



**First Summary of Information on
how the Cancun Safeguards have
been addressed and respected in the
design and implementation of
REDD+ Activities.**

Proposed reporting period: 2019-2023



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Republic of Cuba



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Executive summary

Cuba's forest sector plays a strategic role in advancing national priorities related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable rural development, watershed protection, and ecosystem resilience. These priorities are reflected in the country's broader policy framework, including the National Economic and Social Development Plan to 2030, the State Plan for Addressing Climate Change (*Tarea Vida*), the National Biodiversity Programme, the National Forestry Development Programme and Cuba's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

During the 2019–2023 reporting period, Cuba continued implementing the National Strategy and Programme for Fire Management in Forests of the Republic of Cuba (2018–2030). This instrument strengthens prevention, monitoring and control of forest fires and contributes directly to the conservation of natural forests, the protection of biodiversity, and the reduction of risks of reversals in forest carbon stocks.

In 2023, the regulatory framework for fire management was further reinforced through the adoption of Resolution 59/2023 of the Ministry of the Interior, which establishes the responsibilities of national institutions involved in forest-fire prevention and suppression, and Resolution 53/2023, which regulates the use of fire in forests and adjacent areas. These instruments complement existing forest-sector regulations and strengthen forest governance and risk-management arrangements relevant to REDD+ safeguards.

Within this context, Cuba has been developing a Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector as the principal policy instrument to guide forest-sector climate actions in Cuba. The Plan provides the strategic framework for implementing actions that contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, stakeholder participation, social inclusion, and gender equality. It also includes action lines intended to strengthen safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting through existing institutional arrangements and national information systems.

This Summary of Information should therefore be understood as complementary to the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector. While the Plan establishes the policy framework and action lines for implementation, the SOI constitutes the reporting instrument through which Cuba communicates how the Cancun Safeguards have been addressed and respected in the context of forest-sector actions relevant to REDD+ and the results reported under the UNFCCC.

The Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector includes a specific action line dedicated to strengthening forest information systems, forest monitoring arrangements and safeguards-related information and reporting systems, including the progressive development of the Safeguards Information System

Cuba has strengthened the policy, institutional and technical foundations necessary to participate in REDD+ under the UNFCCC. These efforts have included the consolidation of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), the development and technical assessment of a national Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL), the preparation of a Technical Annex reporting forest-sector results for 2019-2023, the development of a national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards, and the conceptual design of a national Safeguards Information System (SIS).

The implementation of forest-sector actions relevant to REDD+ also involved institutions responsible for environmental and natural-resource management, including the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), whose mandate is central to integrated watershed management and hydrological regulation—ecosystem functions closely linked to forest conservation and climate-change mitigation.

Cuba submitted a modified national Forest Reference Emission Level in July 2025 following the UNFCCC technical assessment process. The assessed reference level includes reducing emissions from deforestation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The assessment process contributed to strengthening the transparency, consistency, and national coverage of the reference level. Although submitted after the reporting period, the updated FREL provides important context for understanding the evolution of Cuba's REDD+ architecture and the strengthening of transparency and consistency in national reporting.

According to the Technical Annex prepared for the reporting period 2019-2023, forest land with tree cover increased from approximately 3.367 million hectares in 2014 to approximately 3.438 million hectares in 2023. Net removals reported for 2019-2023 amounted to approximately 105.5 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, exceeding the removals represented by the reference level over an equivalent period. These results reflect the contribution of sustainable forest management, reforestation, restoration, and forest conservation efforts implemented in Cuba over recent decades.

This first SOI adopts a national approach to safeguards based on existing laws, policies, institutions, information systems and participation mechanisms. Under this approach, safeguards are considered addressed through the existence of relevant legal, policy and institutional arrangements, and respected through their implementation and application during the reporting period.

The assessment presented in this report indicates that all seven Cancun Safeguards are addressed through existing national laws, policies, and institutions. The assessment further indicates that forest governance arrangements, forest monitoring systems, biodiversity conservation measures, stakeholder participation processes and national climate and forestry policies contributed to respecting the safeguards during the reporting period. At the same time, the assessment identified opportunities for improvement related to the systematization of participation records, safeguard-specific indicators, gender-disaggregated information,

grievance-related information, and the continued development of the Safeguards Information System.

The revision of this document considered additional inputs generated through the proposal for a REDD+ Coordination Mechanism in Cuba, reports from provincial stakeholder consultations involving 13 provinces, and comments received during validation workshops and consultations. These processes provided information relevant to institutional coordination, stakeholder participation, gender considerations, safeguards awareness, governance arrangements and potential information sources for the future SIS.

This first SOI forms part of an evolving national process for strengthening safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting. It describes the legal, policy, institutional and implementation arrangements that were in place during the reporting period 2019-2023 and should not be interpreted as an assessment of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector itself, as the Plan was developed after the reporting period covered by this report.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.

Acronym	Meaning
ACPA	Cuban Association of Animal Production
ACTAF	Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians
ANAP	National Association of Small Farmers
AZCUBA	Sugar Agroindustry Business Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEF	Centre for Forestry Studies
CGB	Forest Ranger Corps
CITMA	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
CNAP	National Centre for Protected Areas
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CO ₂ e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
CTC	Cuban Workers' Confederation
DSEF	Forest State Service Division
EAF	Agroforestry Enterprise
ECOVALOR	Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMC	Federation of Cuban Women
FONADEF	National Forest Development Fund
FREL	Forest Reference Emission Level
GAF	Agroforestry Business Group
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFF	Flora and Fauna Business Group
GIS	Geographic Information System
IFN	National Forest Inventory
IFNGEI	National Forest Greenhouse Gas Inventory
INAF	Agroforestry Research Institute
INGEI	National Greenhouse Gas Inventory
INRH	National Institute of Hydraulic Resources
MES	Ministry of Higher Education
MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
OACE	Central State Administration Bodies
OLPP	Local Organs of People's Power
ONEI	National Office of Statistics and Information
PNDB	National Biodiversity Programme
PNDES	National Economic and Social Development Plan 2030

REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks
SEF	State Forest Service
SIS	Safeguards Information System
SNAP	National System of Protected Areas
SNTAFT	National Union of Agricultural, Forestry and Tobacco Workers
SOI	Summary of Information
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

This document constitutes Cuba's First Summary of Information (SOI) on how the safeguards set out in Appendix I to Decision 1/CP.16 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been addressed and respected in the context of forest-sector actions relevant to REDD+ during the reporting period 2019-2023.

The SOI has been prepared in accordance with UNFCCC guidance on REDD+ safeguards and forms part of the information that countries may provide when reporting on the implementation of REDD+ activities. The SOI should be understood as a reporting instrument that complements Cuba's Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector. While the Climate Action Plan establishes the policy framework and action lines for implementing forest-sector climate actions, this SOI provides information on how the Cancun Safeguards have been addressed and respected through the legal, policy, institutional and implementation arrangements applicable during the reporting period.

The specific objectives of this report are to:

- describe Cuba's national approach to REDD+ safeguards and its relationship with the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector;
- identify the policies, laws, regulations, and institutional arrangements through which the safeguards are addressed;
- provide information on how these arrangements operated during the reporting period and contributed to respecting the Cancun Safeguards;
- describe the institutional and information arrangements supporting safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting, including the progressive development of the Safeguards Information System (SIS); and
- identify information gaps, capacity needs, and priority areas for the continued strengthening of safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The proposed reporting period for this first SOI is 2019-2023, corresponding to the period covered by Cuba's REDD+ Results Technical Annex. Accordingly, the assessment focuses on the legal, policy, institutional and implementation arrangements that were in place and operational during that period.

The scope of this report includes REDD+ readiness activities undertaken during the reporting period, national forest governance arrangements, forest monitoring systems, institutional coordination mechanisms, stakeholder participation processes, gender-related arrangements, biodiversity conservation measures and forest-sector actions that contributed to the results reported in the REDD+ Results Technical Annex for 2019-2023. It also considers the legal and institutional frameworks that supported these actions during the reporting period.

The scope of this report also recognizes the role of institutions responsible for water resources and watershed management, including the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), whose mandate is closely linked to hydrological regulation and watershed protection—ecosystem functions directly associated with forest conservation and REDD+ objectives.

For the purposes of this SOI, a safeguard is considered addressed when relevant policies, laws, regulations, institutional mandates, procedures, or governance arrangements exist and contribute to the objectives of a particular Cancun Safeguard. A safeguard is considered respected when those arrangements were implemented and applied during the reporting period in a manner consistent with the objectives of the safeguard.

In line with UNFCCC guidance, this SOI seeks to provide information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected, rather than to demonstrate compliance against a specific certification scheme, safeguard standard, or results-based payment framework. The level of detail provided therefore reflects the information available through national institutions, monitoring systems, and reporting processes during the reporting period.

This first SOI has been prepared following a stepwise and progressive approach consistent with national circumstances and capacities. It reflects the status of safeguards-related arrangements during the period 2019-2023, including the development of a national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards, the consolidation of a national safeguards framework and the conceptual design of a Safeguards Information System. Consequently, this report should be understood as part of a broader process through which safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements will continue to evolve over time.

The national approach to safeguards and the institutional, technical and information arrangements supporting their implementation are described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this report.

For the purposes of this SOI, forest-sector climate actions relevant to REDD+ are understood as those actions implemented through national forest policies, programmes and arrangements that contribute to REDD+ objectives under the UNFCCC.

Finally, it should be noted that important developments related to the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector, the Safeguards Information System and relevant legal and institutional arrangements have taken place after the reporting period covered by this SOI. While such developments provide useful context for understanding the evolution of Cuba's safeguards framework, they do not form part of the assessment of how safeguards were addressed and respected during 2019-2023. These developments will be reflected more fully in subsequent summaries of information.

1.2 Methodology and Sources

Consistent with Cuba's existing systems approach to REDD+ safeguards, the assessment relied primarily on official policy, legal, institutional, and technical information generated by national authorities and organizations with responsibilities related to forest management, environmental governance, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and stakeholder engagement.

The preparation process involved the review and analysis of relevant legal and policy instruments, institutional mandates and responsibilities, administrative and monitoring information, technical reports, and documentation generated through the REDD+ readiness process. Information was also compiled from consultations, workshops and technical exchanges conducted with institutions and stakeholders involved in forest management, environmental management, climate-change reporting, and REDD+ readiness activities.

