United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre submission to the call for information on biodiversity and climate change related issues by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

1. Introduction

This submission responds to the call for information on biodiversity and climate change related issues by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and describes work undertaken on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme. The submission focuses on point (i): experiences and lessons learned with regard to the application of safeguards for biodiversity when planning and implementing activities related 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. It is being submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and gives an overview of experiences from its work within the UN-REDD Programme. This draws on highly collaborative work involving country partners of UN-REDD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as UNEP.

Parties to the UNFCCC recognized the social and environmental benefits and risks of REDD+ in 2010, when they agreed on the 'Cancun safeguards', a set of social and environmental safeguards for REDD+. Safeguard (e) addresses biodiversity directly, requesting that REDD+ actions are "consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, …, 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[1]". The UN-REDD Programme provides support to countries on the development of country approaches to promoting and supporting the Cancun safeguards.

This submission will
  (a) Outline the UN-REDD framework for supporting the development of country approaches to safeguards
  (b) Describe safeguards tools that have been recently developed with the aim of meeting expressed country needs
  (c) Provide an overview of UN-REDD Programme experiences in safeguards work with countries
  (d) Elaborate on lessons learned on country needs from regional workshops
  (e) Summarise the linkages between the CBD and REDD+ in the form of the potential synergies between REDD+ and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, based on UN-REDD Policy Brief 5.

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[1] Taking into account the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and their interdependence on forests in most countries, reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the International Mother Earth Day

2.   The UN-REDD conceptual framework on safeguards

The UN-REDD framework for supporting the development of country approaches to safeguards[2] guides the UN-REDD Programme's support to countries on this topic. This conceptual framework builds on the UNFCCC safeguards-related decisions and aims to help countries in determining how to respond to them. It was developed based on lessons learned about country needs for clarity on options for responding to the UNFCCC Decisions. The framework helps to define what a country approach to REDD+ safeguards might look like and outlines the main considerations and possible steps in developing such a country approach. The framework also indicates where particular UN-REDD tools may be considered most relevant.

Components of a country approach to safeguards
A country approach to safeguards can be thought of as having two core components that ensure social and environmental risks from REDD+ are reduced and that benefits are enhanced:

1) Addressing and respecting safeguards through the implementation of relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs): These PLRs establish the 'content' of the safeguards, or what needs to be adhered to in the implementation of REDD+ activities.

2) Safeguard Information System (SIS): A safeguard information system (SIS) is defined here as the collection and provision of information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout implementation of REDD+ activities.

Along with these two core components are the various formal and informal institutions and processes and procedures needed to design and implement effective approaches to safeguards. Institutions, for example, will play a role in ensuring the fair and effective design of the REDD+ safeguards approach, the implementation of PLRs, and the operation of the SIS. Processes and procedures include aspects that may not be captured in formal PLRs, such as consultation processes, strategic assessments and information dissemination and communication. This also will include data collection and analysis that may be needed to address and respect the safeguards (e.g., defining and mapping the natural forests).

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[2] UN-REDD Framework for supporting the development of country approaches to safeguards. Available at:
www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=10177&Itemid=53

Development of a country approach to safeguards

The conceptual framework recognises that there is no fixed, linear method to developing a safeguards approach, as it will depend on what is already in place in the country, as well as what governments define as the overall goals of the approach. Nevertheless, the framework identifies some generic steps which may be useful for countries planning a country approach to safeguards (Figure 1).
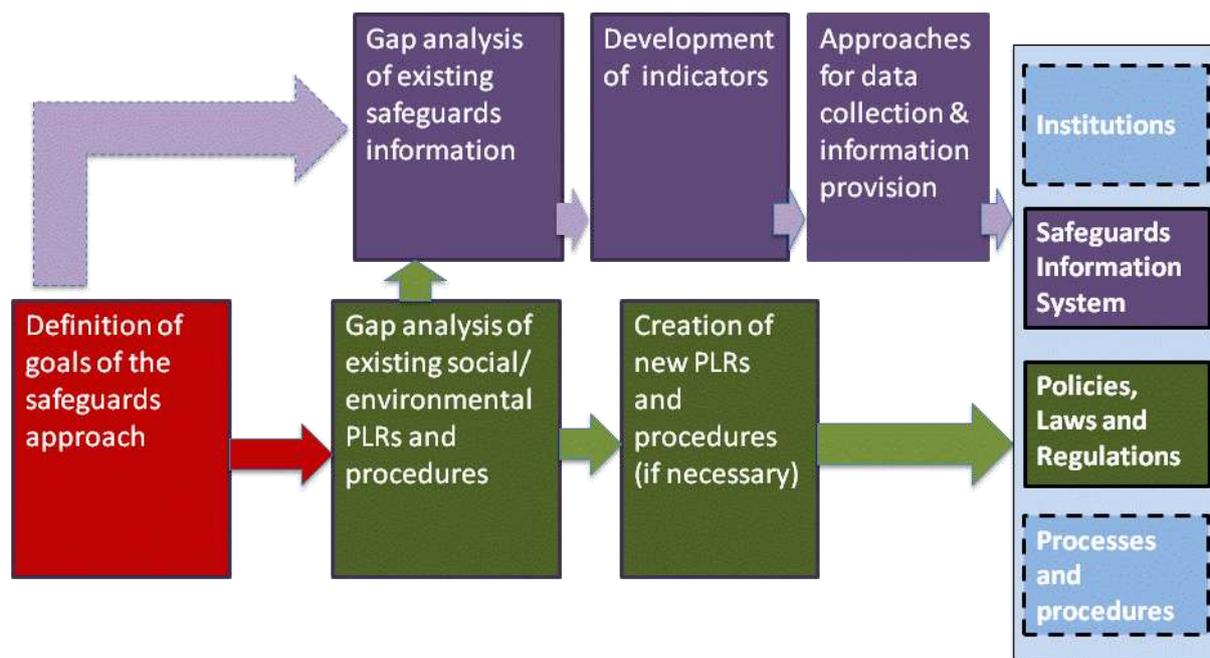

