decision 11/CP.19) states that a NFMS should:
 - Provide data and information that are transparent, consistent over time, and suitable to be MRV'd;
 - Build upon existing systems while being flexible and allowing for improvement, reflecting the phased approach to REDD+ implementation;
 - Be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the COP, as appropriate, as a basis for estimating anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes;
 - Provide, as appropriate, relevant information for national systems for the provision of information on how the REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected.
- The UN-REDD Programme approach to NFMS is the development of three technical pillars that underpin the MRV function:
 - Pillar 1: A Satellite Land Monitoring System (SLMS) – to collect and assess, over time, the Activity Data (AD) related to forest land;
 - Pillar 2: National Forest Inventory (NFI) to collect information on forest carbon stocks and changes, relevant for estimating emissions and removals and to provide emissions factors (EF);
 - Pillar 3: A national GHG Inventory as a tool for reporting on anthropogenic forest-related GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks to the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- The three pillars of the NFMS can be developed along the three phases for REDD+ described in decision 1/CP.16.

Two decisions on NFMS and MRV were adopted in 2013 at COP19. The first (11/CP.19)¹¹⁸ covers the modalities for NFMS, reinforcing that the primary function of the NFMS is the MRV of REDD+ activities. Key elements of the Warsaw Framework NFMS decision text are that an NFMS should:

- Provide data and information that are transparent, consistent over time, and suitable to be MRV'd;
- Build upon existing systems while being flexible and allowing for improvement, reflecting the phased approach to REDD+ implementation (see **Figure 12**);
- Be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the COP, as appropriate, as a basis for estimating anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes

118 Decision 11/CP.19 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

Provide, as appropriate, relevant information for national systems for the provision of information on how the REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected.

The second decision (14/CP.19)¹¹⁹ covers the modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying REDD+ results, including an annex to the decision with guidelines for the elements to be included in the REDD+ BUR technical annex.

Key elements agreed in decision 14/CP.19 include:

- The data and information used by Parties in the estimation of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes, as appropriate to the REDD+ activities undertaken by Parties, should be transparent, and consistent over time and with the established FRELs / FRLs.
- Results of the implementation of REDD+ activities by Parties measured against the FREL / FRL should be expressed in tonnes of CO₂eq / year.
- Developing country Parties seeking RBPs / RBF for RBAs should submit a technical annex to the BUR. This annex is voluntary and should only be submitted when the country is requesting RBPs / RBF.
- Upon the request of the developing country Party seeking to obtain and receive payments for RBAs, two land use, land-use change and forestry experts from the UNFCCC roster of experts, one each from a developing country and a developed country Party, will be included among the members selected for the technical team of experts, which conducts the technical analysis of the BUR.
- The LULUCF experts on the Technical Team of Experts (TTE) will analyse whether the guidelines for the elements to be included in the REDD+ BUR technical annex, contained in the annex to Decision 14/CP.19¹²⁰, have been followed and will assess the transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness, completeness, and accuracy of the data and information provided as well as the accuracy of the results themselves. The LULUCF experts prepare a technical report as the output of this process. It is important to point out that this technical report is separate from the summary report prepared by the full TTE analysing the complete BUR, and unlike that summary report, the REDD+ technical report is not subject to the facilitative sharing of views as part of the broader International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) process. This technical analysis process is further detailed in Section 4.4.2 of this paper: *Technical analysis of the BUR REDD+ Annex*.
- REDD+ RBAs may be eligible for appropriate market-based financial incentives that could be developed by the COP and these may be subject to further specific modalities for verification.

The UN-REDD Programme has developed a comprehensive document on “*National Forest Monitoring Systems: Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (M&MRV) in the context of REDD+ activities*”¹²¹. This section is largely based on information provided in that document – noting that it was published in mid-2013 and therefore does not fully cover the UNFCCC decisions from Warsaw (November 2013).

The UN-REDD document elaborates that an NFMS for REDD+ can serve simultaneous functions: a ‘MRV’ function and a ‘monitoring’ function (see **Figure 11**). The process of

119 Decision 14/CP.19 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

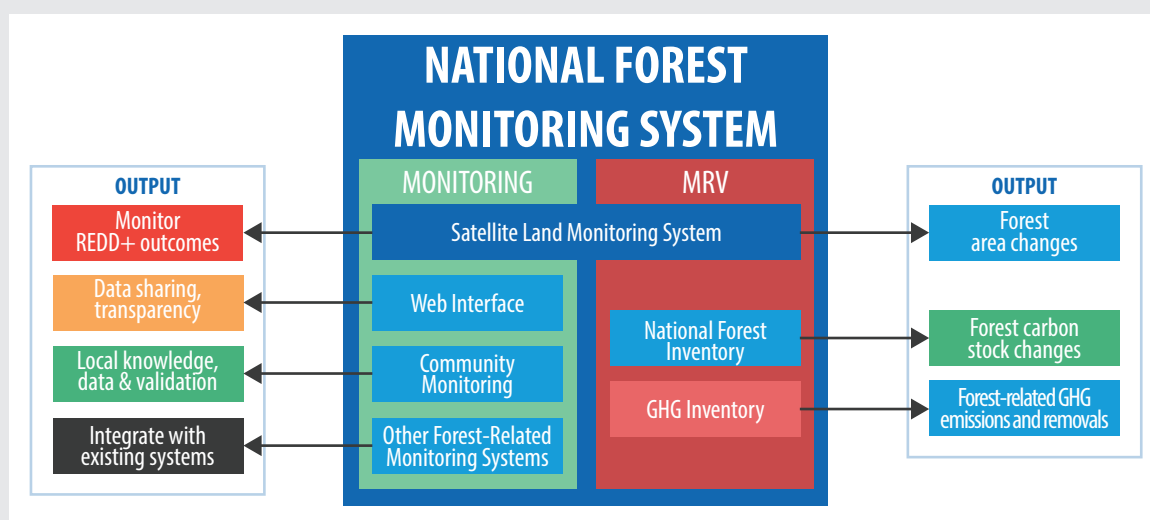
120 See footnote ¹¹⁸

121 Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc395e.pdf>

developing an NFMS should allow for incremental efforts to improve performance in recognition of countries' varied capabilities and national circumstances. In order to follow an iterative development and implementation process with well-defined steps and results a NFMS for REDD+ should be:

- a) Robust, transparent, and aim to be implemented at the national level, with subnational monitoring systems as a potential interim measure;
- b) Developed in line with relevant decisions of the UNFCCC on REDD+, notably decisions 4/CP.15¹²², 1/CP.16¹²³, 11/CP.19¹²⁴ and all other subsequent decisions adopted by the COP;
- c) Relevant for the phased approach to REDD+ implementation as set out by the UNFCCC (decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73¹²⁵).

Figure 11: Approaches, tools and outputs to fulfil the functions of the National Forest Monitoring System.



122 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11>

123 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

124 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

125 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

3.4.3.1 What does the Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) function entail?

MRV can be interpreted as the means to address countries' commitments to collect and share information on the progress of the implementation of provisions and / or commitments of Parties, according to Article 4.1 (a) of the Convention¹²⁶, to *"Develop, periodically update, publish and make available to the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article 12, national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, using comparable methodologies to be agreed upon by the Conference of the Parties."* An alternate definition to consider which might better reflect the updated context (since the Convention was signed) that MRV goes beyond inventory reporting / review is that MRV is a term used to describe *"all measures which states take to collect data on emissions, mitigation actions and support, to compile this information in reports and inventories, and to subject these to some form of international review or analysis"*¹²⁷.

In the context of REDD+, MRV is the process that countries will need to follow in order to estimate the performance of REDD+ activities in mitigating climate change – i.e. the emissions reductions and forest carbon stock enhancements – reported in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents per year (tCO₂e/yr). Because of this critical role in ensuring the environmental integrity of REDD+, MRV of REDD+ results is a pre-condition to countries receiving RBPs / RBF for RBAs.

The UN-REDD Programme approach to NFMS is supporting countries to develop three technical pillars or building blocks of the NFMS that are essential to support the MRV function:

- Pillar 1: A Satellite Land Monitoring System (SLMS) - including other remote sensing products such as Landsat satellite data – to collect and assess, over time, the Activity Data (AD) related to forest land;
- Pillar 2: National Forest Inventory (NFI) to collect information on forest carbon stocks and changes, relevant for estimating emissions and removals and to provide emissions factors (EF);
- Pillar 3: A national GHG Inventory as a tool for reporting on anthropogenic forest-related GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

To ensure that countries report their national GHG inventories in a transparent, accurate, complete, comparable and consistent manner, the UNFCCC COP decided that Parties should be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines to estimate anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks and forest area changes. These IPCC guidance and guidelines relate mainly to the Measurement and Reporting aspects of the MRV component of a NFMS. The UNFCCC has created a page on its REDD Web Platform¹²⁸ with links to the relevant IPCC guidelines and good practice guidance that should form the basis for how developing countries estimate and report on emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation and changes in forest carbon stocks, as requested of Parties in decision 4/CP.15¹²⁹ paragraph 1(c) and further strengthened in decision 11/CP.19 (**Table 5**).

126 Available at http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

127 International Partnership on Mitigation and MRV, available at <http://mitigationpartnership.net/measuring-reporting-and-verification-mrv-0>

128 Available at https://unfccc.int/methods/redd/redd_web_platform/items/6734.php

129 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11>

Table 5: Overview of IPCC Guidelines and Good Practice Guidance that could be relevant to estimate emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation and changes in forest carbon stocks

IPCC Guidance	
IPCC-NGGIP¹³⁰	IPCC-National Greenhouse Gas Inventories Programme
2006 IPCC Guidelines¹³¹	2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (5 Volumes)
GPG-LULUCF 2003¹³²	Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
Degradation of Forest¹³³	Definitions and Methodological Options to Inventory Emissions from Direct Human-induced Degradation of Forests and Devegetation of Other Vegetation Types
GPG2000¹³⁴	Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (accepted and published 2000)
Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines¹³⁵	Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (3 Volumes) (approved in 1996 and published in 1997)
Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines Software¹³⁶	IPCC Greenhouse Gas Inventory Software for the Workbook (published in 1997; Microsoft Excel 5.0c or later version is necessary)

The methodological equation proposed by the IPCC for estimating emissions and removals of GHGs (the ‘measurement’ component of MRV) is: emissions (E) = activity data (AD) x emission factors (EF).

3.4.3.2 What does the ‘Monitoring’ function consist of?

The “monitoring” function of the NFMS can be primarily considered a domestic tool to allow countries to assess a broad range of forest information, including in the context of REDD+ activities. The monitoring function can be implemented through a variety of methods and serve a number of different purposes, depending on national circumstances. In the REDD+ context it is likely to focus on the impacts and outcomes of 1) demonstration activities carried out during the second phase of REDD+ and 2) national policies and measures for REDD+ in the third phase of REDD+. It is also a tool that can help promote transparency of REDD+ actions to the wider international community.

130 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/>

131 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2006gl/index.html>

132 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/lulucf/gp/lulucf.html>

133 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/lulucf/degradation.html>

134 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/english/>

135 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/invs1.html>

136 Available at <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/software.html>

Each element of this equation represents a pillar of work, while the monitoring function will be nationally specific, and may encompass both REDD+-specific and non-REDD+ needs. The focus, however, should be on two REDD+-specific monitoring aspects:

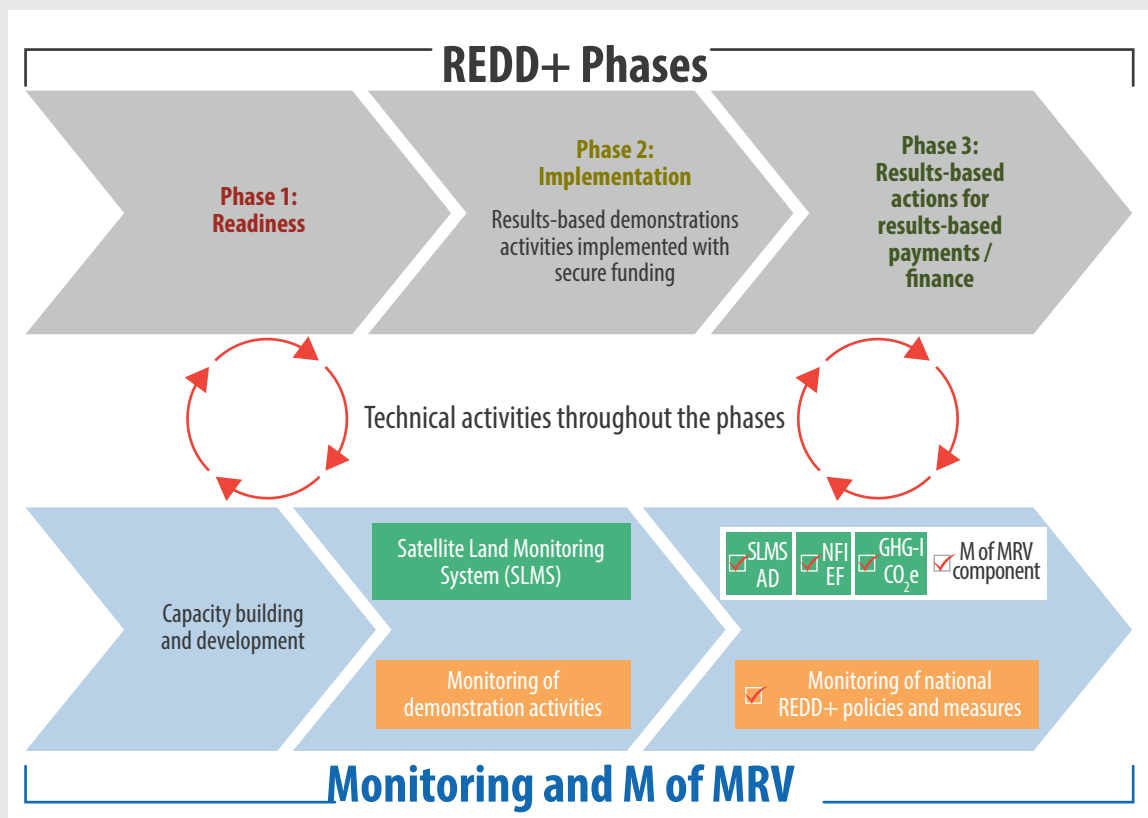
1. Monitoring to assess the performance of REDD+ demonstration activities in Phase 2;
2. Monitoring of the performance of national REDD+ policies and measures in Phase 3.

It is important to acknowledge that the performance of REDD+ activities, policies and measures can be assessed both through direct measurement of emissions stocks / removals and indirectly through a series of proxy indicators (e.g. forest canopy changes, forest certification schemes, etc.).