This SOI draws, inter alia, on the following sources:

- Cuba's First Biennial Update Report (BUR);
- Cuba's Third National Communication to the UNFCCC;
- Cuba's First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR);
- Cuba's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs);
- the REDD+ Readiness Proposal and associated technical outputs;
- Cuba's assessed Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL);
- the UNFCCC technical assessment report of the FREL;
- draft REDD+ Results Technical Annex for the period 2019-2023;
- the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba;
- national forestry, environmental, biodiversity, climate-change and development policies and legislation;
- institutional information and administrative records generated by relevant entities of the forestry and environmental sectors;
- institutional information and administrative records generated by the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), particularly regarding watershed management and hydrological regulation;
- the proposal for the REDD+ Coordination Mechanism in Cuba;
- reports and outcomes from provincial stakeholder consultations undertaken during the REDD+ readiness process; and
- other information generated through consultations and participatory processes conducted during REDD+ readiness activities.

Some of the documents consulted were produced after the end of the reporting period covered by this SOI. Where relevant, these documents have been used to provide contextual information regarding the evolution of national policies, institutions, and reporting systems. However, the assessment of how safeguards were addressed and respected is limited to the reporting period 2019-2023 and is based primarily on the legal, institutional and implementation arrangements that were in place during that period.

Importance was given to information generated through the REDD+ readiness process, including institutional analyses, stakeholder consultations, discussions on safeguards and gender, and consultations undertaken in 13 provinces. These processes informed the development of the national approach to safeguards, the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards and the conceptual design of the Safeguards Information System.

For each Cancun Safeguard, the analysis considered:

- a) the national interpretation of the Safeguard;
- b) the legal, policy and institutional arrangements through which the safeguard is addressed;
- c) available information describing how the relevant arrangements operated during the reporting period and contributed to respecting the safeguard;
- d) opportunities and priority actions for strengthening safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting in future reporting periods.

The preparation of this SOI helped identify relevant information sources, institutional responsibilities and information needs that may inform future development of the SIS.

1.3 Cuba's National Approach to REDD+ Safeguards

Cuba has adopted a national approach to REDD+ safeguards based on the use and strengthening of existing national systems, institutions, legal frameworks, and information sources. This approach reflects national circumstances and seeks to ensure that forest-sector climate actions contribute simultaneously to climate-change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, social inclusion, and good governance.

Rather than establishing safeguard-specific structures, Cuba relies on existing policies, laws, institutional mandates, participation mechanisms, and monitoring systems already operating within the forestry, environmental and rural-development sectors. This approach promotes national ownership, institutional coherence, efficient use of resources and long-term sustainability.

This approach also encompasses institutions responsible for water resources and watershed management, such as the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), given the close relationship between forest conservation, hydrological regulation, and watershed protection.

The national approach was developed through the REDD+ readiness process and informed by technical assessments, institutional analyses, stakeholder consultations and discussions on safeguards, participation, and gender. These processes contributed to the development of a national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards and to the identification of institutional, technical and information arrangements relevant to safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The national approach provides the overarching framework through which safeguards are addressed, respected, monitored and reported in Cuba. It serves as the foundation for the safeguards framework described in this report and for the systematic development of the Safeguards Information System (SIS).

2. National circumstances, forests, and REDD+ in Cuba

2.1 Policy Context

Cuba's forest sector operates within a broader national policy framework aimed at promoting sustainable development, climate resilience, environmental protection, and social well-being. Forest-related policies and programmes contribute simultaneously to national objectives on climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, food security, rural development, and disaster-risk reduction.

The Constitution of the Republic of Cuba establishes the responsibility of the State and society to protect the environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. This constitutional framework is complemented by national development, environmental and sectoral policies that guide the management and conservation of forest resources and provide the policy foundation for actions relevant to REDD+.

The National Economic and Social Development Plan to 2030 (PNDES 2030) identifies natural resources and environmental sustainability as strategic priorities for national development. The Plan promotes the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources,

increased resilience to climate change and the transition towards more sustainable and resource-efficient development pathways.

Climate-change action in Cuba is guided by the State Plan for Addressing Climate Change (*Tarea Vida*), adopted in 2017. *Tarea Vida* provides the national framework for climate adaptation and resilience-building and includes measures relevant to forest conservation, ecosystem restoration, watershed protection, mangrove rehabilitation, and the reduction of climate-related vulnerabilities in coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. Many of the actions implemented under *Tarea Vida* generate important synergies with forest-sector mitigation and adaptation efforts and contribute directly to the environmental objectives reflected in the Cancun Safeguards.

The forest sector also contributes to the implementation of Cuba's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. Forest conservation, reforestation, restoration, and sustainable forest management are recognized as important components of national climate action due to their contribution to greenhouse-gas removals, ecosystem resilience, and biodiversity conservation. Previous NDC submissions established targets for increasing national forest cover, while more recent national climate reporting underscores the strategic role of forests in supporting both mitigation and adaptation objectives.

Biodiversity conservation constitutes another important pillar of the national policy framework. Through the National Biodiversity Programme and the National System of Protected Areas, Cuba promotes the conservation of natural ecosystems, species diversity, and ecosystem services. These efforts reinforce the environmental objectives of REDD+ and support the implementation of the Cancun Safeguards related to the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity.

At the sectoral level, forest management is guided by the National Forestry Development Programme and other policy instruments aimed at strengthening sustainable forest management, forest restoration, reforestation, forest protection, and forest governance. These instruments have contributed to the long-term expansion of forest cover in Cuba and provide the operational foundation for many of the forest-sector actions reflected in national climate and environmental policies.

Gender equality constitutes a critical component of forest-sector climate action in Cuba. Existing policy instruments, including the National Programme for the Advancement of Women and the Ministry of Agriculture's Gender Strategy, provide the framework for increasing the participation of women in forest governance, forest management, and climate-related initiatives within the forest sector.

Within this broader policy context, Cuba has been developing a Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector intended to provide an integrated framework for forest-sector climate action. The Plan seeks to strengthen the contribution of forests to national climate, environmental and development objectives through a set of strategic action lines focused on sustainable forest management, restoration, forest protection, institutional strengthening, stakeholder participation, gender equality, and safeguards implementation. Once operational, the Plan is expected to serve as the principal policy instrument for coordinating forest-sector actions consistent with REDD+ objectives under the UNFCCC.

The preparation of the Climate Action Plan has taken place in parallel with the development of several REDD+ readiness elements, including the National Forest Monitoring System, the Forest Reference Emission Level, the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards and the conceptual development of a Safeguards Information System. Together, these processes have contributed to strengthening the technical, institutional and policy foundations required for future implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector climate actions.

Accordingly, REDD+ in Cuba is understood as part of a broader national effort to strengthen sustainable forest management, enhance forest carbon stocks, conserve biodiversity, increase climate resilience and promote sustainable development. The implementation of REDD+ related activities is therefore linked to existing national priorities and institutions, rather than constituting a separate or parallel policy framework.

Future REDD+ development in Cuba may also benefit from experiences associated with urban forestry and tree cover management, given their contribution to ecosystem services, climate resilience, and environmental quality.

2.2 Forests and Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Cuba's forest resources have continued to expand over recent decades, reflecting long-term efforts in reforestation, restoration, sustainable forest management and forest protection. At the same time, several pressures and degradation dynamics persisted during the reporting period 2019–2023, influenced by climatic, ecological, institutional, and socio-economic factors. These dynamics varied across forest types and regions and were shaped by the interaction between natural processes and human activities.

Forest fires remained one of the most significant degradation pressures. Their occurrence was influenced by climatic variability, prolonged dry periods, and the increased frequency of extreme weather events. During the reporting period, fire incidence was also affected by limited implementation of prevention, surveillance, and integrated fire-management measures, together with constrained institutional capacities for forest-fire prevention and suppression. These conditions contributed to increased vulnerability of forest areas and to degradation processes associated with fire events, particularly in regions with high fuel loads or limited access for rapid response.

Pests, forest diseases and invasive species also contributed to degradation dynamics. Outbreaks were associated with climatic stressors, changes in forest structure and limitations in forest-health monitoring capacities. In several areas, these pressures were linked to a decline in native species and broader impacts on biodiversity, especially where surveillance and control measures were insufficient to prevent the spread or intensification of biological threats.

Illegal activities, including unauthorized logging, continued to affect certain forest areas. These activities were associated with socio-economic pressures, limited enforcement capacities and the availability of accessible forest resources. Their impacts were more pronounced in areas where forest governance arrangements faced operational constraints or where monitoring coverage was limited.

Indirect factors also influenced degradation processes. These included climatic variability, extreme weather events, institutional and economic constraints affecting forest management capacities, and pressures on rural livelihoods. In some regions, degradation dynamics were linked to insufficient implementation of integrated landscape-management approaches, including watershed protection and hydrological regulation—ecosystem functions closely associated with the mandates of institutions such as the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH).

Overall, the drivers of degradation during the reporting period reflected a combination of climatic, ecological, institutional, and socio-economic factors. The continued strengthening of forest governance, monitoring systems, fire-management capacities, forest-health surveillance, and integrated watershed-management approaches remains essential for reducing degradation pressures and supporting the long-term resilience of Cuba's forest ecosystems.

2.3 REDD+ Readiness in the Period 2019-2023.

Cuba's REDD+ readiness process formed part of broader national efforts to strengthen the contribution of forests to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and ecosystem resilience. While most readiness activities were implemented during 2019-2023, they built upon longstanding forest governance arrangements, forest inventories, management planning processes, reforestation programmes and climate-reporting systems that predated the reporting period.

The readiness process was financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented with technical assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It was designed to strengthen the technical, institutional and policy foundations required for future implementation of forest-sector climate actions and participation in REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

Although several forest-monitoring, forest-management and climate-reporting arrangements were already operating prior to 2019, the period 2019-2023 was characterized by significant efforts to consolidate and strengthen the elements required under the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. During this period, Cuba advanced the development of the National Forest Monitoring System, the Forest Reference Emission Level, the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards, the conceptual design of a Safeguards Information System and the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector.

The principal outputs of the readiness process included:

- strengthening and consolidation of the National Forest Monitoring System;
- development and technical assessment of a national Forest Reference Emission Level;
- preparation of a REDD+ Results Technical Annex for the reporting period 2019-2023;
- development of a national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards;
- conceptualization of a national Safeguards Information System;
- preparation of a Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector;

- incorporation of gender considerations and social inclusion approaches into REDD+ related processes; and
- strengthening capacities of institutions and stakeholders involved in forest monitoring, forest management, and climate reporting.

The readiness process strengthened collaboration among institutions responsible for forestry, biodiversity conservation, environmental management, climate-change reporting, and scientific research, while also promoting stakeholder participation through consultations, workshops, and institutional exchanges. Government agencies, research institutions, producer organizations, professional associations and social organizations contributed to the development of readiness outputs, including discussions on safeguards, participation, and gender considerations. Particular attention was given to the participation of organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women and to the integration of gender-responsive approaches into REDD+ readiness activities.

