



REDD+
Safeguards
Brief



Operationalizing REDD+ Safeguards

Challenges and opportunities

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Results-based financing of REDD+ is conditional on the implementation of national Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) to address social and environmental criteria that go beyond carbon. The briefs in this packet discuss the challenges of operationalizing safeguards from various perspectives – governance, benefit sharing, tenure, gender, biodiversity, technical monitoring – and highlight opportunities and strategies for dealing with these challenges.



REDD+ SAFEGUARDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

At the 16th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Cancun, seven safeguards were articulated for countries implementing REDD+ activities (UNFCCC 2011). The Cancun Safeguards focus on governance (a & b), rights (c), participation (d), consent (c & d), environmental and social co-benefits (e), permanence (f) and leakage (g). The intention of these safeguards is to ensure that REDD+ does no harm to local people and the environment, and to verify that new institutions put in place under REDD+ are complementary to other environment and development policies. To be eligible for results-based compensation, REDD+ countries must develop national-level Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) to monitor and regularly report on the social and environmental impacts of REDD+.

In addition, voluntary certification standards for assessing social and environmental impacts at the jurisdictional level have emerged (e.g. the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES)

Initiative led by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and CARE International), and bilateral and multilateral donors have safeguard policies of their own (e.g. the World Bank Group's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the United Nations program on REDD (UN-REDD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)).

The UNFCCC and its Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) have issued limited guidance on expectations for REDD+ SIS. Having minimal guidance supports national ownership and provides space for independent experimentation in complex country-specific contexts, but it can also create uncertainties and high transaction costs. Additionally, the process is complicated by a lack of harmonization among the various safeguard policies and a clear disconnect in REDD+ monitoring efforts at different scales. There is an opportunity to learn from these challenges and support countries toward implementing REDD+ policy and practice that goes beyond 'doing no harm' to deliver a host of social and environmental benefits.



EVIDENCE-BASED BRIEFS IN THIS PACKET

1. The evolution of REDD+ social safeguards in Brazil, Indonesia and Tanzania. Multi-level policy processes, dialogues and actions on REDD+ social safeguards: Challenges and opportunities for national REDD+ safeguards measurement, reporting and verification (P. Jagger et al.)
2. Operationalizing safeguards in national REDD+ benefit-sharing systems: Lessons on effectiveness, efficiency and equity (M. Brockhaus et al.)
3. Why tenure is key to fulfilling climate and ethical goals in REDD+ (W. Sunderlin)
4. Can safeguards guarantee gender equity? Lessons from research on women in early REDD+ implementation (A. Larson et al.)
5. Safeguarding biodiversity in REDD+: Necessary but not sufficient to help slow global biodiversity loss (J. Murray & J. Jones)
6. Designing low-cost, rigorous and sustainable REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems. Using publicly available social and spatial data and impact evaluation methods to assess REDD+ social safeguards in Kalimantan, Indonesia (P. Jagger & P. Rana)



SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES

Operationalizing safeguards in subnational and national REDD+ architectures remains a major challenge in many countries. Currently, safeguards processes are evolving at multiple levels from the development of Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) by national governments to attainment of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) by proponents of subnational REDD+ initiatives. In their brief, Jagger et al. emphasize how polycentric institutional structures (multiple centers vs. nested) can promote greater transparency and accuracy of information in addressing safeguards. In their comparison of the **evolution of social safeguards** in three countries, the authors highlight how advances have largely occurred at the subnational level in Brazil and Indonesia, while Tanzania's top-down approach has shown greater limitations.

Brockhaus et al. focus on the potential for **linking REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms and safeguards** to promote greater equity in REDD+. The authors propose a stepwise approach for operationalizing safeguards. They demonstrate how identifying risks to equitable benefit sharing (e.g. rationales for choosing beneficiaries, issues of representation) informs safeguards prioritization, and how then risk-specific criteria and indicators for assessing benefit-sharing mechanisms can be explicitly linked to the Cancun Safeguards.

While safeguard policies intend to ensure that REDD+ does not harm people and the environment, REDD+ can also have a positive impact through social and environmental co-benefits. There are, however, clear challenges associated with meeting these objectives. Sunderlin details why attention to **tenure** is essential for REDD+ not only to avoid violation of local rights and threats to local livelihoods, but also to enable performance-based reward systems and integrate REDD+ into broader national land use planning efforts. Despite the importance of establishing clear and secure tenure, he highlights several obstacles to making this happen.

In their brief, Larson et al. focus on **gender**. The authors highlight research results from 20 subnational REDD+ initiatives in six

countries finding that women were less informed about and involved in REDD+ activities than their male counterparts, even where REDD+ proponents indicated that they were concerned with gender equity and women were active in village decision making. They conclude that promoting local participation alone is not enough to safeguard women's interests.

Murray and Jones then turn the spotlight on environmental co-benefits focusing on **biodiversity**. The authors make a distinction between 'risk management' and 'opportunity realization' approaches to biodiversity conservation in REDD+, the latter of which requires additional efforts to deliver biodiversity co-benefits, including spatial targeting of REDD+ interventions, supplementary financing, and biodiversity-specific management. They argue for a landscape approach to REDD+ to ensure that biodiversity co-benefits are integrated across larger areas.

As countries begin to develop REDD+ SIS, additional guidance on the use of appropriate indicators, data collection methods, and reporting frameworks for the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of safeguards is needed. In their brief, Jagger and Rana underscore how limited financing for SIS makes it necessary for governments to find low-cost, rigorous and sustainable **safeguard monitoring strategies**. They present proof of concept for the use of publicly available data to assess the social impacts of REDD+ in Kalimantan, Indonesia. While clearly outlining limitations of this approach, they show the potential for building on existing data-collection efforts to measure the social impacts of REDD+.

As countries begin to implement SIS to achieve social and environmental goals and potentially access REDD+ results-based financing, there is an urgent need to understand how safeguard policies and practices can be streamlined, and SIS elaborated from existing national policies and monitoring systems, so that safeguards are a source of support and not a burden. We believe that this set of briefs provides timely and relevant information for governments, policy makers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders interested in operationalizing safeguards, which are ultimately key to the success of REDD+.



REFERENCES

UNFCCC. 2011. The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperation Under the Convention. Decision 1/CP.16. Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Sixteenth Session, Cancun, 29 November–10 December 2010. FCC/CP/2010/7 Add.1. Bonn, Germany: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This brief introduces a set of REDD+ Safeguards Briefs. See the full set here: CIFOR.org/safeguards



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