3.4.3.3 What is meant by a 'Phased implementation of the NFMS'?

The three pillars of the NFMS can be developed along the three phases for REDD+ described in decision 1/CP.16¹³⁷, allowing for the implementation of RBAs in Phase 2 and the full MRV of REDD+ RBAs in Phase 3 (Figure 12). Following this strategy, each phase aims to strengthen capacities and prepare for the next phase, resulting in a degree of overlap between phases, notably in terms of capacity building. In Phase 2, monitoring for REDD+ becomes operational, through the SLMS and relevant proxies / indicators. The transition into Phase 3 is achieved by monitoring REDD+ activities at the national level, a National Forest Inventory (NFI) to produce EFs and a national inventory of estimates of forest related GHG emissions and removals. Monitoring for REDD+ can be visualised throughout the REDD+ Phases as presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Phased implementation of the NFMS



137 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

3.4.4 SAFEGUARDS AND SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIS)

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- According to decision 1/CP.16, seven social and environmental safeguards should be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities.
- REDD+ countries are requested to develop a system to provide information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the REDD+ activities and should have this system in place, along with the other elements called for in 1/CP.16, in order to obtain and receive results-based finance.
- A Summary of information on how safeguards are addressed and respected is to be provided through countries' National Communications or can voluntarily be submitted directly to the UNFCCC REDD Web Platform.
- The summary of information on safeguards should be provided after the start of implementation of REDD+ activities in 1/CP.16, paragraph 70 and needs to be submitted before the country will be eligible to access RBPs / RBF for REDD+.
- According to decision 17/CP.21, the summary should provide information on which REDD+ activities are included (i.e., the scope). Developing country Parties are also strongly encouraged to provide the following in the summary:
 - Information on national circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards;
 - A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;
 - A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards, including information systems;
 - Information on how each safeguard has been addressed and respected, according to national circumstances.
- The UN-REDD Programme has a series of Internal Knowledge Products to support a country approach to safeguards and a Benefits and Risks Assessment Tool (BeRT) as well as the Country Approach to Safeguards Tool (CAST) which had previously been developed. AUN-REDD publication, "Safeguard Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations" is also available.
- The UN-REDD Programme has proposed a non-prescriptive framework for "unpacking," or clarifying each of the Cancun safeguards.

COP16 (Cancun) in 2010 agreed that a set of seven safeguards, commonly referred to as the Cancun Safeguards, should be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities. The safeguards in Appendix 1 of the relevant decision¹³⁸ indicate that when undertaking the REDD+ activities¹³⁹, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

- That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;*
- Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;*

138 Decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

139 Paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16 - available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

- 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 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.*

The **Cancun Agreements**¹⁴⁰ and subsequent decisions adopted in **Durban**¹⁴¹ also request Parties implementing REDD+ to develop a system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the REDD+ activities, in other words a Safeguard Information System (SIS). Both decisions are broad and leave considerable flexibility for Parties on how to implement them in practice.

The relevant decision adopted in Durban on providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected¹⁴² states that Parties undertaking REDD+ activities "...should provide a summary of information on how the safeguards in 1/CP.16¹⁴³ appendix I¹⁴⁴, are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities." The decision states that this summary of information should be provided periodically and be included in national communications. In the decision, it is also agreed that systems for providing information on how the safeguards are addressed and respected (SIS):

"...should take into account national circumstances, recognize national legislation and relevant international obligations and agreements, respect gender considerations, and:

- a) *Be consistent with the guidance identified in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I¹⁴⁵*
- 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 safeguards are being addressed and respected;*
- e) *Be country-driven and implemented at the national level;*
- f) *Build upon existing systems, as appropriate."*

140 COP 16, 2010 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

141 COP 17, 2011 – available at http://unfccc.int/meetings/durban_nov_2011/meeting/6245/php/view/decisions.php

142 Decision 12/CP.17 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

143 Decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

144 Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=26>

145 See footnotes ¹⁴² and ¹⁴³ respectively



Photo: UN-REDD Programme

The decision on safeguards adopted at COP 19 in Warsaw¹⁴⁶ (12/CP.19) pertains to the timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in Appendix I of the Cancun agreements¹⁴⁷, are being addressed and respected. The key elements of the decision are that:

- In addition to National Communications, it refers to an additional channel to provide the summary of information on how all of the safeguards are being addressed and respected, which is through the submission of the summary of information directly to the UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform;
- In terms of timing, the information on safeguards (whether through the national communication or the UNFCCC REDD Web Platform) should be provided after the start of implementation of the five REDD+ activities¹⁴⁸ and before the country aims to access RBPs, if seeking to do so;
- In terms of frequency, the information provided should be in line with the frequency of national communications, which are to be submitted every four years.

In addition, there is also reference to the summary of information on safeguards in Decision 9/CP.19, in which it was agreed that developing countries seeking to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF should provide the most recent summary of information on how all of the Cancun safeguards have been addressed and respected before they can receive RBPs / RBF.

In Paris at COP 21 (December 2015), Parties adopted decision (17/CP.21) providing further guidance on the summary of information on safeguards¹⁴⁹. Though not formally agreed yet, given that the draft decision text is to be forwarded to COP21 for adoption, it is still important to summarize the main elements here. According to the decision, developing country Parties:

- Should provide information on which REDD+ activities are included in the summary of information (i.e., the scope);
- Are strongly encouraged to provide the following in the summary:
 - a. Information on national circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards

146 Decision 12/CP.19 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=33>

147 Decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, See footnotes ¹⁴² and ¹⁴³ respectively

148 Paragraph 70, decision 1/CP.16 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

149 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a03.pdf#page=13>

- b. A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances
 - c. A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards, including information systems
 - d. Information on how each safeguard has been addressed and respected, according to national circumstances
- Are encouraged to provide any other relevant information on the safeguards in the summary and to improve the information provided over time, taking into account the stepwise approach.

With this decision, it was agreed that there is no need for further guidance to ensure the transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all of the safeguards are addressed and respected.

3.4.4.1 What does “Addressing” and “Respecting” the safeguards mean?

Though not specifically defined in the UNFCCC decisions, the UN-REDD Programme interprets “Addressed” to mean that a coherent body of Policies, Laws, Regulations (PLRs), and associated institutional arrangements, are in place (or planned to be put in place) to deal with the potential benefits and risks associated with REDD+ actions¹⁵⁰, and in doing so, seek to guarantee the implementation of the Cancun safeguards and adopted safeguards requirements. The UN-REDD Programme understands “Respected” to mean that the PLRs, through the associated institutional arrangements, are implemented and enforced in practice, and that this implementation affects real and positive outcomes on the ground, in line with the Cancun safeguards.

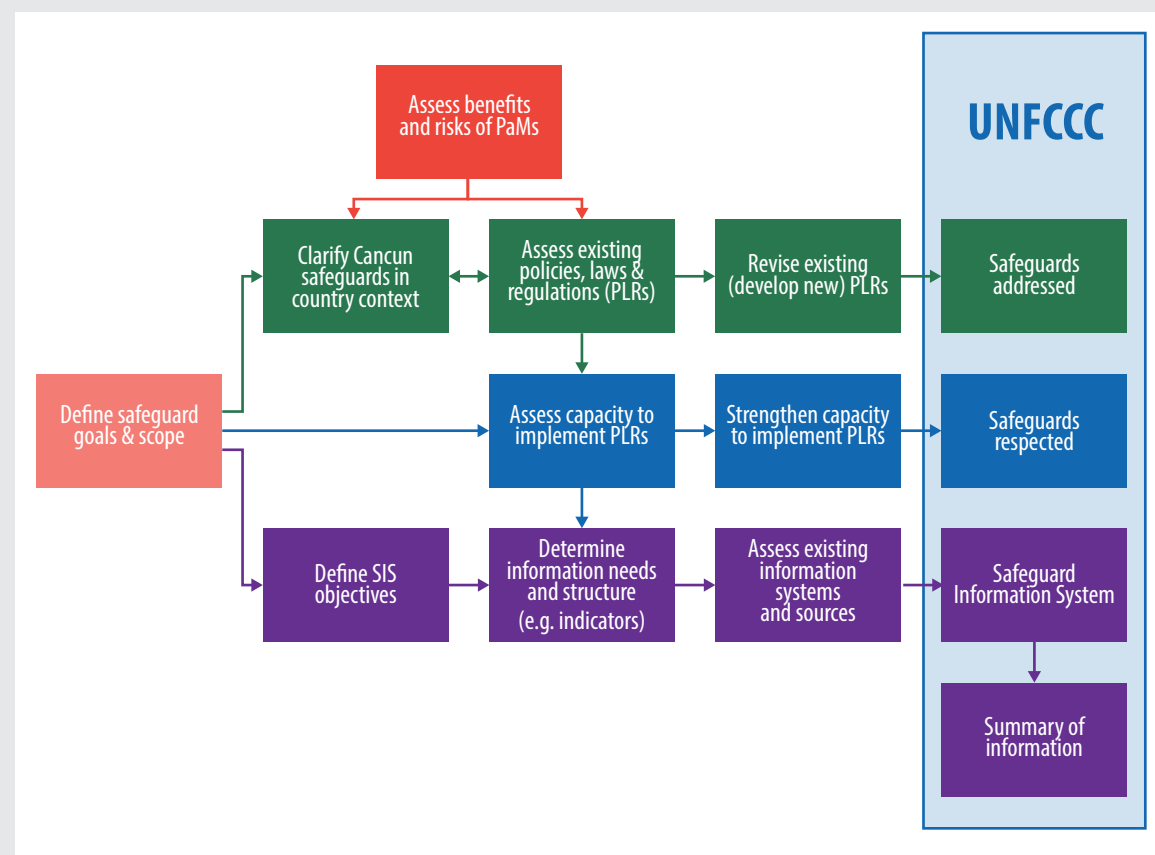
3.4.4.2 How can countries approach the Cancun safeguards?

Approaches to address and respect the Cancun safeguards will vary among countries. There is no blueprint for a country approach; each will be different and will reflect the specificities of national contexts, existing institutions and PLR framework as well as what the country defines as the overall goals and scope of safeguards application for REDD+. However, drawing on practical experiences, some generic steps can be identified, which may be useful for countries planning to develop their country approach to safeguards. A conceptual framework to enable the safeguards to be addressed and respected, as countries determine how to respond to the UNFCCC decisions on safeguards and a safeguard information system, can be accessed here¹⁵¹. Countries may decide to undertake some or all of these components, in varying sequences, and iteratively, depending on their specific context. It also indicates for which step(s) and activity(ies) UN-REDD tools and guiding documents may be considered most relevant and useful. This framework has since been updated and elaborated and the current version is represented in **Figure 13** with each key generic step explained in more detail.

150 Throughout this paper, ‘REDD+ actions’ refers to the specific policies and measures, under the five REDD+ activity categories agreed under the UNFCCC (decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 70 (a-e), elaborated in the REDD+ NS / AP and put in place to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (and / or enabling ‘plus activities’ - conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks).

151 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=document&alias=11892-un-redd-framework-for-supporting-the-development-of-country-approaches-to-safeguards-en-11892&category_slug=information-session-2-support-to-the-3381&layout=default&option=com_docman&Itemid=134

Figure 13: Generic steps for developing a country approach to safeguards.



A country approach to safeguards is a process to respond to international REDD+ requirements (UNFCCC Cancun safeguards and other safeguards as appropriate), in a way that is in line with national policy goals, by building on existing governance arrangements. These governance arrangements used to operationalize the Cancun (and other) safeguards, comprise three core elements:

- a. **PLRs** which define, on paper, what needs to be done in order to support implementation of REDD+ actions in a manner consistent with Cancun (and other) safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being addressed (see green boxes in Figure 13). PLRs are primarily codified statutory ordinance, but can also include corporate environmental and social responsibility policies, industry standards and customary norms of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- b. **Institutional arrangements** - the mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant PLRs are actually implemented in practice, i.e. how safeguards are being respected (see blue boxes in Figure 13). Such arrangements are typically institutionalised within public, private or civil society sectors, but may also involve arrangements to strengthen the individual capacities of citizens, including, including indigenous peoples and local communities, to implement and enforce relevant PLRs.
- c. **Information systems** which collect and make available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation (see purple boxes in Figure 13).

Defining safeguard goals and scope

In this context, defining goals refers to what safeguards or safeguards frameworks the country chooses to apply for REDD+ and whether the country opts to apply additional safeguards beyond those required by the UNFCCC. A country may also want to consider other bi-/multi-lateral safeguards requirements, such as the World Bank Operational Policies, if seeking funding through the FCPF.

Defining the scope of safeguards application will depend on how a country chooses to implement REDD+. The safeguards apply, by default, to all REDD+ actions comprising the NS / AP. Alternatively, countries may wish to consider broadening their application to other forestry and land-use interventions.

How can a country address safeguards?

What it means to address the safeguards will vary by country, but may be thought of as comprising three key steps:

1. Clarifying Cancun safeguards in the country context;
2. Assessing existing safeguards, e.g. relevant PLRs; and
3. Revising existing and/or developing new PLRs, as necessary, to ensure they cover the identified risks and potential benefits associated with REDD+ actions.

The first step entails clarifying (i.e. 'specifying' or 'unpacking') each of the seven Cancun safeguards according to the country's particular circumstances and context. The breakdown of the broad principles embodied in the Cancun safeguards into country-specific themes can be used to develop criteria, indicators or narrative statements as a means to further structure information in a country's SIS. The UN-REDD Programme developed the **Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria** (SEPC) as a guiding framework to support countries to interpret the Cancun Safeguards and the Programme has, more recently, developed an illustrative, international legal best practice-based, framework to assist countries clarify the Cancun safeguards in their own particular contexts, by providing indicative lists of key issues for each of the Cancun safeguards (see Table 6 below).



Photo: Danne Maniatis

Table 6: Illustrative framework for clarifying the Cancun safeguards¹⁵²

Safeguard	Key Issues
<p>Safeguard (a) - [REDD+] actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and complementarities with the objectives of the national forest programme. • Consistency with international commitments on climate; contribution to national climate policy objectives, including those of mitigation and adaptation strategies. • Coordination among agencies and implementing bodies for REDD+, national forest programmes and national policy(ies) that enact the relevant international conventions and agreements. • Consistency with the achievement of the 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), other environmental and natural resource management policy objectives. • Consistency with State’s human rights obligations under international law, including the core international human rights treaties and ILO 169, where applicable. • Consistency with other relevant international conventions and agreements.

152 Source UN-REDD (2015) Country Approach to Safeguards: Framework for Unpacking the Cancun Safeguards – available at http://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2234_5_cas-paper.pdf

Safeguard	Key Issues
<p>Safeguard (b) - Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty</p>	<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. • Coherency of national/subnational legal, policy and regulatory framework for transparent and effective forest governance. • Corruption risks. • Resource allocation/capacity to meet institutional mandate. • Institutional capacity to conduct appropriate data collection and planning for forest management. • Participation in decision-making processes (overlaps with Safeguards (c) and (d)).
<p>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</p>	<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	Key Issues
<p>Safeguard (d) - The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities [in REDD+ actions]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of relevant stakeholders - those who may affect, or be affected by, specific REDD+ actions. • 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 NS/APs, 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

Key Issues

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

- Definition of natural forest (consistent across legal framework, forest reference emission level/forest reference level, NS/AP) and understanding of the spatial distribution of natural forest.
- Design, prioritisation and implementation of REDD+ actions in a way that avoids or minimises 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, prioritisation and implementation of REDD+ actions in a way that avoids or minimises adverse social impacts and that promotes and enhances economic and social well-being, with special attention to the most vulnerable and marginalised 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 incentivise 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

Key Issues

Safeguard (f) - Actions to address the risks of reversals

- 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'.
- NFMS - including satellite land monitoring system, national forest inventory, greenhouse gas 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+ policies and measures, with human resources and technical capacities institutionalized.

Safeguard	Key Issues
<p>Safeguard (g) - Actions to reduce displacement of emissions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation, endorsement and continuous updating of a 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.

An assessment of how effectively existing PLRs address, on paper, the benefits and risks of planned REDD+ actions can be undertaken, 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 PLRs might be amended or new provisions drafted in order to strengthen the PLR framework.

What does it mean to “respect” the safeguards?

As with addressing the safeguards, what it means to respect the safeguards will depend on the country. In the context of a generic country approach as illustrated in **Figure 13**, 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 this PLR implementation. In the generic country approach, respecting safeguards may follow a similar process to that of addressing safeguards:

1. Assessing *existing* institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to implement PLRs; and
2. Strengthening those institutional arrangements to improve PLR implementation.

How can a Safeguard Information System be developed?

