

Lessons learned for credible and effective REDD+ Safeguards Information Systems



Safeguards are vital components of the design and implementation of REDD+¹ strategies and action plans to avoid social and environmental harm and enhance benefits.

Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed to:

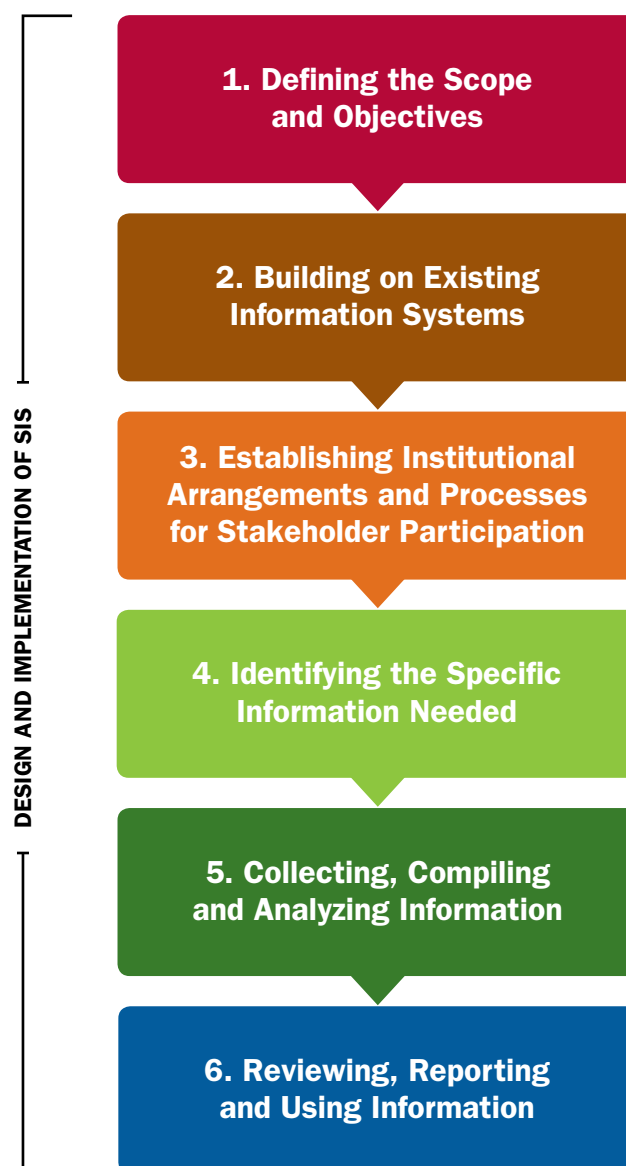
- **apply seven safeguards to REDD+ activities** that address key aspects of governance, protection of natural forests, biodiversity and rights, enhancing environmental and social benefits and ensuring effectiveness and sustainability of emissions reductions;²
- **provide a summary of information** on how these safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout implementation of the activities³ before receiving results-based payments,⁴ and
- **establish a safeguards information system (SIS)** as one of four essential elements for implementation of REDD+.⁵

The lessons learned and good practices presented in this brief are drawn from the experiences of the REDD+ SES Initiative supporting thirteen countries over the last five years with a participatory, country-led approach to safeguards, particularly with developing SIS.

Countries are developing SIS as part of a country safeguards approach that, among its elements, also includes a legal framework (policies, laws and regulations), a grievance redress mechanism, and an institutional framework.

Key elements for development and implementation of SIS

Based on experiences from some countries participating in the REDD+ SES Initiative, approaches to developing and implementing SIS vary between countries but generally comprise the following six key elements.



¹ Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the conservation of forests, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks in developing countries

² Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancun)

³ Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancun)

⁴ Decision 9/CP.19 (Warsaw)

⁵ Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancun)

Some key decisions for development and implementation of SIS

1. Defining the Scope and Objectives

What progress has been made on defining the scope of the country safeguards approach that will affect the SIS? For example, what is the scope and timing of REDD+ activities defined in the national REDD+ strategy and action plans that the SIS will need to cover, potentially in a phased approach?