The readiness process also helped identify strengths and gaps in existing institutional and information systems, providing the basis for future improvements in safeguards monitoring, stakeholder participation, information management, institutional coordination, and reporting arrangements. These findings informed the development of the national safeguards framework and the progressive design of the Safeguards Information System.

2.3.1 National Forest Monitoring System

The National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) constitutes one of the principal technical pillars supporting forest governance, climate reporting, and the implementation of REDD+ in Cuba. The system builds upon long-established national forest inventories, forest management planning processes, administrative reporting mechanisms, and forest-resource monitoring activities that have been progressively strengthened to meet national and international information requirements.

The NFMS has been developed by strengthening and integrating existing national forest inventories, management-planning processes, administrative reporting systems, field measurements and geospatial monitoring tools. This approach promotes consistency with national forest-management practices while supporting transparency and continuous improvement in forest monitoring and reporting.

During the reporting period, the NFMS incorporated information from a variety of sources and methodologies, including:

- the National Forest Inventory;
- the annual *Dinámica Forestal* process;
- forest management plans and administrative records;
- field measurements and permanent sampling plots;
- geographic information systems (GIS);
- satellite imagery and remote sensing analyses;
- Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies;
- unmanned aerial vehicles (drones); and
- Collect Earth Online and other geospatial interpretation tools.

These sources of information support the monitoring of forest extent, forest-cover change, forest carbon stocks, reforestation activities, forest disturbances, and other variables relevant to national forest management and climate-change reporting.

The Ministry of Agriculture, through the forestry authorities and the State Forest Service, leads the coordination of forest monitoring activities. The operation of the NFMS is supported by a network of institutions that contribute technical information, analysis, and field implementation capacities. These include the Agroforestry Research Institute (INAF), the Agroforestry Business Group (GAF), the Flora and Fauna Business Group (GFF), the National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP), the Forest Ranger Corps (CGB), universities and other research and technical organizations involved in forest monitoring and management.

In addition to its role in supporting REDD+ requirements, the NFMS provides information for a wide range of national purposes, including forest planning, sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, forest protection, land-use analysis, climate-change reporting, and policy development. The system therefore contributes simultaneously to environmental management, natural-resource governance, and national development objectives.

For REDD+ purposes, the NFMS provides the information necessary to estimate changes in forest area and carbon stocks, assesses trends in forest cover, supports the development and updating of the Forest Reference Emission Level, and monitors the results associated with forest-sector mitigation actions. The system also generates information relevant to several Cancun Safeguards, particularly those related to biodiversity conservation, forest governance, reversals, and displacement of emissions.

The continued expansion of forest monitoring capacities during the reporting period contributed to improving the consistency, transparency, and national coverage of forest-related information. The integration of remote sensing technologies with field-based data collection strengthened the ability to monitor forest dynamics and supported the preparation of the REDD+ Results Technical Annex for the period 2019-2023.

At the same time, the development of the NFMS should be understood as an ongoing process. While the monitoring arrangements operating during the reporting period provided the information necessary to support forest-sector reporting and REDD+ readiness activities, efforts to further formalize, integrate and strengthen the system are expected to continue. Future improvements may include enhanced interoperability among information systems, refinement of methodologies, expanded monitoring of forest degradation and ecosystem conditions, strengthened quality assurance procedures, and improved accessibility of forest-related information.

Overall, the National Forest Monitoring System represents a key component of Cuba's forest governance framework and an essential foundation for future implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector climate actions. Its continued development will contribute not only to REDD+ reporting requirements, but also to broader national objectives related to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Continued development of information related to Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) within national greenhouse-gas inventories is expected to improve transparency,

consistency, and the identification of future opportunities for emissions reductions and removals associated with the forest sector.

2.3.2 Forest Reference Emission Level and Results for the Period 2019-2023

The Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) constitutes a key element of Cuba's REDD+ framework under the UNFCCC. The FREL provides the benchmark against which future REDD+ performance may be assessed and reported, allowing the country to evaluate changes in emissions and removals associated with forest-sector activities over time. Together with the National Forest Monitoring System, the FREL contributes to transparency, consistency, and comparability in forest-sector climate reporting.

As part of the REDD+ readiness process, Cuba developed and submitted a Forest Reference Emission Level for technical assessment under the UNFCCC. Following the assessment process, methodological improvements were introduced, and a modified submission was presented with national coverage. This represented a key step in strengthening the consistency between forest monitoring, greenhouse-gas reporting, and national forest-sector information systems.

The assessed FREL covers the reference period 2014-2018 and includes three REDD+ activities:

- reducing emissions from deforestation;
- sustainable management of forests; and
- enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The FREL includes carbon stock changes in above-ground and below-ground biomass as well as non-CO₂ emissions associated with forest fires. Forest degradation was not included in the assessed reference level because sufficiently robust activity data and emission factors were not available at the time of submission. Nevertheless, future improvements to national monitoring systems may facilitate the progressive incorporation of additional forest dynamics and carbon pools.

The transition from a subnational to a national-scale reference level strengthened the comprehensiveness of the accounting framework and improved consistency with national forest and greenhouse-gas reporting processes. National coverage also provides a stronger basis for understanding forest-sector trends and for assessing issues relevant to several Cancun Safeguards, including biodiversity conservation, permanence of results and the potential displacement of emissions.

The technical assessment process identified opportunities for continued improvement in areas such as documentation of methodologies, consistency with national greenhouse-gas inventories, treatment of forest categories, uncertainty analysis, and the further refinement of emission factors. These recommendations provide a basis for the continued strengthening of future reference level submissions and associated monitoring arrangements.

The REDD+ Results Technical Annex prepared for the period 2019-2023 reports that Cuba maintained net removals from the forest sector throughout the reporting period. According to the Annex, gross removals during the five-year period amounted to approximately 112.6 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, while emissions associated primarily with forest fires and

wood harvesting totaled approximately 7.1 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. As a result, net removals during the reporting period reached approximately 105.5 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

Compared with the reference level, the reported results indicate an additional net removal of approximately 3.4 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent over the reporting period. These results are attributed principally to increases in forest area, enhancement of forest carbon stocks and the continued implementation of sustainable forest management, reforestation, and restoration activities.

The results also demonstrate the importance of maintaining investments in forest protection and risk management. Although net removals remained positive throughout the reporting period, the Technical Annex identifies forest fires as one of the principal factors affecting annual emissions. The increase in areas affected by fire during 2023 illustrates the continued importance of prevention, monitoring, and response measures to protect forest carbon stocks and ecosystem integrity.

The assessed FREL does not include numerical values in this SOI, as the SOI focuses on safeguards rather than technical quantification. All numerical estimates remain those validated through the UNFCCC technical assessment process.

From a safeguards perspective, the FREL and the reported results provide important contextual information regarding trends in forest cover, forest carbon stocks, and the contribution of the forest sector to climate-change mitigation. However, the existence of positive mitigation results does not in itself demonstrate that the Cancun Safeguards have been addressed and respected. The assessment of safeguards requires additional consideration of the legal, institutional, social, environmental and governance arrangements through which these results were achieved.

Nevertheless, the information generated through the FREL and the REDD+ Results Technical Annex contributes directly to the national safeguards framework by supporting transparency, strengthening monitoring capacities, and providing information relevant to several safeguards, particularly those associated with biodiversity conservation, risks of reversals and the displacement of emissions.

Overall, the development of the FREL and the reporting of results for 2019-2023 represent significant advances in Cuba's REDD+ readiness process and provide an important technical foundation for future implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector climate actions under the UNFCCC.

2.4 Strategic and Legal Framework

The implementation of forest-sector actions relevant to REDD+ in Cuba is supported by an extensive strategic, policy and legal framework that promotes sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, environmental protection, and sustainable rural development.

Rather than relying on REDD+-specific legislation, Cuba addresses forest-sector climate actions through existing national development policies, forestry programmes, environmental legislation, and institutional arrangements. This approach is consistent with the country's

broader policy framework and with the national approach to REDD+ safeguards based on existing systems.

The strategic framework provides policy direction and establishes national priorities for forest conservation, restoration, sustainable management, and climate action. The legal framework defines institutional responsibilities, regulatory requirements, enforcement mechanisms and procedures for the management and protection of forest resources.

Together, these frameworks provide the foundation upon which forest-sector climate actions are implemented and monitored, including the activities and measures that contributed to the results reported during the period 2019-2023 and that are relevant to the implementation of REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

These strategic and legal frameworks also provide the enabling environment for the implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector and for the future operationalization of safeguards-related arrangements under Cuba's national approach to REDD+ safeguards.

2.4.1 Strategic Framework Relevant to Forest-Sector Climate Actions and REDD+

Cuba's forest-sector climate actions are guided by a set of national development, climate, forestry, and biodiversity policies that collectively promote sustainable forest management, ecosystem restoration, environmental protection, and climate resilience.

At the national level, the National Economic and Social Development Plan to 2030 (PNDES 2030) provides the overarching framework for sustainable development and identifies natural resources, environmental sustainability, social equity, and climate resilience among the country's strategic priorities. These objectives create an enabling policy environment for actions aimed at conserving and enhancing forest resources while contributing to broader development goals.

Climate-change policy is guided by the State Plan for Addressing Climate Change (*Tarea Vida*), which establishes national priorities for adaptation and resilience-building. Several of its actions are directly relevant to forests, including ecosystem restoration, watershed protection, reforestation, mangrove rehabilitation, and the strengthening of ecosystem resilience in vulnerable territories.

The implementation of Cuba's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) also provides an important policy basis for forest-sector actions. Forest conservation, sustainable forest management, and reforestation are recognized as important contributions to national mitigation and adaptation objectives, while forests are increasingly viewed as strategic assets for enhancing resilience to climate change and supporting sustainable development.

The National Forestry Development Programme constitutes the principal sectoral framework guiding the conservation, restoration, sustainable management, and productive use of forest resources. The programme supports actions aimed at increasing forest cover, improving forest productivity, strengthening forest governance, and enhancing the environmental services provided by forest ecosystems.

Similarly, the National Biodiversity Programme promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and encourages greater integration between biodiversity conservation, climate action, and ecosystem management. This creates important synergies between forest-sector climate actions and national biodiversity objectives.

Additional policy instruments and programmes contribute to the implementation of forest-sector actions, including:

- the Sustainable Management of Forests and Trees Outside Forests Project;
- the National Forest Development Fund (FONADEF);
- the National Soil Conservation and Improvement Programme;
- the National Fire Management Strategy;
- the Government Plan for Addressing Crimes and Illegal Activities Affecting Forest Resources, Flora, and Fauna;
- the Nineteen Measures for Strengthening the Forestry Sector; and
- the Plan Turquino Development Programme.

Together, these policies, programmes and strategic instruments provide the policy foundation for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of forests in Cuba. They also contribute to creating favorable conditions for the implementation of forest-sector climate actions and the progressive development of REDD+ under the UNFCCC framework.