While decision 12/CP.17 does provide some guidance for the SIS, as included above, this does not go into detail regarding how an SIS might be developed. The following considerations for developing and structuring the content of a UN-REDD Technical Resource Document released in December 2015, titled REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations.¹⁵³

Steps to develop an SIS may include:

1. Defining SIS objectives, or the different domestic and international information needs to which the SIS should respond

At a minimum, the objective would be meeting the UNFCCC requirement of providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions. 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:

- Accessing funding;
- Improving REDD+ NS / AP implementation, through adaptive management;
- Increasing the legitimacy of REDD+.

2. 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. This step comprises two inter-related sub-steps that need to be considered together:

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

153 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=document&alias=15043-technical-resource-series-1-redd-safeguards-information-systems-practical-design-considerations&category_slug=studies-reports-and-publications-1364&layout=default&option=com_docman&Itemid=134

Safeguards information needs should be determined by the identified benefits and risks of REDD+ actions, together with the PLRs required to mitigate these risks and maximize the benefits.

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

The information structure will depend on many factors including but not limited to the:

- Scope of safeguard application chosen by the country;
- Scale of REDD+ intervention (national, subnational or local);
- Specific objectives of the SIS and the different end users of the information;
- Capacity and resources available to implementing institutions.

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

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

A country may also choose a hybrid approach, reflecting a combination of the two broad options above, selecting different structuring options for different safeguards.

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:

- **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 (C)** – 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, and as much as possible, it will be most efficient to identify existing indicators from existing information sources and systems, that may be relevant for the REDD+ SIS. Novel indicators may then be considered on a more limited basis, where a distinct information need, important to demonstrate safeguards are being respected, is not met by existing sources.

3. Assess existing information sources or systems relevant to safeguards

In order to make best use of the country's existing processes and ensure sustainability, countries should, to the extent possible, 'build upon existing systems' as called for in decision 12/CP.17, in order to meet their safeguards information needs.

An assessment of information systems and sources should not only identify existing information, but also information gaps that might be resolved by modifying existing systems to accommodate new information (e.g. new indicators), or developing new systems. Given the breadth of themes covered by the safeguards, one information source (or system) is unlikely to be able to provide all of the information needed for an SIS.

Examples of information systems and sources that may provide relevant contributions to an

SIS include, but are no means limited to:

- National population censuses;
- NFMS;
- Systems supporting national implementation of other international conventions, e.g. biodiversity data centres and networks;
- Sustainable forestry and agricultural commodity standards (including auditing reports);
- Grievance redress mechanisms¹⁵⁴.

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

1. What functions will the SIS need to perform to meet the desired country objectives?
2. What institutional arrangements are in place to ensure these functions are adequately operational?

What are the functions of the SIS?

An effective and operational SIS should perform one or more of the following key functions, as decided by the country:

- Information collection and management;
- Information analysis and interpretation;
- Information quality control and assurance;
- Information dissemination¹⁵⁵ and use.



Photo: UN-REDD Programme

154 Grievance redress mechanisms could be a particularly cost-effective source of safeguards information 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.

155 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: information cannot be disseminated if it has not first been collected, managed, analysed and interpreted.

What institutional arrangements may be considered for the SIS?

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-government institutions should also be considered.

3.4.4.3 UN-REDD safeguards tools

In addition to the information resources already mentioned which are available in French, English and Spanish, the UN-REDD Programme has also developed two different interactive tools that can support the development of country approaches to safeguards. These tools are intended to be applied voluntarily by REDD+ countries in order to support their planning efforts for activities related to safeguards and SIS, carried out in response to the relevant UNFCCC decisions.

Country Approach to Safeguards Tool (CAST)

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

- Make an informed assessment of / plan for development and application of their country approach to safeguards
- Identify, prioritize and sequence these relevant REDD+ safeguards and SIS activities
- Identify available information resources
- Clarify how the processes under various safeguards initiatives¹⁵⁶ correspond with a country approach

CAST can be used at any stage of safeguards planning; it is available in English, Spanish and French. The tool includes a comprehensive library of resources relevant to country approaches to safeguards, including both those of the UN-REDD Programme as well as those developed by other initiatives.

Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT)

BeRT is Excel-based, and is available in English, French and Spanish. It is designed to support countries to:

- Identify benefits and risks associated with REDD+ actions, in the context of the Cancun safeguards;

¹⁵⁶ For example: FCPF's Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)-Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), together with the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) initiative.

- 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+ actions / options to inform decisions on which actions to include in the REDD+ NS / AP;
- Provide content for use in the summary of information on how countries are addressing and respecting the safeguards through existing PLRs.

A number of knowledge products (e.g. webinars, power point presentations, etc.) have also been produced by the UN-REDD Programme to assist systematic application of the country approach to safeguards¹⁵⁷. Along with the Safeguard Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations paper, already summarized above, these may be referred to for more detailed information on the content presented in this section¹⁵⁸:

- Revised schematic diagram of country approach to safeguards (see **Figure 13**);
- Modular slide series on REDD+ safeguards:
- Introduction to safeguards;
- Country approach to safeguards;
- Clarifying the Cancun safeguards;
- Safeguard information systems (and summaries of information).
- Generic ToRs for the country approach to safeguards (including SIS design considerations);
- Glossary of key terms used in the country approach;
- Benefits and risk assessment framework (to accompany and compliment the BeRT v2.0);
- Illustrative framework for clarifying the Cancun safeguards within specific country contexts;
- Info Brief: Summaries of Information: How to demonstrate REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected¹⁵⁹.

The Programme has also produced a UN-REDD Programme publication on "Country Approach to Safeguards: Global Review of Initial Experiences and Emerging Lessons."¹⁶⁰

157 For more information about these or to access them, please contact the UN-REDD Safeguards Coordination Group: safeguards@un-redd.org

158 Available at http://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2234_5_cas-paper.pdf

159 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=document&alias=15299-info-brief-summaries-of-information-1-en&category_slug=safeguards-multiple-benefits-297&layout=default&option=com_docman&Itemid=134

160 Available at http://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2234_5_cas-paper.pdf

3.5 THE SCALE OF REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION: NATIONAL AND INTERIM SUBNATIONAL REDD+

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- REDD+ is a national scale mitigation effort; though subnational activities can be implemented as an interim measure.
- Starting REDD+ implementation at a subnational scale may help countries test approaches and tools. The setting of the scale could be influenced by the types of actions, the scale of the DDFD and the potential of the '+' activities, as well as by the administrative arrangements of a country.
- A country's FREL / FRL should be established at the national scale, but may be established on an interim basis only on a subnational scale. If at national scale, a FREL / FREL can be a combination of subnational FREL / FRELs. If elaborated at a subnational scale, covering less than the entire national territory of forest area, this is to be an interim measure, while transitioning to a national FREL / FRL.
- When a country implements subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure, this should include monitoring and reporting on how displacement of emissions is being addressed, and on the means to integrate subnational monitoring systems into a national monitoring system.
- The UN-REDD Programme provides no specific guidance on how it supports countries in this area. This section covers the following:
 - 1. The importance of scale for REDD+ implementation in countries;
 - 2. Understanding the various concepts;
 - 3. Examples are provided of nested approaches to REDD+ in Peru and Mexico;
 - 4. The challenges of working on REDD+ at multiple scales.
- The UN-REDD Programme supports countries in ensuring technical coherence (NFMS, FREL / FRL, NS / AP, SIS) when subnational programmes / activities are implemented, with the specific objective of integrating those experiences into the national approach.

The issue of scale in relation to 'subnational' systems, monitoring, reporting and FREL / FRL is mentioned in several decisions:

- Decision 4/CP.15¹⁶¹ (paragraph 1 d) requests developing countries to "establish, according to national circumstances and capabilities, robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems and, if appropriate, **sub-national systems** as part of national monitoring systems that [...]".
- Decision 1/CP.16¹⁶² (paragraph 71 b and c) request developing countries to develop the following elements: "(b) A national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level¹⁶³ or, if appropriate, as an interim measure, **subnational forest reference emission**

161 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11>

162 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

163 "In accordance with national circumstances, national forest reference emission levels and / or forest reference levels could be a combination of subnational forest reference emissions levels and / or forest reference levels".

levels and/or forest reference levels, in accordance with national circumstances, [...]; (c) A robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for the monitoring and reporting of the activities referred to in paragraph 70 above, with, if appropriate, **subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure**¹⁶⁴, in accordance with national circumstances, [...].”

- Decision 12/CP.17¹⁶⁵: “Acknowledges that **subnational forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels may be elaborated as an interim measure**, while transitioning to a national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, and that **interim forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels of a Party may cover less than its entire national territory of forest area**”.

It is critical to have a clear and consistent interpretation of what these decisions mean for countries seeking to have REDD+ results recognised under the UNFCCC and seeking RBPs / RBF.

The UN-REDD Programme views the footnotes to Decision 1/CP. 16 as important signals (see footnotes ¹⁶³ and ¹⁶⁴). It is stated there that, “*in accordance with national circumstances, national FREL / FRL could be a combination of subnational FREL / FRL.*” In addition, the Cancun decision also states that in the context of a country applying subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure, this is to include monitoring and reporting on how displacement of emissions is being addressed, and on the means to integrate subnational monitoring systems into a national monitoring system. Therefore, prior to embarking on the implementation of REDD+ actions at the subnational level, a country may wish to (a) carefully assess its capacity to develop a subnational FREL / FRL and implement subnational forest monitoring (including the assessment of emissions and removals at the subnational level) and (b) give consideration to the means by which it would integrate the subnational forest monitoring into a national forest monitoring system.

The UN-REDD Programme understands this footnote text to imply that a country would need to demonstrate interdependence of results achieved in different subnational areas and provide clarity on how these would be integrated and scaled-up to a national level, in order to seek payments for these various results measured independently in separate subnational areas.

Given this interpretation, it is understood that in the case where a REDD+ country intends to submit separate FRELs / FRLs for different sub-national areas within the country, the technical annex should demonstrate that the sum of these results is being compared with the sum of the FRELs / FRLs, rather than being reported separately. In other words, there is an expected interdependence between sub-national areas within a country. For example, if there is poor performance in one area it will affect the mitigation outcome for the country as a whole and the associated RBPs / RBF. This is important to ensure environmental integrity of the results.

The issue of scale for REDD+ implementation under the UNFCCC is a topic of much debate in many countries. It is often difficult for REDD+ practitioners to understand what ‘subnational’ implementation may consist of and what the implications may be. The UN-REDD Programme has stressed the importance of having a robust NFMS that can track all potential subnational initiatives which implicitly stresses the need for a national vision and capacities. However, it

164 “Including monitoring and reporting of emissions displacement at the national level, if appropriate, and reporting on how displacement of emissions is being addressed, and on the means to integrate subnational monitoring systems into a national monitoring system”.

165 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

does not provide explicit guidance on how it supports countries in dealing with sub-national scale initiatives. This section attempts to clarify some of the key concepts related to the issue of the scale of REDD+ implementation.

1. Understanding the various concepts

No clear definitions have been provided in UNFCCC decisions for 'interim' or 'subnational,' allowing for flexibility and a learning-by-doing approach at the national level. Subnational may refer to a subnational administrative unit / jurisdiction (e.g. a federal state, province or district, an ecoregion or an area defined by other boundaries (e.g. project boundary).

The UN-REDD Programme interprets 'interim subnational' as *the full implementation of RBAs for REDD+ while recognising that it is interim, moving to a national scale and requiring a national forest monitoring system that is able to capture the changes in emissions and removals resulting from the 'interim subnational' implementation of REDD+.*

It is important to distinguish between the following concepts:

- **Subnational programmes and / or initiatives:** take place at a smaller scale than the national level but are larger than a project, they can be understood as REDD+ programmes or activities that are administered at a subnational level (e.g. Brazil's Amazon biome). The boundaries need not be administrative;
- **Jurisdictional scale:** a geographic area encompassing one or more administrative units (FCPF CF MF¹⁶⁶);
- **REDD+ Projects:** a specified set of REDD+ actions circumscribed to a given geographical area (usually smaller than the subnational scale), usually carried out by non-state actors.

The aforementioned concepts (subnational programmes / actions, jurisdictional and REDD+ projects) may function together simultaneously in a country within a 'nested approach'. The UN-REDD Programme defines a 'nested approach' as: *A national management and incentive framework that accommodates REDD+ RBAs at various levels of scale and implementation (such as jurisdictional, subnational and project levels) with respective levels of RBPs / RBF while maintaining environmental integrity.*

It is therefore possible for subnational programmes and REDD+ projects to be stand-alone initiatives or 'nested' within a larger national scheme, which may or may not be part of the national level process under the UNFCCC. They may be recognised under the UNFCCC if they are consistent with UNFCCC requirements and are integrated in the national REDD+ process and its accounting scheme (nested)¹⁶⁷(see **Box 3**). Moreover, financing from an international REDD+ approach under the UNFCCC can coexist with financing from other sources, for example other market-based finance, as long as the accounting is reconciled and not double-counted or paid for twice.

166 Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/carbon-fund-methodological-framework>

167 Forest Trends (2012) REDD+ in Vietnam: Integrating National and Subnational approaches - http://www.forest-trends.org/documents/files/doc_3227.pdf

Box 3: The example of a nested approach in Peru

Peru states in its R-PP¹⁶⁸ that:

“Peru considers the adoption of a REDD+ Strategy appropriate and consistent with its national circumstances, using a nested approach that allows the evolution, as specific capacities required by the mechanism’s implementation are strengthened, of subnational (regional and local) initiatives toward an integrated, efficient national approach in order to reduce emissions, promote sustainable development and support the decentralization process. In essence, the nested approach makes it possible to begin the implementation of REDD+ at subnational (local and regional) level, growing toward the national level as capacities increase in the country to design, implement, monitor, verify and report on REDD+ initiatives at all levels. Initially, emission reductions would only be reported for local-level initiatives, later for local-and regional-Level initiatives, and finally for all levels. The various initiatives would be added as these are provided endorsed and registered following rules and procedures that make it possible to maintain the environmental integrity of the set of initiatives. In other words, the nested approach allows for subnational initiatives to be in REDD Phase 3 (performance-based incentives) even though the national level is still in Phase 1 (Readiness) or Phase 2 (implementation)...When subnational initiatives “graduate” and are registered in the REDD+ “National Registry,” they would have the right to market the verified emission reductions that have been generated in their respective areas. In the hypothetical case that the UNFCCC’s future REDD+ mechanism only recognizes national emission reductions, the State would provide priority access to international incentives for those initiatives that have been registered, thus reducing the risk of public and private investments in REDD projects.”

Developments with RBPs / RBF under the FCPF Carbon Fund and the KfW-“global REDD programme for Early Movers” (KfW-REM) programmes are showing a strong trend towards large-scale subnational programmes. Indeed, in their Emission Reduction Program Idea Notes (ER-PIN¹⁶⁹) submitted to the FCPF, Mexico, Ghana, DRC, Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Nepal, Chile and Peru, all proposed sub-national program areas. Further, KfW-REM signed an agreement in 2012 to pay for emission reductions with the State of Acre in Brazil. Of all the countries involved in operational RBPs / RBF for REDD+ to date, only Guyana¹⁷⁰, Ecuador¹⁷¹ and Costa Rica¹⁷² are embarking on national level RBPs / RBF schemes for REDD+.

2. The importance of scale for REDD+ implementation in countries

Several countries have implemented early sub-national REDD+ actions while UNFCCC guidance was being finalised. Such actions are important for countries to gather REDD+ implementation experience and offer an opportunity to inform the NS / AP development process. Attention is required early on to ensure coherence between these various initiatives

168 Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Mar2011/Peru%20R-PP-%20Final%20English%20Translation-March7%20version-March16,%202011.pdf>

169 Available at <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/er-pins-and-early-ideas-presented>

170 Guyana has signed a bilateral agreement with Norway.

171 Ecuador is currently negotiation a results-based payment agreement for REDD+ with KfW-REM.

172 Costa Rica has signed a letter of intent to develop a National Emission Reduction programme with the view to sign an Emission Reduction Payment Agreement with the World Bank.