What are the objectives of the SIS? Will there be multiple objectives that need to be taken into account in the design of the SIS? *e.g. providing a summary to UNFCCC, reporting to donors, informing national and local stakeholders, providing feedback for adaptive management of the REDD+ program*

DECISIONS

2. Building on Existing Information Systems

Are there existing information systems that could be used? *e.g. linked to policies, laws and regulations, reporting to other international conventions, national forest monitoring systems*

What are the gaps that may require collection of additional information?

What are the institutional arrangements, the methods for collecting, compiling and analyzing information, and the processes for reviewing and providing information for the existing information systems?

DECISIONS

3. Establishing Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Stakeholder Participation

To what extent do existing institutional arrangements meet the needs of the SIS?

What stakeholders should be engaged in management and governance of the SIS, including the design, implementation and oversight of the SIS?

How should stakeholders be engaged in the SIS? *e.g. multi-stakeholder committee, advisory platform, technical working group*

On what, when and how should stakeholder consultations be conducted?

DECISIONS

4. Identifying the Specific Information Needed

What specific information is needed to demonstrate that safeguards are being addressed and respected based on the country interpretation of safeguards, the specific risks and opportunities of REDD+ strategies and action plans, and the relevant legal framework and its implementation? To what extent do existing systems provide this information?

Will it be helpful, depending on country context and existing information systems, to develop country-specific criteria and indicators to help identify and organize the information to be collected?

If so, what process will be used to identify and adapt criteria and indicators to the country context? What will criteria and indicators be based on? *e.g. UNFCCC 'Cancun' safeguards, existing national policies, laws and regulations, international best-practice standards, country aspirations based on risks and opportunities of REDD+ activities identified by stakeholders*

If indicators are being used, can a sub-set of indicators be prioritized for each assessment or reporting cycle? *e.g. taking into account the phasing of activities and available resources*

DECISIONS



5. Collecting, Compiling and Analyzing Information

What is the frequency of collecting and reporting information? Do national information needs require more frequent reporting than UNFCCC?

What are the processes for collecting, compiling and analyzing information in existing systems, and should these to be strengthened or added to?

Where and how is information collected and is this adequate to provide credible information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected? *e.g. secondary sources, primary sources with a range of collection methods*

Who collects the information? *e.g. government, stakeholders, independent consultants*

What type of analysis is or should be done to demonstrate that safeguards are being addressed and respected? *e.g. check list, scoring, narrative summary describing performance, at the level of each safeguard, or at the level of each criterion or indicator*

DECISIONS

6. Reviewing, Reporting and Using Information

What are the provisions in existing systems for reviewing, reporting and using information? Is there a need to strengthen and add to these to meet the objectives of the SIS?

To what extent and how are different stakeholders involved in reviewing the information for accuracy, and is there a need to strengthen this aspect to enhance credibility? *e.g. internal review by government, stakeholder consultations, approval by multi-stakeholder committee, independent review*

What information will be shared? *e.g. summary or full analysis of progress for each safeguard, action plan to address gaps, description of methods for collection, compilation, review and reporting*

How will it be shared and with whom? *e.g. disseminated in reports, via a web platform, in what languages*

DECISIONS

Experiences from Countries



REGION OF SAN MARTIN, PERU

Developing a methodology to increase stakeholder participation in the interpretation of indicators