2.4.2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The management, conservation, and use of forest resources in Cuba are governed by an established legal and regulatory framework that defines the rights, responsibilities, and institutional mandates relevant to forestry, environmental protection, climate action, and sustainable development.

The Constitution of the Republic of Cuba provides the highest legal foundation for environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources. It establishes the responsibility of the State and society to protect the environment and promote sustainable development, while recognizing the strategic importance of natural resources for current and future generations.

The Forest Law No. 85 and its implementing regulations constitute the principal legal framework governing the conservation, protection, restoration, management, and use of forest resources. The law establishes institutional responsibilities, planning requirements, management instruments and control mechanisms that underpin forest governance throughout the country.

Environmental management is further strengthened through Law No. 150 on the System of Natural Resources and the Environment, which provides an integrated framework for environmental governance, conservation of natural resources and climate-change action.

This legislation reinforces the legal basis for ecosystem protection, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource management.

The legal framework relevant to forest-sector climate actions also includes instruments governing water resources and watershed management, such as Law 124 on terrestrial waters, which provides the basis for integrated hydrological regulation and complements forest-sector policies and safeguards.

Several additional legal instruments contribute to the governance of forests and related natural resources. These include legislation related to:

- protected areas and biodiversity conservation;
- climate-change management and adaptation;
- land-use planning and territorial management;
- soil conservation and sustainable land management;
- forest-fire prevention and control;
- watershed management;
- forest harvesting, transportation, and commercialization;
- reforestation and restoration activities; and
- environmental planning.

The legal framework is implemented through a broad range of governmental institutions responsible for forestry, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, territorial planning, climate-change management, and scientific research. Together, these institutions provide the regulatory, technical, and administrative functions required for effective forest governance.

Although REDD+ is not specifically regulated through a dedicated legal instrument, the implementation of REDD+-relevant activities relies upon these existing legal arrangements. Consequently, the national legal framework provides the foundation for forest-sector climate actions, supports the implementation of sustainable forest management measures, and establishes the institutional conditions necessary for monitoring, reporting and progressively strengthening safeguards-related arrangements.

The strategic and legal frameworks described above also provide the broader context within which Cuba's national approach to REDD+ safeguards have been developed. The following section presents the international requirements related to the Cancun Safeguards and the national approach adopted by Cuba for their interpretation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

3. National Framework for REDD+ Safeguards in Cuba

3.1 Cancun Safeguards and UNFCCC Requirements

The Cancun Safeguards constitute an integral component of the international framework established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the implementation of REDD+ activities. They were adopted through Decision 1/CP.16 and seek to promote environmental integrity, social benefits, transparency, and good governance in the implementation of actions to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserve forest carbon stocks, promote the sustainable management of forests and enhance forest carbon stocks.

The safeguards recognize that actions implemented to generate climate benefits should also contribute to sustainable development and avoid unintended adverse environmental, social and governance impacts. Accordingly, countries undertaking REDD+ activities are expected to promote and support the Cancun Safeguards throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions.

Subsequent UNFCCC decisions further clarified the requirements for safeguards implementation and reporting. Collectively, these decisions establish that countries seeking to implement REDD+ under the Convention should have:

- a national strategy or action plan;
- a national forest monitoring system;
- a forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, as appropriate;
- a system for providing information on how the Cancun Safeguards are being addressed and respected (Safeguards Information System, SIS); and
- a summary of information on how the Cancun Safeguards have been addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities.

Within this framework, the Safeguards Information System (SIS) and the Summary of Information (SOI) serve complementary functions. The SIS is intended to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected over time, drawing upon relevant national institutions, monitoring systems, and information sources. SOI is the reporting instrument through which countries summarize and communicate such information to the UNFCCC.

In Cuba, these requirements are being developed in parallel with broader efforts to strengthen forest-sector climate action, including the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector, the strengthening of forest monitoring arrangements and the progressive development of safeguards-related institutional and information systems.

The Cancun Safeguards consist of seven principles, commonly referred to as Safeguards A to G:

Safeguard A. Consistency with National Forest Programmes and Relevant International Conventions and Agreements

Actions should complement or be consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements. This safeguard promotes policy coherence, alignment with national priorities and consistency with international commitments related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development.

- **Safeguard B. Transparent and Effective National Forest Governance Structures**

Actions should be implemented through transparent and effective forest governance arrangements, considering national legislation and sovereignty. This safeguard emphasizes

institutional effectiveness, accountability, regulatory compliance, transparency, and appropriate governance mechanisms.

- **Safeguard C. Respect for Knowledge and Rights**

Actions should respect the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and members of local communities, considering 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.

In the Cuban context, where distinct Indigenous Peoples are not formally identified, the interpretation of this safeguard focuses on respect for the rights, interests, knowledge and participation of forest-dependent stakeholders, rural communities, producers, workers, and other actors associated with the management and use of forest resources.

- **Safeguard D. Full and Effective Participation of Relevant Stakeholders**

Actions should promote the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, including rights holders and other interested parties, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of REDD+-related activities.

This safeguard recognizes participation as a fundamental element of effective governance, transparency, legitimacy, and national ownership of forest-sector actions.

- **Safeguard E. Conservation of Natural Forests and Biological Diversity**

Actions should be consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity and should not be used for the conversion of natural forests. Instead, they should incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and the enhancement of social and environmental benefits.

This safeguard highlights the need to ensure that climate mitigation actions generate broader environmental benefits and contribute positively to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem integrity, and sustainable development.

- **Safeguard F. Actions to Address the Risks of Reversals**

Actions should be designed to address the risks of reversals. Under REDD+, reversals refer to situations in which emissions reductions or carbon stock enhancements achieved through forest-sector actions are subsequently lost due to factors such as wildfires, extreme weather events, pest outbreaks, unsustainable management practices, or other disturbances affecting forest ecosystems.

- **Safeguard G. Actions to Reduce the Displacement of Emissions**

This safeguard seeks to ensure that efforts to reduce emissions or enhance removals in one location do not result in increased emissions, deforestation, or forest degradation in another area.

Together, the Cancun Safeguards provide the international framework through which countries seek to ensure that REDD+ activities contribute not only to climate-change mitigation objectives, but also to sustainable development, environmental protection, social inclusion, and good governance.

In accordance with UNFCCC guidance, countries retain flexibility to interpret and implement the Cancun Safeguards in a manner consistent with their national circumstances, legal systems, institutional arrangements, and development priorities. Consequently, the way safeguards are addressed, respected, monitored and reported varies among countries, reflecting different governance systems, forest-sector characteristics, and capacities.

Building upon these international requirements and national circumstances, Cuba has developed a national approach to REDD+ safeguards that relies on existing laws, institutions, policies, participation mechanisms, and information systems. This approach recognizes that safeguards are implemented through the broader forest governance framework of the country and not through stand-alone REDD+-specific structures. Accordingly, the national approach seeks to strengthen and build upon existing systems while progressively improving safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements.

The following section presents the principles, concepts and processes that underpin Cuba's national approach to addressing, respecting, monitoring, and reporting the Cancun Safeguards.

3.2 National Approach to REDD+ Safeguards

Building upon the national circumstances described in Chapter 2 and the safeguards requirements established under the UNFCCC, Cuba has developed a national approach to REDD+ safeguards that provides the conceptual basis for addressing, respecting, monitoring, and reporting the Cancun Safeguards.

The national approach was developed through the REDD+ readiness process and reflects national legal, institutional and policy arrangements, as well as information generated through technical assessments, institutional analyses, stakeholder consultations and discussions on safeguards, participation, and gender. It also reflects Cuba's broader approach to forest-sector climate action, which seeks to strengthen the contribution of forests to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and ecosystem resilience.

Consistent with national circumstances, Cuba has adopted a nationally embedded approach to safeguards. Under this approach, safeguards are implemented through existing laws, policies, institutions, governance arrangements, participation mechanisms, and information systems already operating within the forestry, environmental and rural-development sectors, rather than through parallel REDD+-specific structures.

The national approach recognizes that safeguards are not implemented through a single institution, policy, or reporting mechanism. Rather, they are addressed and respected through the combined operation of the country's broader forest governance framework, including legal and regulatory instruments, institutional mandates, stakeholder-engagement processes,

forest-monitoring arrangements, environmental-management systems, and social inclusion mechanisms.

This national approach provides the overarching framework through which safeguards are interpreted, implemented, monitored, and reported in Cuba and is based on four mutually reinforcing elements:

- operational definitions for understanding how safeguards are addressed and respected in the national context;
- a set of guiding principles reflecting national priorities and the objectives of the Cancun Safeguards;
- a participatory process for developing a national interpretation of the safeguards; and
- a national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards adapted to Cuba's legal, institutional and policy context.

3.2.1 Operational Definitions

For the purposes of this Summary of Information, Cuba distinguishes between how safeguards are addressed and how safeguards are respected.

A safeguard is considered addressed when relevant policies, laws, regulations, institutional mandates, procedures, governance arrangements, or information systems exist and contribute to achieving the objectives of a particular Cancun Safeguard.

A safeguard is considered respected when these arrangements have been implemented and applied during the reporting period in a manner consistent with the objectives of the safeguard.

Accordingly, this SOI provides information on both dimensions. The assessment examines the legal, policy and institutional framework through which safeguards are addressed and describes how these arrangements operated during the reporting period 2019-2023.

This interpretation is consistent with the information requirements established under the UNFCCC, which calls upon countries to provide information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected throughout implementation, while recognizing national circumstances and capacities.

3.2.2 Guiding Principles

The development and implementation of Cuba's national approach to safeguards are guided by a set of principles that emerged from the REDD+ readiness process and reflect both national priorities and the objectives of the Cancun Safeguards.

These principles emerged from analyses and discussions undertaken during the REDD+ readiness process and reflect national priorities related to sustainable forest management, climate action, biodiversity conservation, stakeholder participation, gender equality, and sustainable development. They are also consistent with the objectives of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector and provide strategic guidance for safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The principles provide an overarching framework for the interpretation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of safeguards.

- **Consistency with UNFCCC Requirements.**

Forest-sector actions relevant to REDD+ should be implemented in a manner consistent with the Cancun Safeguards and relevant decisions adopted under the UNFCCC.

- **Alignment with National Priorities and Legal Frameworks.**

Safeguards should support national objectives related to sustainable development, environmental protection, climate action, social equity, and sustainable forest management, while building upon existing legal and institutional arrangements.

- **Transparency and Accountability.**

Implementation of forest-sector actions should be supported by clear institutional responsibilities, monitoring arrangements and procedures that promote transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

- **Participation and Inclusion.**

Relevant stakeholders should have opportunities to participate in the design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector actions. Particular attention should be given to ensuring inclusive participation and consideration of different territorial, social and productive perspectives.