Figure 1: Possible steps in developing a country approach to safeguards

The first step is to clearly *define the goals for the safeguards approach*. This will require:
- Interpreting what is contained in the UNFCCC decisions from the country perspective
- Consideration of the specific social and environmental risks as well as benefits that might be associated with REDD+ in the country.

The UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) can help to add detail to the broad principles set out in the Cancun Agreements and could be used by countries as a guide during these discussions.[3]

Identification of nationally relevant goals should be followed by the *review of existing policies, laws and regulations (PLRs)* that address risks and enhance benefits from REDD+. This gap analysis may indicate that existing PLRs do not cover all of the Cancun safeguards and may require *development of new PLRs*.

The third major step is the *development of a Safeguards Information System (SIS)*. UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17 states that a SIS should provide information on how all Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected. SIS development could include the gap analysis of existing country information

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[3] UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (2012) Available at:
www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=6985&Itemid=53

systems and the development of indicators, data collection methodologies and approaches for providing information.

3. Supporting the development of country approaches to safeguards: CAST and BeRT

A number of tools have been developed by the UN-REDD Programme to support countries in developing approaches to safeguards. Two recently developed tools are described below.

The Country Approaches to Safeguards Tool (CAST) is a process-oriented tool, designed to support countries to:
1) Conduct domestic planning for REDD+ safeguards and SIS activities
2) Identify, prioritize and sequence activities
3) Identify available information resources for each activity
4) Clarify how the processes under various safeguards initiatives correspond.

The spreadsheet-based CAST is flexible to use, as it can be applied by countries at the early planning stage or later in the REDD+ process. CAST has undergone in-country piloting and is scheduled for launch in April 2014.

The Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT) was developed to support the review of Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) in the development of country approaches to safeguards. More specifically, the BeRT helps countries to:
1) Identify benefits and risks associated with specific REDD+ actions in relation to the Cancun safeguards
2) Identify gaps in policies, laws and regulations with respect to the Cancun safeguards.

Also spreadsheet-based, the BeRT is designed to assist countries that have completed the early REDD+ planning stage and have identified likely REDD+ actions to take place in the country. The tool allows for flexibility in application, as users may choose to focus on given safeguards, to tackle only benefits or risks, and to look at PLRs for all benefits and risks identified or only those assigned high priority by the tool users. Piloting of the BeRT is underway and its launch is planned for 2014. Based on experience in the piloting, it is also proposed to develop a module on identifying steps to fill any gaps in PLRs.

4. An overview of the country support on safeguards provided by the UN-REDD Programme

At least 23 partner countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean are actively engaged in safeguards work. This includes countries with UN-REDD National Programmes as well as other UN-REDD partner countries. In the case of the former, safeguards work is built into the broader context of the National Programme. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo has been working on developing the safeguard elements of its REDD+ strategy. Other UN-REDD partner

countries can request Targeted Support to obtain technical advice and capacity development on specific REDD+ readiness issues. Existing targeted support requests include a range of safeguard-related needs from PLR review to SIS development. Bhutan is an example of a country where Targeted Support has included an initial analysis of the PLRs relevant to developing a country approach to safeguards[4]. Other countries for which targeted support on safeguards has been agreed include Costa Rica and Argentina.

Much of the UN-REDD Programme work related to safeguards for biodiversity has involved capacity building and analysis on identifying and mapping potential social and environmental benefits, often in relation to specific REDD+ activities. The aims include support to land-use planning for REDD+ that integrates biodiversity and other benefits, and awareness-raising on the potential for REDD+ to deliver these benefits. Adoption of open-source software tools and developing methods and training materials for their use in this analysis has removed a barrier for in-country take-up. For example, in the Central Sulawesi province of Indonesia, the development of a compendium of maps illustrated the potential of REDD+ to provide additional benefits for biodiversity conservation when maintaining natural forest.