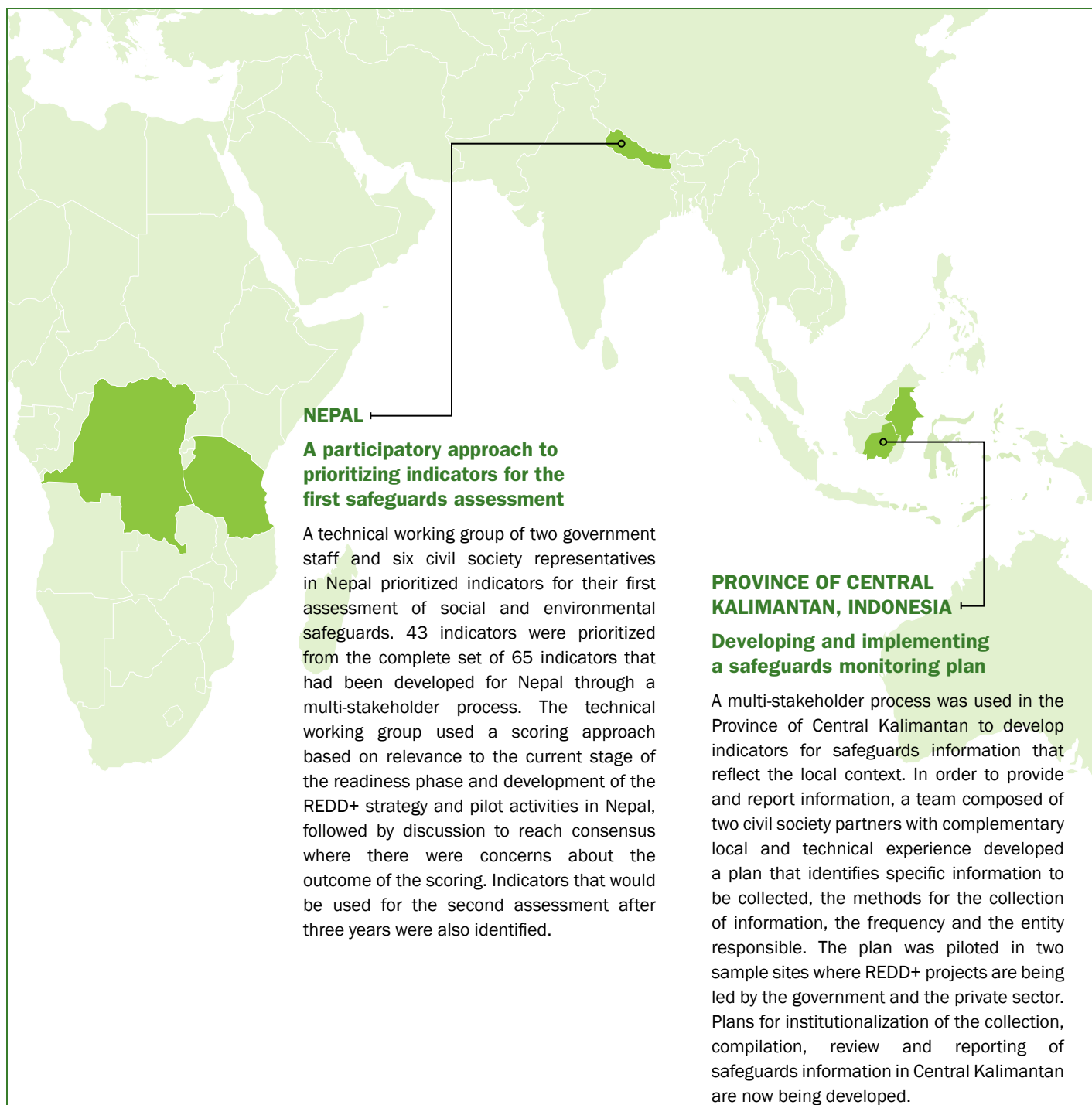
The regional government and its partners in the Region of San Martin in Peru developed a kit to support stakeholder participation in the drafting of indicators to provide information on how REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected, in case further indicators will be needed to support the national or regional systems already in place. The kit sets out a methodology for adapting indicators to the local context and includes a training module on indicators along with guidelines for facilitators to provide the training, a glossary and guidelines to build capacity on safeguards and REDD+. The kit was tested and approved by the Government of San Martin, members of the San Martin REDD+ Roundtable and Indigenous Peoples.

STATE OF ACRE, BRAZIL

A participatory process for developing a safeguards assessment report

Since August 2010, the State of Acre has developed indicators, adapted from the REDD+ SES framework for indicators, and conducted an assessment of progress on how safeguards are addressed and respected in the System for Incentives for Environmental Services (SISA). After broad consultations and approval by a multi-stakeholder Commission for Monitoring and Validation (CEVA), the State of Acre adopted 7 principles, 22 criteria and 52 indicators. A checklist was designed for each indicator to identify the specific information needed to develop an assessment report.

The assessment process was based on a monitoring manual approved by CEVA after stakeholder review. Progress and gaps were identified with respect to each indicator, and then an action plan was developed to address the gaps and strengthen the positive aspects. The checklist, the summary of gaps and the action plan are currently being revised through stakeholder consultation before validation by CEVA, three multi-stakeholder state commissions, and a newly formed Indigenous Working Group. The action plan will be implemented to improve the SISA before the assessment is repeated in two years' time. An international review involving a country visit by members of the REDD+ SES International Steering Committee provided feedback and advice, and assessed the extent to which the REDD+ SES guidelines had been followed.