- **Gender Equality.**

The implementation of safeguards should promote the meaningful participation of women and contribute to gender-responsive approaches within forest governance and rural development processes, consistent with national policies and the Ministry of Agriculture's gender strategy.

- **Environmental Sustainability.**

Forest-sector actions should contribute to the conservation of natural forests, biodiversity and ecosystem services while supporting climate resilience and sustainable resource management.

- **Adaptive Improvement and Institutional Learning.**

The national safeguards framework, institutional arrangements and information systems should evolve progressively over time as latest information, capacities and implementation experience become available.

Use of Existing Systems.

Priority should be given to strengthening and coordinating existing institutions, monitoring systems, and governance arrangements rather than creating parallel structures.

3.2.3 Development of the National Interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards

Cuba's safeguards framework provides the operational structure through which the Cancun Safeguards are translated into implementation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements. It builds upon the national interpretation of safeguards and identifies the main legal, institutional, participatory, and information-management mechanisms relevant to safeguards implementation. The framework is operationalized through existing national systems and supported by the progressive development of the Safeguards Information System

The interpretation process sought to ensure that the safeguards reflected:

- the national legal and institutional framework;
- forest-sector priorities and challenges;
- existing governance and participation arrangements;
- national climate and development objectives;
- biodiversity conservation priorities; and
- emerging arrangements for safeguards monitoring and reporting.

The resulting interpretation provides a common conceptual basis for implementation, monitoring and reporting of safeguards and serves as the foundation for the safeguards framework and the future Safeguards Information System.

3.2.4 National Interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards

The national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards provides the basis for understanding how each safeguard is applied within Cuba's legal, institutional and policy context. These interpretations are intended to guide future implementation, monitoring and reporting and may be refined as the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector, safeguarding arrangements and the Safeguards Information System continue to evolve.

Safeguard	National Interpretation	National Objective
A	Consistency with national policies, forest-sector priorities and relevant international commitments related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development.	Ensure coherence between forest-sector climate actions and national and international commitments.
B	Transparent, effective, and accountable forest governance supported by existing institutions, legal frameworks, monitoring arrangements, and oversight mechanisms.	Strengthening transparency, effectiveness, and accountability in forest governance.
C	Respect for the rights, interests, knowledge, and contributions of stakeholders involved	Promote socially inclusive and equitable implementation of forest-sector actions.

	in or affected by forest management and conservation activities.	
D	Full, effective, informed, and inclusive participation of relevant stakeholders throughout the design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector actions.	Strengthening participation, ownership, and legitimacy of implementation processes.
E	Conservation of natural forests, biodiversity and ecosystem services while promoting environmental co-benefits and avoiding incentives for conversion of natural forests.	Protect biodiversity and strengthen environmental sustainability.
F	Prevention and management of risks that could compromise the permanence of forest carbon stocks and other environmental benefits.	Strengthen resilience and long-term sustainability of forest-sector outcomes.
G	Prevention and reduction of the displacement of emissions through coordinated national approaches to forest monitoring, planning, and management.	Promote sustained emission reductions and forest conservation across the national territory.

Together, these interpretations provide the conceptual foundation for Cuba's safeguards framework and establish a collective understanding of how the Cancun Safeguards are applied within the national context. They guide safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements and provide the basis for the progressive development of safeguard-related information systems, indicators, and reporting procedures.

As implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector progresses, these interpretations may be further refined to reflect implementation experience, emerging information needs and evolving institutional arrangements.

3.3. National safeguards framework.

The safeguards framework translates the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards into implementation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements. It identifies the principal legal, institutional, participatory, and information-management mechanisms through which safeguards are addressed and respected in Cuba.

Cuba's safeguards framework is composed of the following mutually reinforcing elements:

- **Legal, Policy and Institutional Framework.**

The first component consists of the existing legal, policy and institutional arrangements that support the implementation of the Cancun Safeguards. These include the Constitution, forestry legislation, environmental legislation, climate-change policies, biodiversity conservation instruments, and the institutions responsible for their implementation and enforcement.

Together, these arrangements provide the basis for addressing issues related to forest governance, biodiversity conservation, participation, social inclusion, environmental protection, and sustainable forest management.

- **National Interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards.**

The national interpretation constitutes the conceptual foundation of the safeguard's framework. It establishes how each Cancun Safeguard is understood within the Cuban context and provides a common reference for institutions involved in implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The interpretation facilitates consistency in the identification of safeguard-related objectives, information needs and institutional responsibilities across sectors and levels of implementation.

- **Assessment of Potential Risks, Benefits, and Information Needs.**

The safeguards framework incorporates the identification and assessment of potential environmental, social and governance risks and benefits associated with forest-sector climate actions.

This component contributes to informing decision-making, strengthening preventive measures, and identifying opportunities to enhance environmental and social benefits. It also supports the identification of information needs that should be progressively incorporated into safeguards monitoring and reporting arrangements.

- **Stakeholder Participation, Inclusion, and Information Disclosure.**

Participation and inclusion constitute core elements of the safeguard's framework. Existing consultation, coordination, and engagement mechanisms provide opportunities for governmental institutions, research organizations, producer groups, professional associations, women's organizations, and territorial stakeholders to contribute to the design, implementation, and review of forest-sector climate actions.

Particular attention is given to promoting inclusive participation, strengthening transparency, and facilitating access to information relevant to safeguards implementation.

- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.**

The framework recognizes gender equality and social inclusion as cross-cutting considerations relevant to multiple safeguards. Existing national policies, institutional arrangements, and the participation of organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women contribute to the integration of gender-responsive approaches within forest-sector planning and implementation processes.

The framework also seeks to promote equitable participation and consideration of the interests and perspectives of different stakeholder groups associated with forest management and rural development.

- **Feedback, Grievance and Conflict-Resolution Arrangements**

Existing administrative, institutional and governance mechanisms that allow stakeholders to submit observations, complaints, concerns, and recommendations constitute a key component of the safeguard's framework.

Although Cuba does not currently operate a REDD+-specific grievance mechanism, existing arrangements provide a foundation for addressing issues related to forest governance, participation, natural-resource management, and implementation of forest-sector climate actions. These arrangements are expected to become progressively integrated into safeguards monitoring and reporting processes.

- **Safeguards Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting, and Information Arrangements**

The framework includes the institutional, technical, and procedural arrangements through which safeguard-related information is generated, managed, assessed, and reported. These arrangements strengthen coordination among institutions, improve access to information, and facilitate reporting on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

As part of these arrangements, the Safeguards Information System (SIS) is being progressively developed as the principal mechanism for organizing, managing, and communicating safeguards-related information. The SIS builds upon existing information systems, institutional reporting arrangements and monitoring processes and supports future reporting to the UNFCCC, including the preparation of subsequent Summaries of Information.

Together, these components provide the operational structure through which safeguards are integrated into forest-sector climate actions in Cuba. They support transparency, participation, environmental sustainability, and effective governance while creating conditions for progressively strengthening safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The following section describes the management, monitoring, and reporting arrangements through which the safeguards framework is operationalized in practice.

3.4 Safeguards Management, Monitoring and Reporting Framework

The safeguards management, monitoring and reporting framework links safeguards implementation with information generation, assessment, and reporting processes. Information generated through existing institutions and systems is progressively organized and reported through the SIS and future SOIs.

The safeguards management, monitoring and reporting framework operates through four interrelated functions:

- **Implementation**

Safeguards are implemented through the application of relevant laws, policies, regulations, institutional mandates, and procedures associated with forest management, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, stakeholder participation, gender equality, and social inclusion.

- **Monitoring**

Safeguards-related information is generated through existing monitoring and information systems, including forest monitoring systems, biodiversity-monitoring programmes, administrative records, participation processes, environmental reporting arrangements, and other sectoral information sources.

- **Management and Oversight**

Institutional coordination, review of safeguards-related information, implementation support, and identification of priorities for improvement contribute to the management and oversight of safeguards implementation over time.

- **Reporting and Communication**

Safeguards-related information is compiled, analyzed, and communicated through national reporting processes, including the preparation of Summaries of Information (SOIs), technical reports, and other safeguards-related information products.

Together, these functions contribute to ensuring that information on how safeguards are addressed and respected remains transparent, accessible, and capable of supporting decision-making, institutional learning, and continuous improvement.

The management, monitoring and reporting arrangements described above provide the operational basis for the progressive development of the Safeguards Information System (SIS). In this context, the SIS serves as the principal mechanism through which information generated by different institutions and information systems may be organized, analyzed, and communicated for safeguards reporting purposes.

As implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector progresses, these arrangements may continue evolving to reflect implementation experience, emerging information needs, strengthened institutional responsibilities and improvements in national information systems.

4. Assessment of Potential Risks, Benefits, and Information Needs Relevant to Forest-Sector Climate Actions

As part of Cuba's REDD+ readiness process, an assessment of potential environmental, social and governance risks, benefits and information needs were undertaken to support the development of the national approach to safeguards, the national interpretation of the Cancun

Safeguards, the safeguards framework, and the conceptual design of the Safeguards Information System (SIS). This assessment constitutes an important analytical component of Cuba's safeguards framework and informed the identification of priorities for safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting in the context of forest-sector climate actions relevant to REDD+

The assessment was not intended to constitute a project-level environmental and social impact assessment, nor an evaluation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector, which remained under development during the preparation of this first Summary of Information. Rather, it sought to identify the principal environmental, social and governance issues that should be considered when designing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting forest-sector climate actions relevant to REDD+ in Cuba.

The assessment also provides useful context for the future implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector by highlighting governance, participation, gender, biodiversity, and information-management issues that may require continued attention as forest-sector climate actions are implemented and monitored over time.

The assessment was informed by analyses conducted during the REDD+ readiness process, including reviews of the national policy, legal and institutional framework, technical studies related to forests and climate change, stakeholder consultations, institutional analyses, discussions on safeguards interpretation and the identification of existing information sources relevant to safeguards monitoring and reporting. Particular attention was given to identifying opportunities to enhance environmental and social benefits, potential risks requiring monitoring and management, and priority information needs for future safeguards reporting through the SIS.

The assessment confirms that Cuba possesses a solid foundation of policies, institutions and programmes that support sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, climate-change response, stakeholder participation, and social inclusion. At the same time, it identifies opportunities to strengthen safeguard-specific monitoring and reporting arrangements, particularly in relation to participation processes, social inclusion, gender-responsive information, grievance-related information, environmental co-benefits, and safeguard-specific indicators.

The findings presented below should therefore be understood as indicative and intended to guide the progressive strengthening of safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements. They provide a basis for identifying priority information needs, institutional responsibilities, and future areas of improvement as Cuba continues to develop its national safeguards framework and Safeguards Information System.