Photo: Damae Mamiatis

and how they will be scaled-up to the national scale, in an integrated way, especially if various partners are involved and different standards are used. Ensuring the adequate coordination of REDD+ efforts at different geographic scales (i.e. national, jurisdictional, project) and ensuring robust information flows through appropriate channels may be a considerable challenge for countries.

Some REDD+ actions may be more suited to, or generate more carbon and multiple benefits in, specific geographical areas. The suitability of any given action in a specific location depends upon the existing legislation governing the use of that land, the potential for carbon and additional benefits, compatibility with the Cancun safeguards (e.g. on natural

forest conversion) and, usually, the willingness of the local stakeholders to cooperate. The economic viability of the action may be an important deciding factor, unless there is additional financial or political support for actions that are expected to lead to additional benefits. Some spatial analysis tools, such as the Exploring Multiple Benefits Mapping Toolbox developed by UNEP-WCMC¹⁷³, may assist a country in optimizing costs and benefits and identifying priority areas for REDD+ actions.

3. The challenge of working at multiple scales

Although 'on the ground' experiences are crucial to inform the national process, they are often accompanied by challenges. Four challenges are identified here.

The first challenge relates to information sharing and learning. Several initiatives characterised as REDD+ projects have been developed independently by private or NGO project developers following voluntary carbon market standards, which may not require project developers to liaise with or inform the national government. Furthermore, national governments often lack the tools to consolidate useful information originating from projects. Due to this, countries often struggle to have information on where REDD+-relevant projects are being implemented in their territory and how they can support or inform the national REDD+ process.

Secondly, the channels and conditions for the provision of RBPs / RBF will likely be different at different scales. A significant difference between the UNFCCC REDD+ decisions and independent projects is that, in line with decision 10/CP.19¹⁷⁴, RBPs / RBF are likely to be made to entities nominated by the REDD+ focal points and national REDD+ entities. The decision text does not exclude it, but it is unlikely that many different REDD+ project developers will be nominated under this paragraph. It is more likely that receiving RBPs / RBF under the UNFCCC will be centralized in one or a few entities, who will then further allocate the resources to different entities within the country. As a result, many such independent projects are designed more as Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP), rather than as testing grounds for broader policies and measures to address the DDFD and the barriers to the '+' activities. The UNFCCC REDD+ decisions do not address the issue of how REDD+ RBPs / RBF are to be distributed within a country (other than that it should be in accordance with the Cancun safeguards). There is no requirement under the UNFCCC for countries receiving REDD+ RBPs / RBF to pass on payments to specific programmes, projects or rights holders. The UN-REDD Programme's experience with supporting various countries suggests that, implementation of REDD+ requires upfront payments and other non-monetary inputs, furthermore there are important transaction costs associated with strengthening and maintaining the capacity of public institutions in charge of essential tasks such as forest monitoring, or addressing and respecting safeguards. Therefore it cannot be simply assumed that RBP / RBFs can be "passed on" to sub-national actors.

Thirdly, if not carefully placed in context, REDD+ projects can create undesired outcomes with local stakeholders by raising expectations and conveying incomplete information about what participation in REDD+ entails, raising issues of carbon rights and benefit sharing without prior national readiness processes to discuss the implications. Such discrepancies with the UNFCCC decisions and national processes are less likely in the case

173 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=13111&Itemid=53

174 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=28>

of large scale subnational programmes supported through KfW-REM or the FCPF Carbon Fund, since eligibility criteria require sub-national programmes to be coherently integrated and aligned with national strategies and policy goals related to REDD+. Furthermore RBPs / RBF agreements are signed with a national entity (REDD+ focal points) which is usually the Ministry of Environment or Forestry or an entity designated by the REDD+ focal point. It is important to note that the UNFCCC REDD+ decisions are not prescriptive on how benefits are to be shared once RBPs / RBF is received. However, the FCPF Carbon Fund and the KfW-REM RBPs / RBF initiatives require that Emission Reduction Programmes develop and provide a clear “Benefit Sharing Plan” which specifies how RBPs / RBF resources will be passed on to sub-national programmes, projects or rights holders.¹⁷⁵

A fourth challenge of working at multiple scales is that of emissions displacement: where emissions that are reduced in one subnational area are not fully abated but merely shifted to another location within the national boundary. For example, if the rate of logging (and associated emissions) were reduced through project-level activities at one site but logging increased in another part of the country, this would constitute displacement of emissions – i.e. leakage. The challenge of reducing the risk of displacement, which is one of the seven UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards, lies in the ability of an intervention to comprehensively identify, address and ameliorate the driver of the forest-related emissions. Leakage still occurs with policies and measures are implemented at the national scale since the effectiveness of implementation will vary across a country. However, this leakage will have no impact on the environmental integrity of the national framework since its impact will be captured in the national results measured through the NFMS. Given this, decision 1/CP.16¹⁷⁶ contains important footnotes, as described earlier, stating that in the context of a country applying subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure, this is to include monitoring and reporting on how displacement of emissions is being addressed, and on the means to integrate subnational monitoring systems into a NFMS¹⁷⁷.

Countries may wish to take the above-mentioned challenges into consideration before implementing subnational programmes and / or REDD+ projects. Further possible implications of subnational programmes and / or REDD+ projects relating to double-counting when countries seek RBPs / RBF are discussed in section 5.2.3.

The UN-REDD Programme supports countries in trying to ensure technical coherence (NFMS, FREL / FRL, SIS) when subnational programmes / activities are undertaken by countries with the specific objective of integrating those experiences into the national approach.

175 The FCPF Carbon Fund’s methodological framework’s indicator 30.1 states that the Benefit-Sharing Plan should contain the following information: “*The categories of potential Beneficiaries, describing their eligibility to receive potential Monetary and Non-Monetary Benefits under the ER Program and the types and scale of such potential Monetary and Non-Monetary Benefits that may be received. Such Monetary and Non-Monetary Benefits should be culturally appropriate and gender and inter-generationally inclusive. The identification of such potential Beneficiaries takes into account emission reduction strategies to effectively address drivers of net emissions, anticipated implementers and geographical distribution of those strategies, **land and resource tenure rights (including legal and customary rights of use, access, management, ownership, etc. identified in the assessments carried out under Criterion 28), and Title to ERs, among other considerations.***” This implicitly suggests that at least part of the RBP resources should be “passed on” to rights holders. Government should carefully consider costs and benefits associated with the implementation of sub-national REDD+ programs before they commit to such benefit sharing.

176 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

177 See footnote ¹⁶⁴

3.6 WHAT IS MEANT BY NON-CARBON BENEFITS IN A REDD+ CONTEXT?

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- REDD+ implementation has the potential to deliver environmental and social benefits beyond carbon, referred to as non-carbon benefits (NCBs) in the UNFCCC negotiations, and as 'the multiple benefits of REDD+' by the UN-REDD Programme.
- Safeguard (e) of the Cancun safeguards addresses NCBs of REDD+ by referring to enhancement of other social and environmental benefits of REDD+.
- Decision 9/CP.19 (2013) recognizes the importance of incentivizing NCBs for the long-term sustainability of the implementation of REDD+ activities.
- The UN-REDD Programme supports countries in their work on applying the UNFCCC's REDD+ safeguards as well as on land-use planning to support decisions on the multiple benefits of REDD+.
- It is unlikely that countries will receive premium payments under the UNFCCC for enhancing social and environmental co-benefits beyond carbon.

While REDD+ has as its core objective the mitigation of global climate change, its implementation also has the potential to deliver other environmental and social benefits. In the UNFCCC negotiations these have been referred to as Non-Carbon Benefits (NCB); while the UN-REDD Programme's work refers to 'the multiple benefits of REDD+'.

Though there is no formal definition of NCBs of REDD+ under the UNFCCC, the UN-REDD Programme interprets the term to include benefits beyond carbon / GHG emission reductions or enhanced removals which are generated and/or enhanced through REDD+ implementation. Most countries consider this scope to include both social and environmental benefits at a minimum, though additionally economic and cultural benefits have also been proposed as categories for NCBs. Potential environmental NCBs include promotion of biodiversity conservation and securing provision of ecosystem services such as water regulation, timber production, erosion control and the supply of non-timber forest products. Potential social benefits of REDD+ include improved livelihoods, clarification of land tenure, and stronger governance.

As previously discussed, safeguard (e) of the Cancun safeguards addresses NCBs of REDD+ by referring to REDD+ actions being 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.

NCBs are also addressed in the context of REDD+ NS / APs and implementation. Paragraph 72 of decision 1/CP.16 indicates that the COP "Also requests developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of annex I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia, indigenous peoples and local communities;"

Guidance provided by the same decision when implementing REDD+ activities, notes that

these are to be consistent with the objective of environmental integrity, take into account the multiple functions of forests and other ecosystems, be consistent with Parties' sustainable development needs and goals as well as promote sustainable management of forests.

Decision 2/CP.17 contains further implications for NCBs within the development and implementation of national strategies and actions plans when it states that "[...] *policy approaches and positive incentives for mitigation actions in the forest sector, as referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, can promote poverty alleviation and biodiversity benefits, ecosystem resilience and the linkages between adaptation and mitigation, and should promote and support the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix 1, paragraph 2(c-e),...*".

Decision 9/CP.19 recognises the importance of incentivizing NCBs for the long-term sustainability of the implementation of REDD+ activities. Article 5 of the Paris Agreement¹⁷⁸ also reaffirms the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, NCBs associated with REDD+ as well as Joint Mitigation and adaptation approaches.

In addition to the broader UNFCCC decisions referenced just above, the issue of NCBs in relation to REDD+ was also formally initiated as a dedicated UNFCCC negotiating stream of discussion at COP 18 (2012), where Parties agreed to discuss how NCBs could be incentivised and requested SBSTA to initiate work on methodological issues related to NCBs resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities. Technical negotiations on methodological issues related to NCBs were finalised at the 42nd SBSTA session in Bonn in June 2015, where the SBSTA chair recommended a draft decision text on NCBs for adoption at COP21¹⁷⁹.

This decision 18/CP.21¹⁸⁰, adopted in Paris in December 2015, recognizes that countries may be seeking support to integrate NCBs into the REDD+ activities, with a view to contribute to the long-term sustainability of those activities and encourages those countries to provide information addressing, inter alia, the nature, scale and importance of the NCBs, via the UNFCCC REDD+ web platform. Furthermore, the draft decision makes it clear that methodological issues related to NCBs resulting from the implementation of the five REDD+ activities are not a requirement to receive support for either the implementation of REDD+ actions or to receive RBPs / RBF.

To ensure that REDD+ delivers benefits and that risks are reduced, in line with safeguard (e) as well as decision 9/CP.19, which recognizes the importance of incentivizing NCBs for the long-term sustainability of the implementation of REDD+ activities, the UN-REDD Programme supports countries in their work on applying the UNFCCC's REDD+ safeguards as well as on land-use planning to support decisions on the multiple benefits of REDD+. NCBs are important in the context of broader strategic planning for REDD+ and national objectives.

178 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>

179 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/sbsta/eng/l05a03.pdf>

180 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l10a03.pdf>

WHAT ARE THE REDD+ INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS AND WHEN DO COUNTRIES NEED TO SHARE INFORMATION REGARDING REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION?

4

4.1 'INFORMATION HUB' ON THE UNFCCC REDD+ WEB PLATFORM

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The objective of the information hub is to increase transparency of information on RBA, on the corresponding payments and on countries' four required elements (decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71).
- The Lima REDD+ information hub is hosted on the existing UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform.
- The UNFCCC Secretariat will publish information on the results of REDD+ implementation and corresponding RBPs / RBF on the site.

At COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013, a decision¹⁸¹ was adopted which includes a few important paragraphs¹⁸² on the creation, and the information to be held on, a new information hub that is hosted on the already existing UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform¹⁸³. The Lima REDD+ Information Hub has since been established and is fully operational, already containing information for Brazil, at the time of writing.¹⁸⁴ The UNFCCC Secretariat will publish information on the results of REDD+ implementation and corresponding RBPs / RBF on the site. The objective of the hub is to increase transparency of information on RBA, on the corresponding payments, as well as on countries' four required elements¹⁸⁵, without creating additional requirements for developing countries. The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ sets out six required 'information types' to be published on the information hub if a country is seeking RBPs / RBF (**Figure 14**).

181 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

182 Paragraphs 9-12 available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=25>

183 Available at http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/redd_web_platform/items/4531.php

184 Available at <http://redd.unfccc.int/info-hub.html>

185 As per decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>



Figure 14: The six 'information streams' that the information hub on the UNFCCC REDD+ Web platform will contain.

National Strategy or Action Plan	Link published
Assessed national FREL /FRL	The assessed FREL / FRL expressed in tCO ₂ e/year and a link to the final report of the technical assessment team.
NFMS	Description of the NFMS as provided in the BUR technical annex
Summary of information on safeguards	Summary of information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected , provided as part of the National Communication or submitted directly to the UNFCCC REDD+ platform
Reported results	The results for each relevant period expressed in tCO ₂ e/year and a link to the technical report prepared by the LULUCF experts on the TTE, which would be published on the web platform
Additional information on RBP	The quantity of results for which payments were received, expressed tCO ₂ e/year, and the entity paying for results



4.2 INFORMATION REQUIRED WHEN SEEKING RBPs / RBF

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- To obtain and receive RBPs / RBF (for RBA), REDD+ actions should be fully measured, reported and verified and the four REDD+ required elements should be in place (decision 9/CP.19).

In order to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF (for RBA), REDD+ actions should be fully measured, reported and verified and the four required elements¹⁸⁶ should be in place¹⁸⁷. **Figure 15** (see next page) summarises how information related to the four core elements is communicated, as well as the process and timing for technical assessment and analysis, and what goes onto the UNFCCC Lima REDD+ information Hub.

When seeking to access RBPs / RBF for REDD+ RBA, countries should make available information in the specific format it is called for, which in turn undergoes a specific assessment (FREL / FRL) or analysis (BUR technical REDD+ annex) process. This is presented in sections **4.3** (for the assessment of the FREL / FRL) and **4.4** (for the reporting and technical analysis of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities).

¹⁸⁶ As per decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

¹⁸⁷ As per decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 3 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

Figure 15: Summary of the four required elements and what is needed when seeking RBPs / RBF for RBA.

What	UNFCCC Channel	Process	Timing	Information Hub on the REDD+ Platform	Reference
National Strategy (NS) or Action Plan (AP)	None	No further action	When seeking RBP	As appropriate, link to NS or AP	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11
National FREL / FRL	FREL / FRL submission	Technical assessment in context of RBP	When ready (especially when seeking RBP)	FREL/RL Submission & final assessment report	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (b) 13/CP.19
Results in tonnes of CO₂eq per year	Technical Annex BUR	Technical assessment in context of RBP	Every two years	Final technical report	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (a) & (e) 14/CP.19
Safeguard (SG) Information	National Communication Web platform	No further action	Approximately every four years	Summary of information on addressing & respecting SG	9/CP.19 para 3 & 11 (c)



Photo: Daniele Mantratis

4.3 THE TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF A SUBMITTED FREL / FRL

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Decision 13/CP.19 provides guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of FRELs / FRLs submitted by Parties.
- The technical assessment process is coordinated by the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- A FREL / FRL may be submitted at any time and will be assessed during the next scheduled assessment session, if received at least ten weeks before that session.
- Each submission will be technically assessed by an Assessment Team (AT).
- The process for the assessment of a FREL / FRL submission to the UNFCCC is described

A FREL / FRL may be submitted at any time, on a voluntary basis, when the Party deems it appropriate, and following the guidelines in decision 12/CP.17¹⁸⁸. The FREL / FRL will be assessed during the next scheduled assessment session, following the date the submission is made, as long as it has been received no later than ten weeks before that scheduled assessment session. Each submission will be technically assessed by an AT in accordance with the procedures and timeframes established in the guidelines agreed in Warsaw.