In the experience of the UN-REDD Programme, countries wish to ensure that safeguards work under different initiatives is complementary rather than duplicative. Initiatives however use different terminology, and some confusion exists over what is a mandatory requirement and what is guidance for countries to consider. The UN-REDD Programme approach to safeguards offers flexible support that can help clarify the connections between initiatives including the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

5. **Lessons learned on country needs in relation to safeguards in UN-REDD Programme workshops**

The UN-REDD Programme Workshop 'REDD+ Beyond Carbon: Safeguards and Multiple Benefits' held in Cambridge in November 2012 demonstrated the substantial progress that countries have made in their understanding of safeguards and multiple benefits work since the previous UN-REDD Programme workshop on multiple benefits held in April 2010. In identifying country priorities for safeguards, participants from the three regions emphasized the importance of building technical capacity, including within civil society and indigenous peoples groups, as well as the assessment of existing data and frameworks.

The 'Planning for REDD+: Incorporating Multiple Benefits and Safeguards Regional Workshop, Africa' held in Nairobi in September 2013 found that most countries in the region had taken steps towards developing a country approach to safeguards, including stakeholder analysis, awareness raising and capacity-building. Fewer countries had proceeded with defining or developing safeguard policies, laws and regulations, collecting information on safeguards, and providing or sharing information on safeguards. Countries requested practical training on spatial planning approaches that take multiple

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[4] Available from:
http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=9987&Itemid=53

benefits and safeguards into account as well as concrete guidance on Safeguard Information Systems. Support on approaches that can be used to plan for both social and environmental benefits from REDD+ at the same time was also requested.[5] The 'Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop: Supporting planning for REDD+ activities through spatial analysis' held in Bangkok in October 2013 highlighted a need for REDD+ safeguards workshops for civil society and indigenous peoples at national and sub-national levels in the region[6] These further needs expressed will inform the development of future UN-REDD Programme support on safeguards.

6. Key messages from a UN-REDD Programme Policy Brief on CBD and REDD+ linkages

The majority of developing countries have ratified both the UNFCCC and CBD, and therefore may voluntarily participate in REDD+ and have committed themselves to achieve progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As recognized in CBD Decision XI/195, it may be helpful for countries to consider how activities under REDD+ and those aimed at achieving the Aichi Targets may complement one another, and to promote synergies between them. The following key messages were distilled from a recent UN-REDD Programme policy brief on "REDD+ and the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets: Promoting synergies in international forest conservation efforts".[7]

Action for REDD+ can help to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and vice versa, in many but not all cases. This is already illustrated by some national REDD+ work. For example, the draft national REDD+ Safeguards document for Tanzania states that REDD+ activities are to be designed to maintain or enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.

How REDD+ actions are planned and implemented is key to determining to what extent synergies are achieved. Opportunities include shared priority-setting, land-zoning/planning processes, and appraisal of interventions for their impacts on both carbon and biodiversity.

Respecting and addressing the Cancun safeguards are respected and addressed will increase the ability of REDD+ to contribute towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Cancun safeguards promote REDD+ actions consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, and that effectively involve indigenous people and local communities, as well as addressing other important issues.

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[5] For the workshop report, see: Hallosserie, A., Bodin, B., Väänänen, E., Runsten L., Goodman L, Woroniecki, S., and Miles, L. (2013) Planning for REDD+: Incorporating Multiple Benefits and Safeguards Regional Workshop, Africa. Workshop Report. Prepared on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme. UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK. Available at:
http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=11822&Itemid=55

[6] For the workshop report, see: Munroe, R., Hicks, C., Goodman L., Woroniecki, S., Hallosserie, A., Miles, L., (2013). Supporting planning for REDD activities through spatial analysis. Workshop Report. Prepared on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme. UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK. Available at:
http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=11977&Itemid=53

[7] For the full brief, see: Miles, L., Trumper, K., Osti, M., Munroe R. and Santamaria, C. (2013) REDD+ and the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets: Promoting synergies in international forest conservation efforts. Policy Brief no. 5. UN-REDD Programme. Available at: http://www.un-redd.org/AichiBiodiversityPolicyBrief/tabid/130684/Default.aspx

REDD+ implementation is not expected to contribute to the achievement of all the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, since these are broader than forest and its role in climate change mitigation.

REDD+ could sometimes hinder the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets if pressure on forest land were displaced across national boundaries or into other ecosystems, unless such 'leakage' is prevented.

Joint planning for REDD+ implementation and achievement of the CBD Aichi Targets could help countries to develop cost-effective and complementary approaches to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. Countries are thus likely to benefit from ensuring that their policies advance both REDD+ and CBD goals while promoting and supporting the Cancun safeguards.