Preliminary Assessment of Risks, Benefits, and Information Needs Relevant to Forest-Sector Climate Actions

Category	Main Benefits and Opportunities	Potential Risks and Challenges	Information Needs
Forest Governance	Strengthened forest governance, improved monitoring systems,	Limited availability of safeguard-specific governance indicators,	Governance indicators, enforcement data,

	enhanced institutional coordination, transparency, and accountability in forest-sector management.	uneven documentation of enforcement outcomes and limited public access to safeguards-related information.	information on transparency and accountability mechanisms, records from feedback and grievance processes.
Stakeholder Participation	Improved stakeholder engagement, strengthened institutional cooperation, increased ownership of REDD+ processes and broader participation in forest-sector decision-making.	Incomplete documentation of consultation processes and limited systematic recording of stakeholder inputs and outcomes.	Participation records, consultation outcomes, stakeholder mapping, gender-disaggregated data and information on stakeholder feedback.
Rights, Gender, and Social Inclusion	Strengthened consideration of local knowledge, gender equality, social inclusion, and participation of organizations representing producers, workers, and women.	Limited availability of safeguard-specific information demonstrates how rights-related safeguards are respected and monitored in practice.	Indicators on social inclusion, gender equality, participation, local knowledge and equitable access to opportunities and benefits.
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	Enhanced conservation of natural forests, biodiversity protection, watershed conservation, ecological restoration, climate resilience, and ecosystem services.	Potential impacts from forest fires, hurricanes, droughts, and other disturbances affecting biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.	Biodiversity indicators, ecosystem-services information, environmental co-benefits and monitoring information from protected areas and forest ecosystems.
Risks of Reversals	Existing fire-management, forest restoration, and forest monitoring arrangements contribute to maintaining forest carbon stocks and ecosystem resilience.	Increased frequency and intensity of climate-related disturbances, particularly forest fires, droughts, and extreme weather events.	Risk assessments, resilience indicators, disturbance monitoring, restoration effectiveness, and forest-protection information.

Displacement of Emissions	National-scale Forest monitoring and reporting provides a strong basis for identifying and minimizing displacement risks.	Limited methodologies and evidence currently available to assess and document displacement risks systematically.	Spatial analysis, land-use change information, monitoring of deforestation and degradation drivers, and indicators related to displacement of emissions.
Safeguards Information and Reporting	Opportunity to consolidate safeguards information, strengthen reporting arrangements, improve transparency, and facilitate coordination among information providers.	Variability in information quality, availability and consistency across institutions and safeguard themes.	Harmonized indicators, reporting protocols, quality-control procedures, and improved interoperability among information systems.

The assessment suggests that the principal strengths of Cuba's safeguards framework are associated with the existence of an established policy, legal and institutional framework supporting sustainable forest management, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and climate-change response. Additional strengths include the existence of national forest monitoring arrangements, established institutions responsible for forest governance and biodiversity conservation, and the increasing incorporation of stakeholder participation and gender considerations into REDD+ readiness processes.

The assessment also highlights opportunities for improvement related to the systematic documentation of stakeholder participation processes, the strengthening of gender-disaggregated information, the development of safeguard-specific indicators, the integration of environmental and social information systems, the compilation of information related to grievance-management mechanisms, and the continued development of methodologies and information sources relevant to reversal and displacement risks.

These findings informed the development of Cuba's national approach to safeguards, the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards, the safeguards framework, and the conceptual design of the Safeguards Information System. They also provide an initial basis for identifying safeguard-related information needs, potential indicators, information sources, and institutional responsibilities that may support future safeguards monitoring and reporting.

As implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector progresses, the assessment of safeguards-related risks, benefits and information needs should be revisited and refined to reflect evolving implementation priorities, institutional arrangements, and information requirements. Future Summaries of Information are therefore expected to provide increasingly detailed assessments as safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements continue to mature.

5. Description of how Cuba Addressed and Respected the Cancun Safeguards During the Reporting Period

This chapter presents the assessment of how the Cancun Safeguards were addressed and respected during the reporting period 2019–2023. Following Cuba’s national approach to safeguards, the assessment considers the legal, policy and institutional arrangements through which each safeguard is addressed, information on how those arrangements operated during the reporting period, and opportunities for future strengthening.

5.1 National Framework for Addressing the Cancun Safeguards

The Cancun Safeguards are addressed through existing policies, legislation, institutions, and governance arrangements operating within the broader framework of forest governance, environmental management, climate-change response, and sustainable development. Table X summarizes the principal components of the national framework supporting each safeguard.

The following table summarizes the principal elements of the national framework that contributes to addressing each Cancun Safeguard.

Cancun Safeguard	Principal Policies, Strategies and Legal Instruments	Key Institutions
A. Consistency with national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	National Economic and Social Development Plan 2030 (PNDES), Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Tarea Vida, National Forestry Development Programme, National Biodiversity Programme, Constitution, Forest Law No. 85, environmental legislation	MINAG, CITMA, DSEF
B. Transparent and effective forest governance	Constitution, Forest Law No. 85, Forest Law Regulations, forest-control and permitting regulations, Government Plan for Addressing Crimes and Illegal Activities Affecting Forest Resources, environmental legislation	DSEF, SEF, CGB, MINAG, CITMA
C. Respect for knowledge and rights	Constitution, environmental legislation, labor and social legislation, Forest Law No. 85, MINAG Gender Strategy, participation mechanisms	MINAG, ANAP, FMC, ACTAF, local authorities
D. Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders	REDD+ readiness consultation processes, participation mechanisms, MINAG Gender Strategy, stakeholder engagement arrangements	MINAG, DSEF, ANAP, FMC, ACTAF, SNTAFT, territorial governments

E. Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity	Forest legislation, environmental legislation, protected areas framework, National Biodiversity Programme, Tarea Vida, National Forestry Development Programme	CITMA, CNAP, MINAG, DSEF
F. Actions to address the risks of reversals	National Forest Monitoring System, National Fire Management Strategy, fire-management regulations, Tarea Vida, reforestation, and restoration programmes	SEF, CGB, DSEF, MINAG
G. Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions	National Forest Monitoring System, Forest Reference Emission Level, Forest Law No. 85, forest planning, and monitoring processes	DSEF, SEF, MINAG

5.2 Assessment of Individual Cancun Safeguards.

For each Cancun Safeguard, the analysis distinguishes between how the safeguard is addressed through existing legal, policy and institutional arrangements and how these arrangements operated during the reporting period and contributed to respecting the objectives of the safeguard.

Safeguard A. Consistency with National Forest Programmes and Relevant International Conventions and Agreements

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to ensure that forest-sector climate actions are consistent with national priorities related to sustainable development, sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and climate-change response, as well as with relevant international commitments assumed by the country under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

This safeguard is addressed through national policy, legal and institutional framework governing forests, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. Relevant instruments include the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, the National Economic and Social Development Plan to 2030, Tarea Vida, the National Forestry Development Programme, the National Biodiversity Programme, the Nationally Determined Contribution, and the legislation governing forests and environmental management.

The Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector further strengthens policy coherence by providing a common framework through which forest-sector climate actions contribute simultaneously to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, and sustainable development objectives.

The National Strategy and Programme for Fire Management in Forests of the Republic of Cuba (2018–2030) also contributes to addressing this safeguard by strengthening prevention, monitoring, and control of forest fires, and by reinforcing governance arrangements relevant to forest protection and climate-related commitments.

How the Safeguard was Respected

During the reporting period, actions relevant to REDD+ were implemented within the framework of existing national forestry, environmental and climate policies. Forest monitoring, reforestation, restoration, and forest-management activities supported national objectives related to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate-change response, while contributing to the development of the elements required under the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. Relevant national policies and institutional arrangements related to watershed management and integrated natural resource management also contribute to REDD+ implementation. Provincial consultations contributed to validating proposed coordination arrangements for REDD+ implementation, involving representatives of forestry authorities, research institution, and civil society organizations. The outcomes confirmed broad support for strengthening inter-institutional cooperation and alignment with national forest governance frameworks.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- further documentation of contributions of forest-sector actions to national climate and biodiversity objectives;
- development of indicators linking safeguard implementation with sustainable development outcomes;
- continued alignment between safeguards reporting and implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector.

Safeguard B. Transparent and Effective Forest Governance

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to ensure transparent, effective, and accountable forest governance through the application of existing laws, institutions, monitoring systems, and oversight mechanisms responsible for the management, conservation, and use of forest resources.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

The safeguard is addressed through the Forest Law, environmental legislation, forest-management regulations, permitting and control systems, forest-monitoring arrangements, and the mandates of institutions responsible for forest governance, including MINAG, DSEF, SEF, CITMA and the Forest Ranger Corps.

Existing arrangements for receiving, processing, and responding to complaints, concerns, observations, and grievances related to forest resources and environmental management also contribute to addressing this safeguard. Although Cuba does not currently operate a REDD+-specific grievance mechanism, various administrative and institutional procedures are available through public authorities, forestry institutions, environmental agencies, local governments, and public-attention mechanisms.

How the Safeguard was Respected

During the reporting period, national forest-monitoring, inspection, and enforcement arrangements remained operational. Forest authorities continued implementing planning, monitoring, and regulatory functions, while remote sensing, GIS tools and forest-dynamics assessments contributed to improving transparency and oversight of forest resources.

Existing channels through which citizens, producers, cooperatives, and organizations may present concerns, complaints, recommendations, or observations regarding forest-resource management also remained available. No information was identified indicating that REDD+ readiness activities undermined existing governance arrangements or institutional responsibilities.

During the reporting period, the use of remote-sensing technologies, geographic information systems (GIS), satellite imagery and standardized methodologies was strengthened for monitoring forest cover, land-use change, and the detection of forest fires, contributing to more transparent and effective forest governance.

Provincial stakeholder meetings provided an additional platform for transparent discussion of governance arrangements, enabled participants to review, discuss, and submit recommendations regarding the proposed REDD+ coordination mechanism and related institutional responsibilities.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- improve systematization of information related to complaints, grievances, and their resolution;
- strengthen transparency and public accessibility of governance-related information;
- strengthen safeguard-specific governance indicators;
- progressively integrate grievance-related information into the Safeguards Information System;
- continue strengthening interoperability among monitoring and information systems.

Safeguard C. Respect for Knowledge and Rights

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the recognition and respect of the rights, interests, knowledge, experiences, and contributions of stakeholders involved in the management, conservation, and sustainable use of forest resources, in accordance with national legislation and principles of equity, inclusion and social justice.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

This safeguard is addressed through constitutional provisions, environmental and forestry legislation, labor and social legislation, land-use and usufruct arrangements, the Gender Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and the participation of organizations representing producers, workers, women, and rural stakeholders.