Decision 13/CP.19¹⁸⁹ provides guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions of proposed FRELs / FRLs from Parties. The technical assessment process is coordinated by the UNFCCC Secretariat. Each AT is composed of LULUCF experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts. Participating experts serve in their personal capacity and cannot be nationals of the Party undergoing the technical assessment nor funded by that Party.

The assessment sessions are scheduled once a year, and any submissions received by the UNFCCC Secretariat no later than ten weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at that session. The objectives and scope of the FREL / FRL technical assessment process are summarised in **Figure 16**.

The objective of the FREL / FRL technical assessment process under the UNFCCC is two-fold. The main objective of the assessment is to assess the degree to which the information provided by Parties is in accordance with the guidelines for submissions of information on FRELs / FRLs. The assessment process also offers a facilitative, non-intrusive technical exchange on the construction of FRELs / FRLs with a view to support the capacity of REDD+ countries to improve their FREL / FRLs over time.

188 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

189 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=34>

Figure 16: Summary of objective and scope of a FREL / FRL as presented in the decisions (based on the Annex of decision 13/CP.19).

Objectives	Scope
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess the degree to which information provided by Parties is in line with the guidelines for submissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistency of FREL / FRL with emissions and removals contained in GHG-I
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer a facilitative, non-intrusive, technical exchange of information of the construction of FREL / FRL with a view to supporting capacity of developing countries	<input type="checkbox"/> How historical data have been taken into account
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extent of information being: transparent, complete, consistent and accurate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Description of relevant policies and plans (as appropriate)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes to previous FREL / FRL taking into account a step-wise approach
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pools and gases, and activities included (or not)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Definition of forest used
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assumptions about future changes to domestic policies included or not
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extent to which the FREL / FRL value is consistent with the information and descriptions provided by the Party.

Each AT will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the submitted FREL / FRL and as the main output of the process the AT will prepare a report, under its collective responsibility. The process for the assessment of a FREL / FRL submission to the UNFCCC is as follows (the timeline is shown in **Table 7**):

- a. The UNFCCC secretariat should forward all relevant information to the AT at least eight weeks before the start of the assessment session;
- b. Prior to the assessment session, the AT should identify any preliminary issues requiring clarifications from the Party;
- c. The Party that submitted the FREL / FRL may interact with the AT during the assessment of its submission to provide clarification and additional information to facilitate the assessment by the AT.;
- d. The AT may seek additional clarifications from the Party no later than one week following the assessment session. This may result in the provision of technical inputs to the Party on the construction of its FREL / FRL;
- e. The Party is to provide clarifications to the AT no later than eight weeks following the

request. As a result of the facilitative process referred to above, the Party may modify its submitted FREL / FRL in response to the technical inputs of the AT;

- f. In the event that the Party modifies its submitted FREL / FRL in response to the technical inputs of the AT, the AT will consider this information within four weeks from the submission of the modified FREL / FRL;
- g. The AT will prepare a draft report and make it available to the Party no later than 12 weeks following the assessment session. In the case that a Party has modified its submitted FREL / FRL, this period will be extended to no more than 16 weeks following the assessment session. The report should include an assessed forest reference emission level and / or forest reference level and, if relevant and appropriate, areas identified for further technical improvement, and capacity-building needs for the construction of future forest reference emission levels and / or forest reference levels;
- h. The Party will have 12 weeks to respond to the draft report of the AT;
- i. The AT will then prepare a final report within four weeks following the Party's response. This final report should include the contents described above for the draft report, and, in addition, should contain the Party's response to the draft report;
- j. The assessment team will send the report to the secretariat for publication via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.

In 2014, Brazil was the only country to submit a proposed FREL. Five Parties then submitted their FREL / FRLs for the 2015 assessment session: Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Malaysia and Mexico.

In late 2015 / early 2016, nine countries submitted their FREL / FRLs for the 2016 assessment session: Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru, Viet Nam and Zambia. These submissions are available and the technical assessment reports are expected to be made available by the end of 2016.

All FREL / FRL submissions are available on the REDD+ web platform¹⁹⁰. The technical assessment reports for 2014 and 2015 are also available on the UNFCCC website.

The UNFCCC has produced a synthesis report providing an overview of the first two TA sessions and challenges faced so far as well as solutions implemented and suggestions for future improvements to the process.¹⁹¹

190 Available at <http://redd.unfccc.int/fact-sheets/forest-reference-emission-levels.html>

191 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/sbsta/eng/inf02.pdf>

Table 7: Timeline for technical assessment of FREL / FRL (submissions in 2016).¹⁹²

	Technical assessment 2016	Technical assessment 2017
Early notice to the secretariat	Latest by 2 November 2015	Latest by 31 October 2016
Deadline for reference level submission (no later than 10 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 4 January 2016	Latest by 2 January 2017
Information forwarded to assessment team (8 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 18 January 2016	Latest by 16 January 2017
Assessment session in Bonn (1 week)	14 – 19 March 2016	13 – 18 March 2017
Seeking additional clarifications from the Party (up to 1 week)	21 – 28 March 2016	20 – 27 March 2017
Party to provide clarifications (8 weeks)	29 March – 23 May 2016	27 March – 22 May 2017
4 weeks for assessment team to consider modified reference level (applicable in the case that the Party modifies its submitted reference level)	23 May – 20 June 2016	22 May – 19 June 2017
Assessment team to prepare draft report	Latest by 11 July 2016	Latest by 10 July 2017
Party to respond to draft report (12 weeks)	Latest by 3 October 2016	Latest by 2 October 2017
Assessment team to prepare final report within four weeks following the Party's response	Latest by 31 October 2016	Latest by 30 October 2017
Final report published and technical assessment completed	11 November 2016	10 November 2017

¹⁹² This table has been adapted from a message send to Parties by the UNFCCC secretariat on 19th of February 2015. In this note the secretariat has informed Parties that “dates for 2017 are indicative and the exact dates may still change in case of clashes with events which are difficult to envisage at this point in time” - available at http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/notifications/application/pdf/message_to_parties_information_on_the_submission_of_proposed_forest_reference_emission_levels_and_or_forest_reference_levels.pdf

4.4 MEASUREMENT, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Reporting: Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and National Communications (NCs):
 - Countries will report results of REDD+ implementation through BURs. A description of the NFMS and results in tCO₂e / yr will have to be reported through a technical annex of the BUR;
 - The information on safeguards will have to be reported through NCs;
 - The submission of a FREL / FRL is done through an independent submission to the UNFCCC;
 - Results submitted for RBPs / RBF should be expressed in tCO₂e / yr;
 - The core elements of the NC (for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties) are information on the activities a Party has undertaken to implement the Convention and on emissions and removals of GHGs;
 - Annex I countries and Non-Annex I are to submit NCs every four years;
 - To complement the NCs, in 2011 COP17 adopted guidelines for the preparation of BURs from non-Annex I Parties. BURs are to be submitted every two years.
- The technical analysis of the BUR REDD+ Annex:
 - Is an important iterative process between countries and LULUCF experts which is required before a country can receive RBPs / RBF;
 - Its modalities and rules were adopted in decision 14/CP.19.

The modalities for MRV¹⁹³ of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities were adopted during the Warsaw COP in 2014. Key elements of this decision have already been summarized in section 3.4.3 of this document.

The measurement of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities has also already been presented in section 3.4.3. However, the reporting and 'verification' rules and modalities have not been presented explicitly in the above section and are instead presented here.

193 See decision 14/CP.19 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

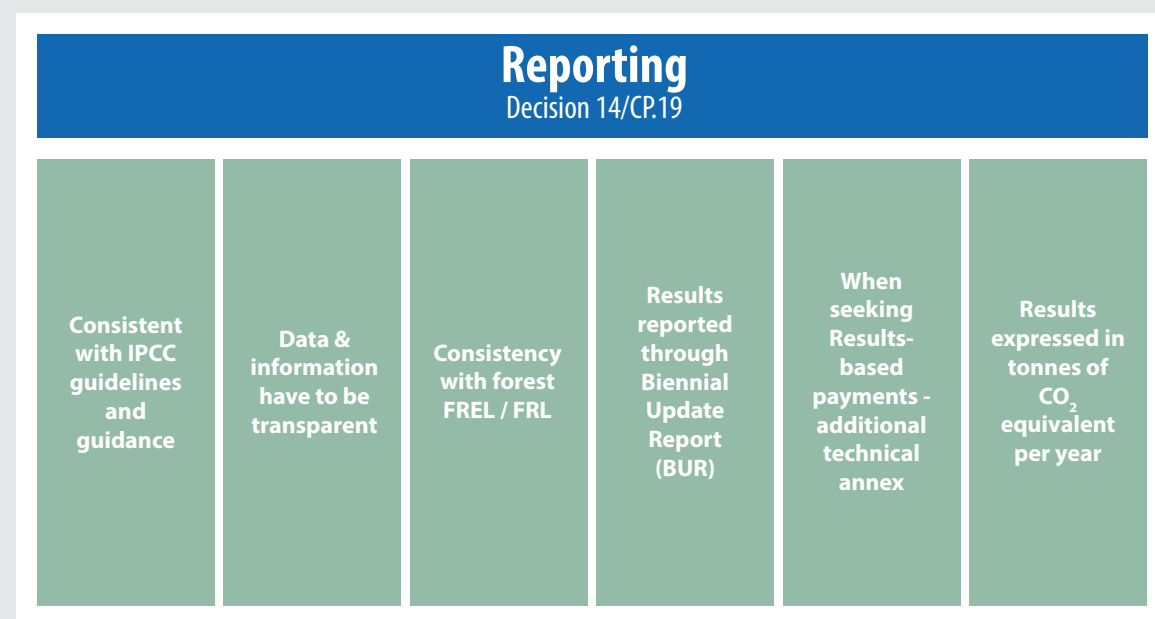


Photo: Danne Maricic

4.4.1 REPORTING: BURS AND NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS (NCS)

Countries will report results of REDD+ implementation through the BUR, in a REDD+ technical annex. In addition to the results in tCO₂e / yr, a description of the NFMS is also to be reported through this technical annex. It is important to note that the submission of a FREL / FRL is done through an independent submission to the UNFCCC (not a NC or a BUR). **Figure 17** summarises the key elements that countries need to take into account when reporting the results of REDD+ activities through the technical Annex of a BUR.

Figure 17: Key elements to take into account when reporting REDD+ implementation results.



The core elements of the NC (for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties) are information on the activities a Party has undertaken to implement the Convention and on emissions and removals of GHGs. NCs typically contain information on national circumstances, a vulnerability assessment, financial resources and transfer of technology, and education, training and public awareness.

Guidelines for the preparation of NCs for non-Annex I Parties have existed since COP2 in 1996. These were reviewed and revised guidelines were adopted at COP8 in 2002¹⁹⁴. As of COP16, Non-Annex I countries are to submit their NCs every four years, mirroring the NC reporting frequency of Annex I countries¹⁹⁵.

In 2011, in order to complement the NCs, COP17 adopted guidelines for the preparation of BURs from non-Annex I Parties¹⁹⁶. Non-Annex I countries were to submit their first BUR by December 2014, with Least Developed Country (LDC) Parties and Small Island Developing

194 Available at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/items/1408.php

195 See decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 60 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=11>

196 It is important to note that Annex I countries are obligated to submit BURs as well. A main difference is that these will go through a more rigorous review process called "Institutional Assessment and Review" (IAR) versus the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) for non-Annex I BURs.

States (SIDS) given the flexibility to submit BURs at their discretion. BURs are to be submitted every two years.

A BUR can actually be submitted in the year of a NC: “...non-Annex I Parties shall submit a biennial update report every two years, either as a summary of parts of their national communication in the year in which the national communication is submitted or as a stand-alone update report”.¹⁹⁷

The UNFCCC website has a dedicated webpage¹⁹⁸ containing the relevant guidelines and manuals related to NCs and BURs for non-Annex I Parties. The difference in scope between the two types of reports is presented in **Figure 18**. Examples of submitted NCs and BURs can be accessed through the UNFCCC website^{199,200}.

Figure 18: Difference in scope between NCs and BURs for non-Annex I countries.

Scope of National Communications	Scope of Biennial Update Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National circumstances • National GHG inventory • Programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change • Programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change • Any other information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Transfer of technologies (b) Research and systematic observation (c) Education, training and awareness (d) Capacity building (e) Information and networking • Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National circumstances and institutional arrangements • National GHG inventory • Mitigation action and their effects – methodologies and assumptions • Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needs – support needed and received • Level of support received for BURs preparation and submission • Domestic MRV • Any other relevant information

A comparison of the differences of the reporting requirements between NCs and BURs is summarised in **Table 8**.

197 See decision annex III of decision 2/CP.17 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=39>

198 Available at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/guidelines_and_user_manual/items/2607.php

199 Available at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/items/2979.php

200 Available at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/reporting_on_climate_change/items/8722.php

Table 8: Comparison of reporting requirements for national GHG inventories in the reporting guidelines on national communications and the reporting guidelines on BURs for non-Annex I countries²⁰¹

Elements	National Communications	Biennial Update Reports
Methodology and metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines (“should”) IPCC good practice guidance (“encouraged”) 1995 IPCC GWP values (“should”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodologies established by the latest UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines, IPCC good practice guidance and IPCC good practice guidance for LULUCF (“should”) 1995 IPCC GWP (“should”)
Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial national communication: 1994, or alternatively 1990 (“shall”) Second national communication: 2000 (“shall”) LDCs (“at their discretion”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first (and the subsequent) BUR shall cover, at a minimum, the inventory for the calendar year no more than four years prior to the date of the submission, or more recent if available
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter of national communication Tables 1 and 2 (“encouraged”) Sectoral tables and worksheets (“encouraged”) Information on methodologies (“encouraged”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National inventory report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables 1 and 2²⁰² (“should”) Annex 3A.2 of the IPCC good practice guidance for LULUCF and the sectoral tables annexed to the Revised IPCC Guidelines (“encouraged”) Summary information tables of inventories for previous submission years (e.g. for 1994 and 2000) (“encouraged”) Additional or supporting information may be submitted in a technical annex (“encouraged”) Time series – provide a consistent time series back to the years reported in the previous national communication (“encouraged”)

201 Adapted from Table 3 in the UNFCCC “Handbook on measurement, reporting and verification for developing country parties” – available at http://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/annex_i_natcom/application/pdf/non-annex_i_mrv_handbook.pdf

202 Table 1 is contained in the annex to decision 17/CP.8, “National GHG inventory of anthropogenic emission by sources and removals by sinks of all GHGs not controlled by the Montreal Protocol and GHG precursors” and table in the annex to decision 17/CP.8, “National GHG inventory of anthropogenic emissions of HFCs, PFCs and SF6”.



Photo: Doree Maniatis

4.4.2 TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BUR REDD+ ANNEX

After reporting the results of REDD+ implementation in the BUR, the REDD+ technical analysis process, as part of the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) under the UNFCCC, can take place. This is an important iterative process between countries and LULUCF experts which is required before a country can receive RBPs / RBF.

The modalities and guidelines for the ICA of the BURs for developing countries were adopted at COP17²⁰³. In this decision, it is recognized that the ICA corresponds to the international measurement, reporting and verification of internationally supported mitigation actions (NAMAs) called for at COP16.