Countries participating in the REDD+ SES Initiative to 2014

Latin America

- State of Acre, Brazil
- State of Mato Grosso, Brazil
- State of Amazonas, Brazil
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- States of the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico
- State of Jalisco, Mexico
- Region of San Martin, Peru

Africa

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Liberia
- Tanzania

Asia

- Province of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Province of East Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Nepal

Lessons learned and good practices for development and implementation of SIS

Participation and transparency are essential for the development of credible and effective systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

1. Defining the Scope and Objectives

- Ensure that the scope of the SIS aligns with the scope and objectives of the country safeguards approach, and that the country-specific interpretation of safeguards is based on the risks and opportunities of the REDD+ strategy and action plan.
- Ensure that the SIS will provide information to improve the design and implementation of the REDD+ strategy and action plan and to enhance political support for REDD+ safeguards (from all types of stakeholders) as well as the reporting to UNFCCC and donors.

LESSONS

2. Building on Existing Information Systems

- Assess and use existing sources of information, and link with existing information systems to develop the SIS.

LESSONS

3. Establishing Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Stakeholder Participation

- Implement a multi-stakeholder process to ensure political support for the effective implementation of safeguards.
- Provide capacity building for stakeholders to enable them to participate effectively in identifying, implementing and assessing safeguards.
- Discuss and publish plans for the design and implementation of the SIS so that stakeholders know when and how they can participate.
- Establish a facilitation team that includes government and civil society to ensure that the agreed process and methodology are followed.
- Establish a multi-stakeholder committee to review and approve safeguards information, indicators, and the assessment of progress addressing and respecting safeguards.
- Build on and link with existing multi-stakeholder platforms, reinforcing them, or developing new ones if needed, to ensure participation of key stakeholder groups.
- Establish or strengthen institutional arrangements to ensure effective flow of information.

LESSONS

4. Identifying the Specific Information Needed

- Assessment of how safeguards are being addressed and respected should use existing information where this is relevant and credible.
- Design a participatory process that helps stakeholders to understand and participate in safeguards and REDD+ processes, for example through the identification of indicators that are feasible, match assessment capacity and are adapted to the country context.
- Indicators can perform an important role in further specifying the information that should be collected, particularly where safeguards have not yet been incorporated into legal and policy frameworks, e.g. indicators based on voluntary standards.
- Prioritize a sub-set of specific information or indicators for each assessment that are most relevant to that phase.

5. Collecting, Compiling and Analyzing Information

- Ensure transparency in the information collection and analysis process.
- Develop an assessment checklist or guide to help to demonstrate how each safeguard is being addressed and respected, providing information for each important aspect of the safeguard or for each indicator.
- Encourage effective stakeholder participation by organizing public consultations on safeguards reports and any associated action plans that may have been developed to address gaps.

6. Reviewing, Reporting and Using Information

- Ensure that information is accessible to the identified users, within and beyond the country.
- Tailor the format, language and dissemination of reports to the needs of the information users.
- Share safeguards information with stakeholders to encourage their participation in identifying legal as well as implementation gaps, the underlying causes of these gaps and the design and implementation of measures to address the gaps.
- Provide sufficient information to build confidence in the REDD+ strategy and action plan, and to demonstrate the credibility and effectiveness of the safeguards information system.

The REDD+ SES Initiative

The REDD+ SES Initiative was developed from 2009 to promote good practices to support government-led REDD+ programs that make a substantial contribution to human rights, poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation goals while avoiding social or environmental harm. As of December 2014, thirteen countries (including some subnational initiatives) have participated in the Initiative, using the content and process of the REDD+ SES in different ways, either as good practice guidance, as the basis for their safeguards information system, or as a quality assurance standard. The Initiative has also created a dynamic learning and exchange platform to support south-south exchanges and the identification and dissemination of good practices.

The REDD+ SES Initiative is overseen by a multi-stakeholder International Steering Committee and supported by a secretariat from the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance and CARE. For more information see www.redd-standards.org or contact us at info@redd-standards.org.

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