This safeguard is also intricately linked to efforts aimed at strengthening equitable participation of women, producers, cooperatives, and rural actors involved in forest management and forest-sector climate actions.

How the Safeguard was Respected

During the reporting period, REDD+ readiness activities were implemented through existing institutional arrangements that involved technical institutions, producer organizations, social organizations, and stakeholders associated with the forestry sector. The development of REDD+ elements benefited from technical expertise, local experience, and sectoral participation.

Provincial consultations facilitated the participation of local stakeholders, including producers, cooperatives, technical specialists, and women's organizations. Contributions received during these meetings supported the integration of local perspectives and gender considerations into the ongoing design of REDD+ governance and safeguards arrangements.

No information was identified suggesting systematic restrictions on rights recognized under national legislation in relation to the activities reported in this SOI.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- strengthen documentation of local knowledge contributions;
- improve gender-disaggregated information;
- strengthen indicators related to social inclusion;
- improve monitoring of social benefits associated with forest-sector actions.

Safeguard D. Full and Effective Participation of Relevant Stakeholders

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to ensure the full, effective, informed, and inclusive participation of relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of forest-sector climate actions.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

Stakeholder participation is supported through existing institutional and sectoral mechanisms, complemented by processes developed during REDD+ readiness activities. Relevant stakeholders include government institutions, research organizations, universities, producer associations, social organizations, women's organizations, cooperatives, Agroforestry Enterprises, territorial governments, and other actors associated with forest-resource management.

Gender inclusion is supported through the participation of the Federation of Cuban Women and the implementation of the Ministry of Agriculture's Gender Strategy

Participation mechanisms include technical consultations, workshops, working groups, institutional coordination forums, validation processes, training activities, and territorial exchanges.

How the Safeguard was Respected

During the readiness process, consultation and exchange activities were conducted with institutions, technical entities, producer organizations, social organizations, and territorial stakeholders. These processes contributed to the development of the National Forest

Monitoring System, the Forest Reference Emission Level, the national interpretation of safeguards and the conceptualization of the Safeguards Information System.

During the REDD+ national preparation, a series of stakeholder engagement meetings were undertaken across 13 provinces, involving 306 participants, of whom 55.3 per cent were women. Participants included representatives of the State Forest Service, local governments, producer organizations, research institutions, women's organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. These consultations contributed to validating REDD+ coordination arrangements, strengthening awareness of REDD+ safeguards, and collecting feedback on existing participation and grievance mechanisms.

The participation of organizations such as ANAP, FMC, ACTAF, universities and forestry entities contributed to strengthening ownership of the process and incorporating technical, territorial, and gender-related perspectives.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- strengthen documentation of consultation outcomes;
- improve stakeholder-disaggregated and gender-disaggregated information;
- strengthen mechanisms for documenting how participation influences decision-making;
- increase participation of local stakeholders in safeguards monitoring and reporting;
- strengthen integration of participation information within the SIS.

Safeguard E. Conservation of Natural Forests and Biological Diversity

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to ensure that forest-sector climate actions contribute to the conservation of natural forests, biodiversity and ecosystem services while avoiding incentives for the conversion of natural forests.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

This safeguard is addressed through forest legislation, environmental legislation, protected-area frameworks, biodiversity policies, Tarea Vida, the National Biodiversity Programme, and the National Forestry Development Programme.

This safeguard is also consistent with national efforts to restore degraded ecosystems, strengthen ecosystem resilience and conserve mangroves, mountain forests, and other ecosystems of strategic importance for climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation.

How the Safeguard was Respected

Forest conservation, restoration, reforestation, and protection activities continued during the reporting period and contributed to increases in forest area and maintenance of ecosystem functions. Existing arrangements for protected-area management, biodiversity conservation, forest-fire monitoring, and forest governance supported the protection of natural forests and associated biodiversity.

Discussions held during provincial consultations highlighted the importance of biodiversity conservation objectives and promoting sustainable forest management practices as integral elements of REDD+ implementation.

The National Strategy and Programme for Fire Management in Forests (2018–2030) also supports this safeguard by reducing fire-related pressures on natural forests and biodiversity, and by reinforcing prevention and control measures that help maintain ecological integrity.

No information was identified indicating that forest-sector climate actions promoted the conversion of natural forests.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- strengthen biodiversity-related indicators;
- improve monitoring of environmental co-benefits;
- strengthen integration between forest and biodiversity information systems;
- improve monitoring of impacts from fires and climate-related disturbances.

Safeguard F. Actions to Address the Risks of Reversals

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to identify, prevent and manage risks that may compromise the permanence of forest carbon stocks and other environmental benefits associated with forest ecosystems.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

This safeguard is addressed through forest-monitoring systems, forest-protection measures, fire-management strategies, restoration programmes, Tarea Vida, surveillance arrangements, and forest-governance mechanisms.

The safeguard is also supported by national efforts to address major risks affecting forest ecosystems, including forest fires, extreme weather events, pests, diseases, and invasive species.

Key instruments include Forest Law No. 85 and its implementing regulation; the National Strategy and Programme for Fire Management in Forests (2018–2030); Resolution 59/2023 establishing institutional responsibilities for forest-fire prevention and suppression; and Resolution 53/2023 regulating the use of fire in forests and adjacent areas. These instruments strengthen prevention, control and governance arrangements that reduce the risk of reversals associated with forest fires.

How the Safeguard was Respected

Forest-monitoring, surveillance, restoration, and fire-management activities remained operational during the reporting period. National reforestation and restoration programmes continued contributing to forest recovery and increasing forest cover. Monitoring arrangements enabled identification of disturbances affecting forests, including the impacts of forest fires.

During consultations, stakeholders emphasized the importance of maintaining long-term institutional coordination and local engagement as key factors supporting the sustainability of REDD+ outcomes and reducing the risk of reversals.

Despite increasing climate-related pressures, the maintenance of net removals throughout the reporting period suggests that national arrangements contributed to strengthening the permanence of forest-sector results.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- strengthen climate-risk assessments;
- improve monitoring of ecosystem resilience;
- incorporate permanence indicators within the SIS;
- strengthen information on restoration effectiveness and recovery following disturbances.

Safeguard G. Actions to Reduce the Displacement of Emissions

National Interpretation

Cuba interprets this safeguard as the need to prevent, minimize and monitor situations in which actions contributing to emissions reductions or carbon-stock enhancements in one area could result in increased emissions or forest loss elsewhere in the country.

How the Safeguard is Addressed

This safeguard is addressed through the National Forest Monitoring System, the national Forest Reference Emission Level, national forest planning processes, forest-governance arrangements, and forest-management regulations.

How the Safeguard was Respected

Forest-cover dynamics were monitored through nationally coordinated systems covering the entire country. The national scope of both the NFMS and the FREL contributes to identifying spatial trends and reducing the risk that emissions reductions in one area may be offset by increases elsewhere.

Feedback received during provincial consultations reinforced the need for coordinated land-use planning and cross-sectoral collaboration to minimize potential displacement of emissions and promote coherent implementation of REDD+ activities across territories.

No information was identified suggesting that the actions considered in this SOI resulted in significant displacement of emissions within the national territory.

Information Gaps and Areas for Improvement

- develop methodologies specific to displacement assessment;
- strengthen territorial and spatial analyses;
- improve integration among sectoral monitoring systems;
- develop safeguard-specific indicators related to displacement risks;
- strengthen understanding of interactions among forestry, agriculture, and land-use dynamics.

5.3 Summary Assessment of the Cancun Safeguards

Safeguard	Addressed	Respected
A. Consistency with national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	Yes	Yes
B. Transparent and effective forest governance	Yes	Yes
C. Respect for knowledge and rights	Yes	Partially documented
D. Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders	Yes	Partially documented
E. Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity	Yes	Yes
F. Actions to address the risks of reversals	Yes	Yes
G. Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions	Yes	Initial information available

5.4 Overall Assessment

The assessment indicates that all Cancun Safeguards are addressed through existing legal, policy and institutional arrangements. Information available for demonstrating how safeguards were respected varies among safeguards, with stronger documentation available for governance, biodiversity conservation and forest monitoring than for participation, social inclusion, and displacement of emissions. These gaps provide a clear agenda for the continued development of the SIS.

5.5 Key Cross-Cutting Findings

The assessment identified several strengths that contribute to the implementation of multiple safeguards:

- a comprehensive legal and policy framework supporting sustainable forest management, environmental protection, and climate action;
- established institutions responsible for forest governance, monitoring, and enforcement;
- a National Forest Monitoring System capable of generating information relevant to several safeguards;
- continued growth in national forest cover and implementation of forest restoration programmes;
- existing stakeholder-engagement arrangements involving government institutions, producer organizations, academic institutions, and social organizations;
- progressive incorporation of gender considerations through the Ministry of Agriculture's Gender Strategy and the participation of the Federation of Cuban Women; and
- existing administrative mechanisms through which feedback, grievances and conflicts related to forest-resource management may be received and addressed.

These strengths provide an important foundation for the continued development of safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements in Cuba.

5.6 Main Information Gaps

The assessment also identified common information gaps across several safeguards:

- limited availability of safeguard-specific indicators;
- need for more systematic documentation of stakeholder participation and consultation processes;
- need for improved sex-disaggregated and stakeholder-disaggregated information;
- limited systematization of information related to grievances, complaints, and conflict-resolution outcomes;
- need for stronger integration among forest, biodiversity, and social information systems;
- limited information specifically related to the assessment of displacement of emissions; and
- need for more systematic monitoring of social and environmental co-benefits associated with forest-sector climate actions.

6. Safeguards Information System (SIS)

6.1 Introduction

In Cuba, the development of the Safeguards Information System (SIS) forms part of the broader national approach to safeguards described in Chapter 3. The SIS is not conceived as a stand-alone safeguards mechanism, but rather as the principal tool for organizing, managing, and communicating safeguards-related information generated through existing policies, institutions, governance arrangements, participation mechanisms, and monitoring systems.

The Safeguards Information System (SIS) forms part of Cuba's broader national approach to safeguards and serves as the principal mechanism for organizing, managing, and communicating information on how the Cancun Safeguards are addressed and respected. Rather than creating a new safeguard-specific system, the SIS builds upon existing institutions, information systems, governance arrangements and monitoring processes.

The SIS supports the implementation of the national safeguards framework by facilitating the compilation, analysis, and communication of safeguards-related information and by supporting the preparation of future Summaries of Information.

6.2 Objectives and Scope

The overall objective of the SIS is to provide transparent, consistent, accessible, and periodically updated information on how the Cancun Safeguards are addressed and respected in Cuba.