The modalities and rules for the technical analysis of REDD+ results²⁰⁴ were adopted at COP 19 in Warsaw. The technical analysis by the LULUCF experts joining the technical team of experts for the ICA will specifically analyse the extent to which:

- a. There is consistency in methodologies, definitions, comprehensiveness and the information provided between the assessed reference level and the results of the implementation of the REDD+ activities²⁰⁵;
- b. The data and information provided in the technical annex is transparent, consistent, complete²⁰⁶ and accurate;
- c. The data and information provided in the technical annex follows the guidelines for elements to be included in the technical annex and is consistent with earlier methodological decisions adopted by the COP²⁰⁷;
- d. The results are accurate, to the extent possible.

203 Decision 2/CP.17 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=4>

204 See decision 14/CP.19, paragraph 11 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=40>

205 See decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

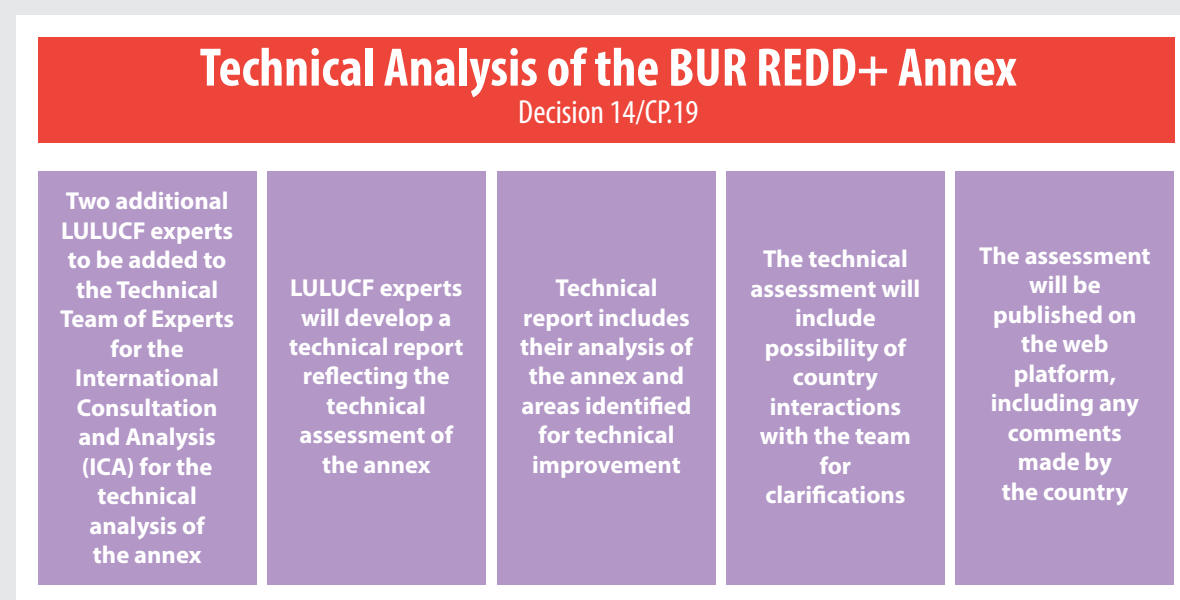
206 Complete means here the provision of information that allows for the reconstruction of the results.

207 See decisions 4/CP.a5 and 12/CP.17 – respectively available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=11> and <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

The technical analysis of the BUR REDD+ Annex results in a technical report prepared by the LULUCF experts, which includes their analysis of the annex and areas identified for improvement. It is important to point out that this technical report is separate from the summary report prepared by the full TTE analysing the complete BUR, and unlike that summary report, the REDD+ technical report is not subject to the facilitative sharing of views as part of the broader ICA process. At the time of writing, only Brazil has submitted a REDD+ technical annex as part of a BUR and had it technical analysed as part of the ICA of the BUR. The technical report assessing the annex is available on the UNFCCC website.²⁰⁸

The technical analysis, which is included within the modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying for REDD+²⁰⁹, is summarised in **Figure 19**. It was also agreed in paragraph 15 of the same decision that RBAs that may be eligible for market-based approaches that could be developed by the COP²¹⁰, may be subject to further specific modalities for verification consistent with any relevant decision of the COP.

Figure 19: Summary of the technical analysis of the results of REDD+ implementation when countries seek RBF / RBPs



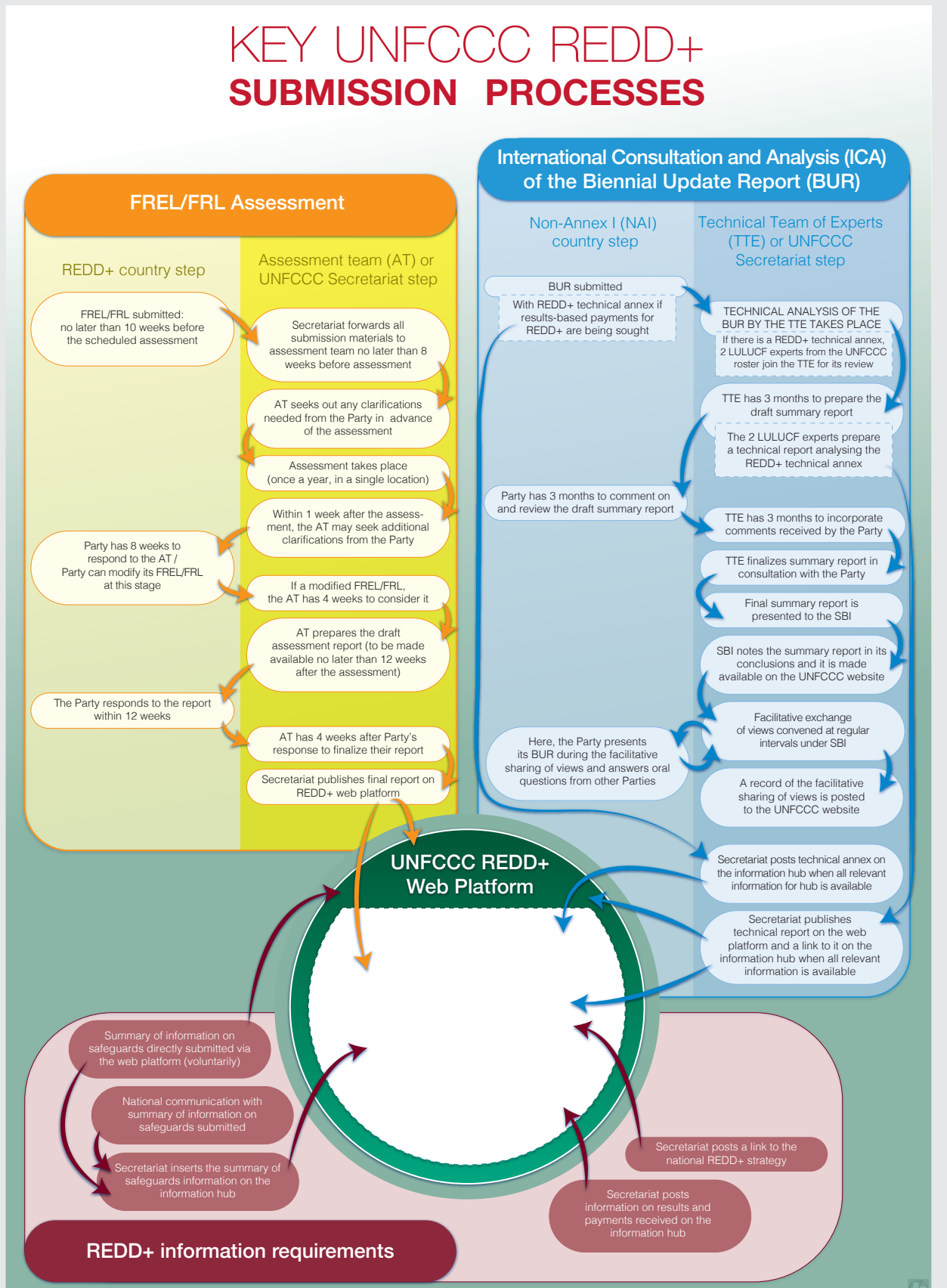
Having explained all the different information requirements, reporting, reviewing processes in the context of REDD+, **Figure 20** presents a summary of the key UNFCCC REDD+ submissions processes, including technical assessment or analysis, as relevant.

208 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/tatr/eng/bra.pdf>

209 See decision 14/CP.19 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

210 As per decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 66 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=15>

Figure 20: Summary of key UNFCCC submission processes.
 This figure has been reviewed and cleared by the UNFCCC Secretariat.



HOW CAN RBPs / RBF FOR RBAs BE ACCESSED?

The Warsaw Framework sets out how countries can access RBPs / RBF for REDD+ RBAs. The decision text uses the terms RBPs and RBF interchangeably without any distinction being made between the two. Paragraph 3 of decision 9/CP.19²¹¹ recalls that for developing country Parties undertaking the RBAs referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 73²¹², to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF, those actions should be fully MRV'd:

- In accordance with decisions 13/CP.19²¹³ on guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed FREL / FRL;
- In line with decision 14/CP.19²¹⁴ on MRV of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities;
- With all of the elements referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71²¹⁵ (the REDD+ required elements), in place, in accordance with decisions 12/CP.17²¹⁶, 9/CP.19²¹⁷ and 11/CP.19²¹⁸:
 - A REDD+ NS / AP (link made available to UNFCCC Secretariat);
 - A national FREL / FRL (through a stand-alone submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat and subsequent technical assessment);
 - ANFMS (REDD+ mitigation results and a description of the NFMS to be communicated through a technical annex to the BUR);
 - A system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities (information to be reported to the UNFCCC Secretariat through NCs).
- Providing the most recent summary of how the Cancun safeguards have been addressed and respected (i.e. the output of the SIS).

In summary, before receiving RBPs / RBF, countries need to have in place the four REDD+ required elements referred to in section 3.4. When these elements are in place, a country should follow two distinct procedures to access RBPs / RBF under the UNFCCC:

- Submission of a proposed FREL / FRL for technical assessment;
- MRV of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities.

According to decision 10/CP.19 (para 2), countries may nominate entities to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF. Additionally, in order to access funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), countries will need to nominate entities which will in turn need to be accredited by the GCF.

211 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

212 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=13>

213 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=34>

214 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

215 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

216 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

217 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

218 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

This section will address the following questions: How RBPs / RBF can be accessed, how REDD+ emissions reductions may be 'verified' under the UNFCCC and how the private sector can be engaged to support RBPs / RBF.

5.1 HOW CAN RBPs / RBF FOR REDD+ BE ACCESSED?

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- The Green Climate Fund (GCF) will play a role in channelling financial resources to developing countries and catalysing climate finance.
 - For REDD+, a specific model was developed that is integrated in the GCF's mitigation logic model;
 - The five REDD+ activities themselves have been defined as programme outputs and outcomes (the resulting tCO₂e ER);
 - Results are measured in terms of tCO₂e / year;
 - A request for proposals for REDD+ RBPs / RBF is under development by the GCF Secretariat and will include guidance needed for operationalizing RBPs under the GCF.
- The GCF will use, on an interim basis, the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) performance standards to assess social and environmental impacts of projects and programmes.
- RBPs / RBF may come from a variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources.
- Decision 10/CP.19 provides the key elements for "Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements".
- National entities or focal points of countries that serve as a liaison with the UNFCCC Secretariat and the relevant bodies under the Convention, may nominate their entities to obtain and receive RBPs / RPF, consistent with any specific operational modalities of the financing entities providing them with support for the full implementation of the REDD+ activities.
- National focal points appointed to the UNFCCC and the GCF might not be the same.

5.1.1 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GCF IN ACCESSING RBPs / RBF FOR REDD+ RBAs?

The GCF is expected to be the main multilateral source of funding for adaptation and mitigation initiatives in developing countries, including REDD+. It was established at COP16 (decision 1/CP.16) as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC under Article 11. The *"Green Climate Fund will work through a wide range of [accredited] entities to channel its resources to projects and programmes. Such entities may be international, regional, national, or subnational, public or private institutions that meet the standards of the Fund. Countries may access the Fund through multiple entities simultaneously"*²¹⁹.

In decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 7 of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, the GCF is identified as having a key role in providing RBPs / RBF for REDD+.

²¹⁹ Available at <http://www.greenclimate.fund/ventures/funding#how-it-works>

In decision 7/CP.21²²⁰, the COP “[u]rges the Board of the Green Climate Fund to operationalize results-based payments for activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, consistent with decision 9/CP.19, and in accordance with Green Climate Fund Board decision B.08/08.”

The five REDD+ activities themselves have been defined as GCF programme outputs and outcomes (the resulting tCO₂e ER). As per the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, results are measured in terms of tCO₂e / year. The GCF decision also notes that the GCF will disburse RBPs / RBF in accordance with 9/CP.19 and lists what the Information Hub will contain as per paragraph 11²²¹ of 9/CP.19. In addition, the GCF decision further notes that the methodologies for the indicators will be aligned with the methodological guidance provided by the COP.

The GCF has already adopted a series of decisions for the operation of the Fund, both broader than and specific to REDD+. Through GCF/B.08/08/Rev. 01²²², the GCF adopted a logic model and Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) for ex-post REDD+ RBPs / RBF, which was developed based on the methodological guidance in the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ and in decisions 1/CP.16 and 12/CP.17. As recognized in GCF/B.08/08/Rev. 01, the initial logic model and PMF for REDD+ RBPs / RBF is integral to the Fund’s broader mitigation logic model (GCF/B.07/04)²²³ and PMF²²⁴ with REDD+ RBPs / RBF contributing to the achievement of result 4.0, which is focused on reduced emissions from land use, deforestation, forest degradation, and sustainable management of forests and conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The next step towards the completion of the framework within which REDD+ RBPs / RBF can be supported by the GCF is to develop methodologies and operational guidance for the indicators in that PMF for REDD+ RBPs / RBF. According to GCF Board decision B/08/08²²⁵, it is noted that methodologies for the indicators will be aligned with the methodological guidance provided by the COP.

The GCF Board decision B.12/07, paragraph (d), requested the GCF Secretariat to provide a document for consideration by the Board at its fourteenth meeting, allowing for the operationalization of RBPs / RBF for REDD+ activities, consistent with UNFCCC decision 9/CP.19, and in accordance with decision B.08/08. The document titled “Support for REDD-Plus” (GCF/B.14/03) was prepared in response to this request. It provides background information on REDD+ finance, notes key elements for designing a REDD+ RBF scheme, and proposes options to initiate the operationalization of GCF RBF for REDD+.

Based on consideration of this document, The GCF Board adopted Decision B.14/03²²⁶ at its

220 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a02.pdf#page=10>

221 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=25>

222 Available at https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/24946/GCF_B.08_08_Rev.01_-_Initial_Logic_Model_and_Performance_Measurement_Framework_for_REDD_Results-based_Payments.pdf/af196e83-86cd-45b3-b220-463e12827920

223 Available at https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/239759/5.2_-_Results_Management_Framework__RMF_.pdf/a0558a59-ef20-4ba8-b90b-8d3ae0c8458f

224 The latest version of the mitigation PMF – though not yet adopted – may be found in the GCF document titled Further development of indicators in the performance measurement frameworks, available at: https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/184476/GCF_B.12_13_-_Further_development_of_indicators_in_the_performance_measurement_frameworks.pdf/30f1f9a5-98a5-483b-8553-e306b3c394e2?version=1.1

225 Available at https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/24946/GCF_B.08_45_-_Decisions_of_the_Board_-_Eighth_Meeting_of_the_Board__14-17_October_2014.pdf/1dd5389c-5955-4243-90c9-7c63e810c86d

226 GCF Decision B.14/03. Available at https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/409835/GCF_B.14_17_-_Decisions_of_the_Board__fourteenth_meeting_of_the_Board__12-14_October_2016.pdf/da61a7d6-f3dc-4342-a744-a03257a33ed7



Photo: Damae Mamaitis

14th Board meeting in October 2016 whereby it:

- a. *Recognizes the need to complement other sources and types of finance and that the Green Climate Fund can support the development of national REDD+ strategies or action plans and investment plans including through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, and that the Fund can support the implementation of national REDD+ strategies or action plans*
- b. *Requests the Secretariat to develop for consideration by the Board at its sixteenth meeting:*
 - i. *A Request for Proposals for REDD+ results-based payments, including guidance consistent with the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ and other REDD+ decisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) taking into account topics included in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of document GCF/B.14/03 and decision B.08/08; and*
 - ii. *Further guidance to support efforts by national designated authorities and focal points to engage with the Green Climate Fund in early phases of REDD+ using existing Green Climate Fund modalities, tools and programmes.*
- c. *Also requests the Secretariat to implement, with the advice of the Co-Chairs, a process for stakeholder and expert input to support its work under this decision and provide a progress report to the Board at its fifteenth meeting.*

Also at its fourteenth meeting, the Board of the GCF approved the first GCF project to cofinance the implementation of PAMs to reduce emissions from deforestation (REDD+: reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries).

The GCF decision includes a grant of US\$ 41.2 million to co-finance the implementation of Ecuador's national REDD + Action Plan.

The GCF documents on accreditation, proposal evaluation and post approval project cycles reflect an investment approach as opposed to ex post payments for results. What is still open is whether changes will be made in the project cycle to reflect RBPs / RBF.

On an **interim** basis the GCF will use the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) performance standards²²⁷ to assess social and environmental impacts of projects and programmes.

Environmental and social safeguards will be checked both at the level of the entity during accreditation (i.e. its capacity to manage environmental and social risks) and in terms of the activities it seeks to implement (during proposal assessment). Entities will be categorised according to the level of risk they can manage and they can present proposals in the corresponding categories. The IFC performance standards do not correspond to the Cancun safeguards. Whether the standards are adequate for REDD+ implementation is not a question to be debated here. However, a very pragmatic consequence of the inconsistency for project / programme developers and policy makers is that they may be subjected to multiple standard systems (their national one based on the Cancun safeguards and those of the GCF) in terms of contents, documentation, management frameworks, monitoring and evaluation – thus creating additional burden and increasing transaction costs. The GCF will develop its own environmental and social safeguards and criteria at a later stage.

5.1.2 MULTIPLE FINANCING SOURCES USING COMMON METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE

Decision 9/CP.19²²⁸ recognizes the key role that the GCF will play in channelling financial resources to developing countries and catalysing climate finance. Furthermore the decision (paragraph 1) also reaffirms that RBPs / RBF may come from a variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources, as referred to in decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 65²²⁹.

The same decision requests the GCF to apply the methodological guidance agreed through the various UNFCCC REDD+ decisions agreed by Parties: *“Requests the Green Climate Fund, when providing results-based finance, to apply the methodological guidance consistent with decisions 4/CP.15, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 12/CP.17 and 11/CP.19 to 15/CP.19, as well as this decision, in order to improve the effectiveness and coordination of results-based finance”*.

It is important to note that this is in contrast to the reference made to other financing entities for REDD+ in paragraph 6 of the same decision, which only encourages this consistency: *“Also encourages the entities referred to in paragraph 5 above, when providing results-based finance, to apply the methodological guidance consistent with decisions 4/CP.15, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 12/CP.17 and 11/CP.19 to 15/CP.19, as well as this decision, in order to improve the effectiveness and coordination of results-based finance”*.

In Paris, in December 2015, two additional, relevant decisions were adopted, 6/CP.21 and

227 Available at http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/115482804a0255db96fbffd1a5d13d27/PS_English_2012_Full-Documents.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

228 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=24>

229 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=15>

7/CP.21, further reinforcing this call for the GCF to ensure consistency with the negotiated framework for REDD+ under the UNFCCC. Through decision 6/CP.21 the COP welcomed the report and endorsed the work plan that resulted from the third forum of the 2015 Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), which took place on 8-9 September 2015. There, participants exchanged views on how to enhance coherence and coordination of finance for REDD+, and it was widely acknowledged in those discussions that the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ provides the guidelines for the delivery of REDD+ RBPs / RBF and that this should be considered as the basis for RBP / RBF mechanisms. This was reflected in the recommendations and work plan contained within the report of the SCF to COP21. This included the recommendation encouraging the GCF to “*expedite work on results-based finance in 2016, applying the methodological guidance consistent with the Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus, in order to improve the effectiveness and coordination of results-based finance.*”

In decision 7/CP.21²³⁰, the COP “[u]rges the Board of the Green Climate Fund to operationalize results-based payments for activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, consistent with decision 9/CP.19, and in accordance with Green Climate Fund Board decision B.08/08.”

The COP conditions progress on REDD+ on international funding by reaffirming “*that the progression of developing country Parties towards results-based actions occurs in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support for all phases of the actions and activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 70 and 73*”²³¹. It thus emphasizes the importance of international sources.

Despite the multiplicity of potential sources, the UNFCCC has taken some steps to improve the effectiveness and coordination of RBPs / RBF by:

- Encouraging the entities providing RBPs / RBF for REDD+ to apply the methodological guidance of the Convention;
- Requesting the GCF, when providing RBPs / RBF, to apply the methodological guidance of the Convention. Furthermore, decision 5/CP.19²³² on the arrangements between the COP and the GCF, states that the GCF will receive guidance from the COP, including on matters related to policies, programme priorities and eligibility criteria and that the GCF will take appropriate action as a response to the guidance received and will report on such actions taken. However, this does not deprive the Board of the GCF of its full responsibility for funding decisions.

5.1.3 NATIONAL FOCAL POINT NOMINATING NATIONAL ENTITIES TO RECEIVE RBPs / RBF

Decision 10/CP.19 provides the key elements for “*Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements*”; specifically (paragraphs 1 and 2):

“1. Invites interested Parties to **designate**, in accordance with national circumstances and the principles of sovereignty, **a national entity or focal point to serve as a liaison with the secretariat and the relevant bodies under the Convention**, as appropriate, on the

230 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a02.pdf#page=10>

231 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

232 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=13>

coordination of support for the full implementation of activities and elements referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 70, 71 and 73²³³, including different policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation, and to inform the secretariat accordingly;

2. Notes that the **national entities or focal points of developing country Parties** may, in accordance with national circumstances and the principles of sovereignty, **nominate their entities to obtain and receive results-based payments, consistent with any specific operational modalities of the financing entities** providing them with support for the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70²³⁴,”

It is important to note that there are overlaps between, and possible confusion about, the entities nominated under the UNFCCC as national entities to receive RBPs / RBF, which may be subject to further conditions and the accreditation process of the GCF. The confusion may come from the fact that the national focal points appointed to the UNFCCC and the GCF may not be the same. Another potential difficulty is that the GCF does not accredit entities that would be nominated under the UNFCCC automatically or that entities other than the ones nominated through the UNFCCC will receive the endorsement from the GCF focal point (termed ‘no-objection’) and subsequent accreditation.



Photo: Dancé Mamiatis

233 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

234 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

5.2 HOW ARE ERs RESULTING FROM REDD+ CHARACTERISED AND ACCOUNTED?

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Emission reductions (ERs):
 - ERs reported by a country will not necessarily be eligible for RBPs / RBF at the international level;
 - ERs 'verified' through the UNFCCC technical analysis of reported results in the annex of a BUR would likely qualify as results of government action for which RBPs / RBF may be claimed.
- Verified ER 'units / credits':
 - So far, there is no guidance under the UNFCCC whether or not REDD+ ERs verified under the UNFCCC may become 'units / credits';
 - Unlike emission reductions as described above, ER 'units / credits' are intangibles that make the transfer of property possible via 'serialisation';
 - Until further clarity exists around this issue of whether or not REDD+ ERs verified under the UNFCCC may become 'units / credits' under the UNFCCC process, many countries have chosen not to create / issue verified ER 'units / credits'.
- Issues of double-counting:
 - There is currently no guidance on double-counting in a REDD+ context under the UNFCCC;
 - Processes outside the UNFCCC REDD+ context such as the KfW-REM programme and the FCPF Carbon Fund require countries to avoid double-counting as part of the requirements of RBPs / RBF schemes;
 - Three forms of double-counting are identified:
 - (i) Multiple interventions claiming the same verified ER 'unit / credit';
 - (ii) The same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is recorded / issued more than once;
 - (iii) The same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is paid for by more than one buyer of RBPs / RBF.
 - If sub-national activities are allowed to generate verified ER 'units / credits' under its regulations, a REDD+ country should be able to demonstrate that no two project / programmes are claiming the same verified ER 'units / credits' to ensure environmental integrity;
 - Ensuring that the same verified ER 'units / credits' is not sold to or paid for by two parties can be done by establishing a RBPs / RBF registry;
 - Under the UNFCCC, it is expected that double counting will be dealt with by centralizing all information of RBPs / RBF for RBAs through the information hub;
 - Until there is clarity under the UNFCCC on the matter of REDD+ verified ER 'units / credits', the UN-REDD Programme does not support countries to access potential 'buyers' of REDD+ verified ER 'units / credits' outside the UNFCCC process.

5.2.1 WHAT ARE EMISSION REDUCTIONS (ERs)?

As REDD+ is a mitigation approach under the UNFCCC, it is important to consider the nature of ERs resulting from RBAs. In addition to the biophysical nature of an ER achieved, there are legal aspects to consider. ERs reported to the UNFCCC Secretariat by a country qualify as an assertion or statement by the country but will not necessarily be eligible for RBPs / RBF at the international level until they have undergone a process of 'verification'.

ERs 'verified / certified' through the UNFCCC technical analysis of reported results would likely qualify as results of government action for which RBPs / RBF may be claimed. In this case, this is an ER that – even though it may be compensated by another country – can be considered an ER achieved by the host country. It is important to point out that, in this case, there is no ownership since there is no tangible product formally created, which could then be owned.

5.2.2 VERIFIED / CERTIFIED ER 'UNITS / CREDITS'

Unlike ERs as described above, ER 'units / credits' are tangible products that make the transfer of property possible via 'serialisation'. The credits become unique and identifiable like a financial security. This still, however, does not mean that the asset becomes tradable.

Experience under the UNFCCC with Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits comes from the CDM. The CDM allows Annex I countries to meet their emissions reductions targets by funding emission-reduction projects in non-Annex I countries. These projects, once validated by the UNFCCC, generate CER credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂, which can be traded and sold.

So far, there is no guidance under the UNFCCC on whether REDD+ ERs verified / certified under the UNFCCC could become 'units / credits' in the future. According to decision 14/CP.19, REDD+ RBAs that may be eligible for appropriate market-based approaches, which could be developed by the COP, as per decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 66, may be subject to any further specific modalities for verification consistent with any relevant decision of the COP. Therefore, in the future, REDD+ market-based approaches could be developed by the COP and, if there are REDD+ 'units or credits' generated through these approaches, these could potentially be subject to verification that is additional to, or would take the place of the technical analysis of the BUR REDD+ annex as part of the ICA process.

Verified / certified ER 'units / credits' can be:

- Restricted in their use and only used to transfer the ERs to the buyer. The buyer cannot account for it in its reporting obligations and cannot on-sell them (e.g., Tranche B of the World Bank's Carbon Fund); or
- Freely tradable like any other intangible property (e.g., Tranche A of the World Bank Carbon Fund, VCS). This type of emission reduction unit is the basis of a market-based mechanism.

As outlined earlier in the document, the UNFCCC decisions refer to RBPs / RBF for ERs using the FREL / FRL as a benchmark against which to measure results. However, such ERs or removals are not necessarily verified / certified ERs that are eligible for a market mechanism. Recording the ERs in the Information Hub has no legal consequence. Indeed, decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 16²³⁵, "*Notes that the insertion of results on the information hub **does not create any rights or obligations for any Party or other entity***". Paragraph 18 of the same decision "*Further notes that **nothing under this decision and its implementation prejudices any future decision with regard to the eligibility or non-eligibility of the***

235 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=26>

REDD+ activities, to the new market-based mechanism²³⁶, or to the outcome of the work programme referred to in decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 44”²³⁷

The Paris Outcome did not make any reference to the legal nature of REDD+ RBPs / RBF. The Paris Agreement did include what are referred to as “Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes” (ITMOs) in Article 6 of the Agreement, which is effectively understood to refer to market mechanisms for transfer of ERs and therefore would require further definition of the legal nature of those ERs. However, until the eligible scope for these ITMOs has been determined, it is premature at this time to evaluate if there would be any potential implications for REDD+ emission reductions.

Market mechanisms are under discussion under the UNFCCC and are also being developed outside of the UNFCCC framework. As there is currently no clarity around the issue of whether or not REDD+ ERs verified / certified under the UNFCCC may become ‘units / credits’ under the UNFCCC process, countries are currently unable to create or issue verified / certified ER ‘units / credits’ related to the UNFCCC process. Two examples of RBPs / RBF schemes without the creation of verified ERs ‘units / credits’ are, for example, Brazil’s Amazon Fund²³⁸ and Ecuador’s current negotiations with the KfW-REM programme.

The UN-REDD Programme considers that market mechanisms could be an important potential source of REDD+ finance. However, the Programme cannot prejudge the outcome of the UNFCCC negotiations on this topic, as described above. There is a dedicated page under the UNFCCC regarding market and non-market based approaches²³⁹. In the short term, the challenge for many countries is to create legal frameworks and institutions that can draw from all the sources of finance to allow the interoperability between RBPs / RBF from various sources and accounting and crediting systems.

5.2.3 DOUBLE-COUNTING

Double-counting is cited under the UNFCCC in paragraph 79²⁴⁰ of decision 2/CP.17: “Emphasizes that various approaches, including opportunities for using markets, to enhance the cost-effectiveness of, and to promote, mitigation actions, bearing in mind different circumstances of developed and developing countries, must meet standards that deliver real, permanent, additional and verified mitigation outcomes, **avoid double counting of effort**, and achieve a net decrease and / or avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions”.

Despite the current uncertainty around the future existence of a market mechanism for REDD+

236 Defined in decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 83 – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=17>.

237 Chapter D of decision 1/CP.18 refers to: “Various approaches, including opportunities for using markets, to enhance the cost-effectiveness of, and to promote, mitigation actions, bearing in mind different circumstances of developed and developing countries”. Paragraph 44 “Requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to conduct a work programme to elaborate a framework for such approaches, drawing on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention on this matter, including the relevant workshop reports and technical paper, and experience of existing mechanisms, with a view to recommending a draft decision to the Conference of the Parties for adoption at its nineteenth session” – available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/eng/08a01.pdf#page=9>.

238 Available at http://www.amazonfund.gov.br/FundoAmazonia/fam/site_en

239 Available at http://unfccc.int/cooperation_support/market_and_non-market_mechanisms/items/7551.php

240 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=79>

under the UNFCCC, decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 17²⁴¹ “Also notes that the information on results included on the information hub should be **linked to the same results reflected on any other relevant future system that may be developed under the Convention**”. Although the decision does not provide sufficient detail about what this link entails, the UN-REDD Programme interprets this as possibly meaning that results achieved and paid for should be clearly identified so that it is possible to avoid double-counting. However, as there is currently no generation of verified / certified ERs units / credits under the UNFCCC without an established market-based approach for REDD+, there is also no guidance on double-counting.

Processes outside of the UNFCCC REDD+ context, such as the KfW-REM programme and the FCPF Carbon Fund, require countries to avoid double-counting as part of the requirements of RBPs / RBF schemes.

Additionally, some countries that are currently receiving RBPs / RBF outside of the UNFCCC process which involve the transfer of ‘title’ of the verified / certified ERs ‘units / credits’ to the buyer, are facing the challenge that by transferring the title, those ERs cannot subsequently be used towards their national contributions under the UNFCCC. At this stage, it is not possible to provide further details of potential implications of these issues, as there is still no certainty / clarity on this under the UNFCCC. Therefore, this document will only focus on double-counting that countries are required to avoid under the KfW-REM programme and the FCPF Carbon Fund.

Avoiding double counting is an important challenge for REDD+ implementation at multiple scales, as it entails meticulous accounting of ERs from different sources to preserve the environmental integrity of REDD+ implementation.

In cases of subnational programmes or REDD+ projects (see section 3.5), it is important to take note of the fact that “crediting rules” established under voluntary carbon market standards or bilateral agreements may be different from those that will be adopted under the UNFCCC and that methodological consistency between FREL / FRL and MRV between national and sub-national implementation scales may be difficult to achieve. In this context the host country needs to carefully evaluate the pros and cons of projects and subnational programmes if relevant agreements specify that ERs generated and sold by the projects / programmes will not be sold, offered or otherwise used or reported a second time and / or need to be deducted from national accounting (i.e., a no double accounting requirement)²⁴².

5.2.3.1 Forms of double-counting

Three different forms of potential double-counting involving different groups of actors can be identified:

1. Multiple interventions claiming the same verified ER ‘unit / credit’, which can happen if more than one national or subnational entity has the right to issue emission reductions

241 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=26>

242 For example Criterion 23 of the FCPF Carbon Methodological Framework states: “To prevent double-counting, ERs generated under the ER Program shall not be counted or compensated for more than once. Any reported and verified ERs generated under the ER Program and sold and/or transferred to the Carbon Fund shall not be sold, offered or otherwise used or reported a second time by the ER Program Entity. Any reported and verified ERs generated under the ER Program that have been sold and/or transferred, offered or otherwise used or reported once by the ER Program Entity shall not be sold and transferred to the Carbon Fund”. – available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2014/MArch/March/FCPF%20Carbon%20Fund%20Methodological%20Framework%20Final%20Dec%2020%202013.pdf>

destined for international RBPs / RBF. In order to avoid this type of double-counting a process should be in place to determine who and under what conditions an entity can be allowed to value results from REDD+. Under the UNFCCC a country can establish such a process to coordinate support for REDD+ implementation as described in section 5.1.3. The designated REDD+ national entity or focal point is: (a) the only entity that can request RBPs / RBF under the UNFCCC; and (b) allowed to nominate entities to receive RBPs / RBF. This can be interpreted to mean that the REDD+ focal point would have the national authority to decide who should receive RBPs / RBF. Though this process would seem sufficient to avoid any form of double-counting, there are possible loopholes for double-counting as stated in section 5.1.3 as the national focal points appointed to the UNFCCC and the GCF may not be the same.

2. The same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is recorded / issued more than once, which can happen if:
 - There is no system in place to ensure that verified / certified ER 'units / credits' are never issued more than once;
 - The same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is issued on more than one system simultaneously;
 - There are flaws in the system that has been created to issue verified ER 'units / credits'.

Under the UNFCCC, in the context of the Warsaw Framework, the potential for this is minimized given that:

- Currently, the REDD+ information hub is the only process by which results may be recognized;
- Paragraph 17 of decision 9/CP.19 also notes that the information on results included on the information hub should be linked to the same results reflected on any other relevant future system that may be developed under the Convention.

In other words this will be dealt with later under the UNFCCC if needed, as in the case that there is a new process and / or platform for a new market mechanism.

3. The same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is paid for by more than one buyer of RBPs / RBF, which can happen if a verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' already sold / purchased is sold to another party. This could happen if there is no process for national verified / certified ER 'units / credits' accounting.

5.2.3.2 Ensuring that the same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is never created or issued more than once

If payments are always made under the UNFCCC process, the operational modalities of the information hub should function in a way that avoids a situation where multiple payments are made for the same verified ER 'unit / credit'. However open questions do remain regarding what type of information should be specified in order to differentiate between different sources of payments for the same results or tonnes.

In the case where a country is implementing REDD+ at the national level and accounting for verified ER 'units / credits' generated at such a scale (ER-Programme implementation area is national) OR in the case where a country only has one REDD+ project / programme, then evidence that the same verified ER 'units / credits' are claimed by the same intervention is straight forward. However, if sub-national activities are allowed to generate verified ER 'units / credits' under its regulations, a REDD+ country must demonstrate that no two project /



programmes are claiming the same verified ER 'units / credits' to ensure environmental integrity (see related discussion at the end of section 3.5). This involves ensuring that no two approved projects / programmes overlap in scale and scope²⁴³. This can be done by establishing an official approval process for REDD+ projects / programmes aiming to generate verified ER 'units / credits' and registering the geographical perimeter of all approved REDD+ projects and programmes, the REDD+ activities and carbon pools that are accounted for in each project / programme as well as the FRELs / FRLs used.

If multiple sub-national activities are allowed to generate verified ER 'units / credits' under its regulation, and if the country intends to have more than one provider of RBPs / RBF (a desirable outcome), then it must demonstrate that the same verified ER 'unit / credit' is never recorded / issued more than once, and that the same verified / certified ER 'unit / credit' is never sold to or paid for by two parties²⁴⁴. Ensuring that the same verified ER 'unit / credit' is never created (or issued) more than once can be done by:

- Ensuring that verified / certified ER 'units / credits' registration / creation is based on a verification report verifying the amount of verified ER 'units / credits' generated and measured during a given monitoring period;
- Registering the FREL / FRL, and the start / end of a monitoring period during which results were achieved. In the case of market mechanism, this is done by serializing issued verified / certified ER 'units / credits' and registering the monitoring period associated with the serial numbers. Serial numbers can typically include information on project / programme code (allowing for identification of a project / programme in the registration platform and the associated documents), the start / end of a monitoring period (vintage), standard used, issuing registry and methodology.

Ensuring that the same verified ER 'units / credits' is not sold to or paid for by two parties can be done by registering all transactions or RBPs / RBF and associated information: partners and their respective account identifiers, dates of delivery and accounting, volume, standard,

243 Scale refers to the geographical perimeter while scope refers to the REDD+ activities and carbon pools that are being accounted for.

244 ERs can be traded from one party to another, however there must be a sole owner of a single ERs at all times (i.e. no rupture or uncertainty in the chain of custody).

purpose, and serials of traded verified ER 'units / credits' in the case of a market mechanism. A registry of all RBPs / RBF should therefore follow generally accepted accounting principles.

A registry of RBPs / RBF can greatly facilitate this process. In the absence of a registry, accounting for all RBPs / RBF and market transactions becomes very challenging, which would only likely be feasible in a situation with very few transactions and transparent and comprehensive reporting from the creation of the verified ER 'unit / credit' to its subsequent and final use (which can be numerous in the case of a market mechanism)²⁴⁵. Under the UNFCCC, it is expected that the issue of double counting will be dealt with by centralizing all information of RBPs / RBF for RBAs through the information hub.

As discussed in this section, the production and sale of REDD+ verified ER 'units / credits' is currently not directly relevant under the UNFCCC process.

5.3 ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR RBPs / RBF

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

- Decision 15/CP.19 on addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation specifically mentions the need for the involvement of the private sector.
- It is important for countries implementing REDD+ activities to engage the private sector in a timely and strategic manner (especially when designing NS / APs).
- A number of roles that may involve private sector actors are:
 - Implementing actions to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation;
 - The production and sale of REDD+ verified ERs 'units / credits' outside the UNFCCC process;
 - Financial Intermediaries, whose lending policies and investments can have a significant impact on the behaviour of private actors.
- REDD+ NS / APs may have repercussions on a large segment of the private sector, with considerable potential implications for direct and indirect land users. Engagement with relevant private sector actors can help to ensure the policies and measures are effective in achieving the desired REDD+ results.

Paragraphs 3 and 4²⁴⁶ of decision 15/CP.19 on addressing the DDFD specifically mention the need for the involvement of the private sector:

- Paragraph 3: *"Encourages Parties, organizations and the private sector to take action to reduce the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation"*;
- Paragraph 4: *"Also encourages all Parties, relevant organizations, and the private sector and other stakeholders, to continue their work to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to share the results of their work on this matter, including via the web platform on the UNFCCC website"*.

It is hence important for countries implementing REDD+ activities to engage the private sector

²⁴⁵ In the case of a market mechanism using REDD+ offsets, ERs are first issued, then transferred from the seller to the buyer's registry account(s) and can subsequently be sold several times to different intermediaries until they are sold to the final user which uses the offsets for compliance and retires them from circulation. This whole process must be documented to avoid double counting.

²⁴⁶ Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=43>

in a timely and strategic manner (especially when designing NS / APs and developing PAMs to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and barriers to the ‘+’ activities).

The UN-REDD Programme published a policy brief in June 2013 on ‘The Role of the private sector in REDD+: the case for engagement and options for intervention’²⁴⁷. The policy brief notes a number of roles that may involve private sector actors:

- The production and sale of REDD+ verified ERs ‘units / credits’ outside the UNFCCC process (see section **5.2.3**);
- Undertaking actions that may be addressed through REDD+ NS / APs;
- As Financial Intermediaries, whose lending policies and investments can have a significant impact on the behaviour of private actors.

Thoughts of “private sector” often focus on the first group, for a variety of reasons: (i) experience with the CDM and the voluntary carbon markets led many of the first on-the-ground REDD+ interventions to be projects that involved private sector project developers; (ii) such private sector actors have proved adept at advocating for their role and in attracting attention; and (iii) negative attention generated by “carbon cowboys”.

Less attention has been paid to the critical business of engaging the private sector in addressing DDFD and barriers to ‘+’ and achieving REDD+ RBAs. The commitment of some commodity companies to eradicate deforestation from their supply chains is worthy, however for the most part these commitments are not driven by REDD+ efforts. In other words, they are not necessarily the result of policies and measures set out in REDD+ NS / APs, but rather are the consequence of other forces (such as consumer or advocacy pressure). Involving the private sector is an important element in shaping REDD+ NS / APs²⁴⁸.

The implementation of REDD+ NS / APs may in many countries impact private sector actors, with considerable potential implications for direct and indirect land users. Engagement with relevant private sector actors can help to ensure the policies and measures are effective in achieving the desired REDD+ results. This may include improving the understanding of what drives their current practices (that contribute to deforestation or the other potential RBAs) and in terms of shaping incentive measures that are likely to be the most successful in shifting those current practices.

The work of UNDP’s Green Commodities Programme (GCP) may be very relevant, as it supports the creation of national policy dialogue platforms for a number of relevant commodity sectors. Similarly, the UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) engages with various relevant private sector actors, both in collaboration with UNDP GCP and in other contexts. Beyond working on commodities, countries can also explore the possibilities of engaging the banking, investment and insurance sector to ensure that loans and guarantees ensure zero deforestation and forest degradation. UNEP-FI works with over 230 banks, insurance companies and investors on (i) phasing out deforestation from the financial side of commodity supply chains, (ii) develop a sound business case for private sector investments into REDD+, and (iii) provide a platform for national-level dialogues between the public and the private sector.

247 Available at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=10509&Itemid=53

248 Through the UN-REDD Programme, UNEP-FI is engaging with Financial Intermediaries and working to develop lending and investment policies that may contribute to REDD+ results.



SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

This section summarises the main take-home points reviewed in this note regarding REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

The REDD+ rulebook: With the seven REDD+-related decisions adopted at COP19 ('Warsaw Framework for REDD+'), the REDD+ 'rulebook' is now complete. Taken with earlier COP decisions and the three additional decisions adopted at COP21, the UNFCCC has now set out the framework for developing countries to have the results of their REDD+ activities recognised and eligible for RBPs / RBF.

Identifying the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and the barriers to conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (section 3.3):

- It is important for countries to develop an understanding of, and build consensus around, the direct and underlying DDFD, as well as the barriers to forest conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management (or barriers to the '+').
- Analyses of DDFD and barriers to the implementation of the '+' activities may include:
 - Reaching consensus on a national level through appropriate stakeholder engagement;
 - A continuous and iterative analytical process;
 - Spatial and socio-economic factors;
 - Linking to the scope and scale of REDD+ implementation;
 - Quantifying emissions and removal potential.

The REDD+ activities: There are five REDD+ activities (section 3.1):

- Reduction of emissions from deforestation;
- Reduction of emissions from forest degradation;
- Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- Sustainable management of forests;
- Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The four required elements: Countries are requested to have the following elements in place for REDD+ implementation and to access RBPs / RBF (section 5):

- A national strategy or action plan (section 3.4.1);
- A national FREL / FRL (section 3.4.2);
- A robust and transparent NFMS for the monitoring and reporting of the five REDD+ activities (section 3.4.3);
- A SIS (section 3.4.4).

The three phases of implementation: The REDD+ activities are to be implemented in three non-discrete phases stressing an iterative, flexible and learning-by-doing approach to REDD+ implementation (section 3.2):

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- In Phase I (*readiness*) countries design NS / APs with relevant stakeholders, build capacity for REDD+ implementation, develop policies and measures for REDD+ and initiate demonstration activities;
- In Phase II (*implementation*) policies and measures proposed in Phase I are tested, implemented and scaled up from sub-national to national scale. This phase may include results-based demonstration activities and require additional capacity building, technology development and transfer;
- In Phase III (*RBA for RBPs / RBF*) RBAs are implemented at the national scale and all results are fully MRV'd through the UNFCCC.

Accessing RBPs / RBF for REDD+ RBAs (section 5.1): For developing country Parties undertaking RBAs to obtain and receive RBPs / RBF, those actions should be fully MRV'd:

- In accordance with decisions 13/CP.19²⁴⁹ on guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed FREL / FRL;
- In line with decision 14/CP.19²⁵⁰ on MRV of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities;
- With all of the elements referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71²⁵¹ (the REDD+ required elements), in place, in accordance with decisions 12/CP.17²⁵² and 11/CP.19²⁵³
- Providing the most recent summary of how the Cancun safeguards have been addressed and respected (i.e. the output of the SIS).

Reporting and Verification of RBAs when seeking RBPs / RBF

- NS / AP:
 - No specific reporting or assessment requirements. When seeking RBPs / RBF, a link to the NS / AP must be provided, as appropriate, through the information hub.
- Technical assessment of the FREL / FRL (section 4.3):
 - Reporting: The FREL / FRL is submitted through a specific FREL / FRL submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat
 - Verification: It undergoes a technical assessment in the context of RBPs / RBF
- MRV (section 4.4):
 - Reporting: technical annex of the BUR
 - Verification: It undergoes a technical assessment in the context of RBPs / RBF
- SIS (section 4.2):
 - Reporting: the summary of information on addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards through the SIS are reported to the UNFCCC Secretariat through a NC
 - The NC, and therefore, the summary of information on safeguards contained, does not undergo a distinct assessment process

249 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=34>

250 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=39>

251 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=12>

252 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a02.pdf#page=16>

253 Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf#page=31>

- Countries should be aware of issues of accounting and crediting for ERs in the context of REDD+ RBPs / RBF and the issue of double counting (section 5.2).

International information sharing (section 4.1): There are six required 'information streams' to be published on the information hub when countries seek RBPs / RBF:

- NS / AP: A link to the NS / AP;
- FREL / FRL: A link to the final report of the technical assessment team;
- NFMS: information on the NFMS as provided in the BUR technical annex;
- Summary from SIS: provide information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected before receiving RBPs / RBF;
- Reported results: the results for each relevant period expressed in tCO₂e/year and a link to the MRV technical report;
- Additional information on RBPs / RBF: the quantity of results for which payments were received, expressed in tCO₂e/year, and the entity paying for the results.



Photo: Damae Mamaitis

REDD+ KEY TERMS GLOSSARY

Available at:

<http://bit.ly/commonunderstandingREDDPlusGlossary>

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TECHNICAL RESOURCE SERIES

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