Specific objectives include:

- supporting the preparation of future Summaries of Information (SOIs);
- strengthening transparency and accountability in forest-sector climate actions;
- supporting monitoring and reporting of safeguards implementation;
- facilitating institutional coordination and information sharing and promoting informed decision-making;
- strengthening stakeholder confidence in safeguards-related processes; and
- contributing to continuous improvement of safeguards implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

The SIS applies to forest-sector climate actions relevant to REDD+ and covers:

- policies, measures, and actions relevant to REDD+ implementation;
- forest monitoring, conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest-management activities;
- environmental, social and governance issues relevant to the Cancun Safeguards;
- stakeholder participation and inclusion processes;
- information generated through existing feedback, grievance, and conflict-resolution arrangements; and
- information necessary to report on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

6.3 Safeguards Management, Monitoring and Reporting Functions

Consistent with Cuba's use of existing national arrangements, these functions are implemented through existing institutions and information systems rather than through parallel safeguard-specific structures.

The SIS supports four mutually reinforcing functions.

- **Information Collection and Management**

The SIS facilitates the compilation, storage and organization of safeguard-related information generated through existing national institutions and information systems.

- **Information Analysis and Interpretation**

The SIS supports the assessment of information relevant to safeguards implementation, including trends, challenges, strengths, risks, benefits, and information gaps associated with each Cancun Safeguard.

- **Quality Assurance and Validation**

SIS promotes consistency, transparency, and reliability of safeguard-related information through institutional review, validation procedures, and the use of nationally recognized information sources.

- **Reporting and Communication**

The SIS supports the preparation of safeguards-related products, including future Summaries of Information, technical reports and other information materials intended for national stakeholders and international reporting processes.

6.4 Sources of Information

Consistent with Cuba's existing systems approach, the SIS is designed to rely primarily on information generated through existing institutions and information systems rather than creating parallel monitoring structures.

Potential sources of information include:

- National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS);
- National Forest Inventory;
- forest-management plans and administrative records;
- biodiversity monitoring programmes;
- protected-area monitoring systems;
- environmental statistics and reporting systems;
- climate-change reporting processes;
- REDD+ readiness products and reports;
- records of consultation and participation processes;
- information generated by producer organizations and social organizations;
- information related to feedback, grievances, and conflict resolution; and
- scientific studies and research generated by universities and technical institutions.

These sources of information reflect Cuba's reliance on national institutions and systems and build upon information already generated through forest governance, biodiversity conservation, climate reporting, stakeholder engagement, gender-related processes, and administrative information systems.

6.5 Institutional Arrangements for the SIS

The SIS relies on collaboration among institutions responsible for generating, managing, and reporting safeguards-related information. MINAG, through the forestry authorities, is expected to coordinate safeguards reporting processes, while information is generated by institutions responsible for forest management, biodiversity conservation, environmental governance, statistics, research, and stakeholder participation.

Information contributing to the SIS may be generated by a broad range of institutions, including:

- forestry authorities and the State Forest Service;
- Agroforestry Business Group (GAF);
- Flora and Fauna Business Group (GFF);
- Agroforestry Research Institute (INAF);
- Forest Ranger Corps (CGB);
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA);
- National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP);

- National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI);
- universities and research institutions;
- producer organizations, including ANAP;
- the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC);
- professional organizations and technical associations; and
- provincial and municipal stakeholders involved in forest management.

These institutions contribute information relevant to environmental, social and governance safeguards and support the preparation of future safeguards reports.

6.6 Integration of Feedback, Grievance and Conflict-Resolution Information

Information generated through existing administrative, institutional, and grievance-management mechanisms may contribute to safeguards monitoring, particularly for safeguards related to governance, participation, transparency, and rights. Although Cuba does not operate a REDD+-specific grievance mechanism, existing arrangements provide a foundation for progressively incorporating such information into the SIS.

As SIS evolves, consideration will be given to progressively incorporating information related to:

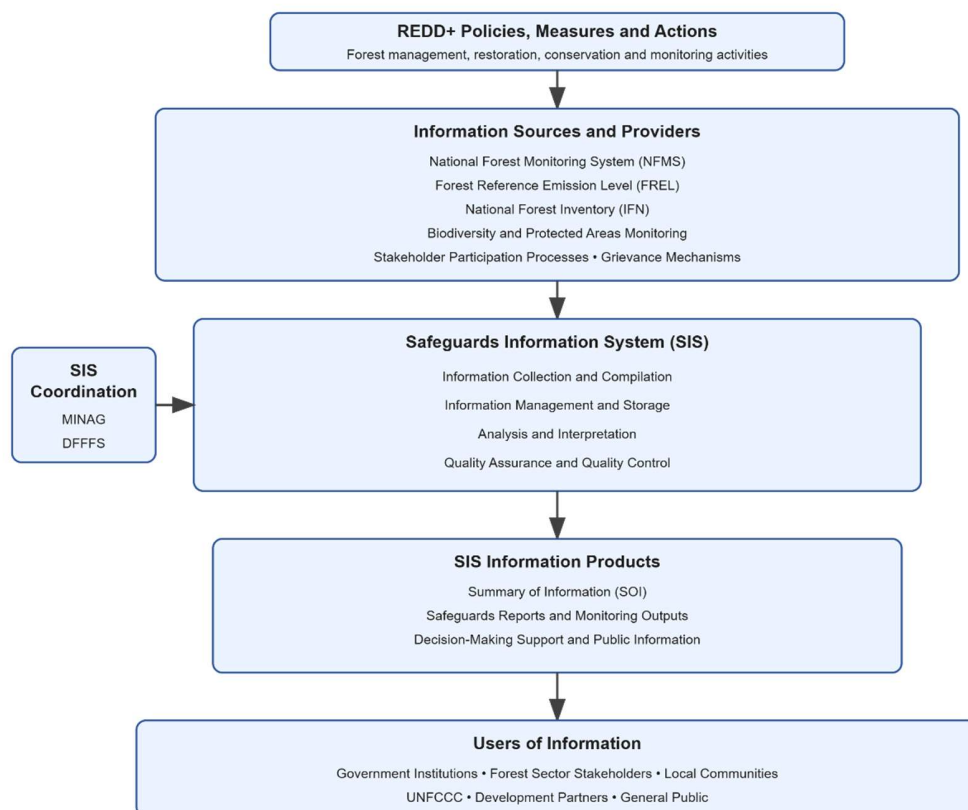
- consultations conducted;
- observations received;
- grievances and complaints submitted;
- conflicts identified;
- corrective measures adopted; and
- outcomes of grievance and conflict-resolution processes.

The integration of such information is expected to strengthen transparency, governance, and accountability by improving the availability of safeguards-related information relevant to several Cancun Safeguards, particularly those related to governance, stakeholder participation, and rights.

6.7 Progressive Development of the SIS

Cuba is developing the SIS through a stepwise and progressive approach consistent with national circumstances, institutional capacities, and information availability. Future improvements are expected to focus on safeguards indicators, interoperability among information systems, integration of environmental, social and governance information, participation, and feedback mechanisms, reporting procedures and accessibility of safeguards-related information.

As implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector progresses, institutional arrangements, reporting procedures and information requirements associated with the SIS may be further refined and updated.



7. Institutional Arrangements for Safeguards Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

7.1 National Coordination

The implementation, monitoring, and reporting of safeguards in Cuba builds upon existing institutional arrangements and responsibilities associated with forest management, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, climate-change response, statistics, research, and stakeholder participation.

Consistent with Cuba's existing systems approach, safeguards implementation relies on existing institutions rather than new safeguard-specific entities. Overall coordination of safeguards-related processes is undertaken by MINAG through the forestry authorities responsible for forest monitoring, safeguards reporting and institutional coordination.

Within MINAG, the forestry authorities are responsible for coordinating safeguard-related processes, including forest monitoring, safeguards reporting, institutional coordination and liaison with national and international stakeholders involved in REDD+ readiness and forest-sector climate actions.

Existing coordination arrangements, including the National Reforestation System Commission, provide a multi-sectoral platform for consultation, planning, and coordination among institutions relevant to safeguards implementation and reporting.

The implementation of safeguards further relies on collaboration among multiple institutions responsible for generating information, implementing sectoral policies, supporting stakeholder participation, and contributing to the progressive development of the Safeguards Information System.

7.2 Relevant Stakeholders

Safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting involve a broad range of governmental institutions, technical organizations, social and professional organizations, and territorial stakeholders associated with forest management, environmental governance, and rural development.

Governmental and Technical Institutions

- Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG);
- State Forest Service (SEF);
- Agroforestry Business Group (GAF);
- Flora and Fauna Business Group (GFF);
- Agroforestry Research Institute (INAF);
- Forest Ranger Corps (CGB);
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA);
- National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP);
- National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI);
- universities and research institutions.

Social and Professional Organizations

- National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP);
- Federation of Cuban Women (FMC);
- Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians (ACTAF);
- National Union of Agricultural, Forestry and Tobacco Workers (SNTAFT);
- Cuban Workers' Confederation (CTC);
- other organizations associated with forest management, rural development, and environmental conservation.

Territorial Stakeholders

- Agroforestry Enterprises;
- agricultural and forestry cooperatives;
- forest producers;
- provincial and municipal governments; and
- local stakeholders involved in forest management and restoration activities.

These stakeholders contribute to safeguards implementation through their respective mandates, technical expertise, participation in consultation and coordination processes, generation of safeguards-related information and support to forest-sector climate actions implemented across the national territory.

7.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation, monitoring and reporting of safeguards depends on collaboration among multiple institutions and stakeholder groups. The principal responsibilities include:

Institution / stakeholder group	Main safeguards-related role
MINAG	Overall coordination and forest-sector leadership
Forestry authorities and SEF	Forest governance, monitoring, and safeguards reporting
GAF and GFF	Forest management, restoration, and conservation activities
INAF and academic institutions	Scientific support, methodologies, and technical analyses
CITMA and CNAP	Biodiversity conservation and environmental information
CGB	Forest protection, law enforcement, and fire management
ONEI	Statistics and information management
ANAP, FMC, ACTAF, SNTAFT and CTC	Stakeholder engagement, social participation, and technical contributions
Territorial governments, cooperatives, and producers	Local implementation, consultation, and monitoring

7.4 Progressive Strengthening of Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements for safeguards implementation, monitoring and reporting are expected to evolve as the SIS and the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector continue to be operationalized. Future improvements may focus on information sharing, stakeholder participation, integration of environmental, social and governance information, and the incorporation of gender-responsive approaches into safeguards monitoring and reporting.

Future improvements may include:

- strengthened information-sharing procedures among institutions;
- improved integration of environmental, social and governance information systems;
- enhanced participation of territorial stakeholders in safeguards monitoring;
- greater incorporation of gender-responsive information and participation indicators;
- improved coordination among institutions contributing information to the SIS; and
- refinement of institutional responsibilities associated with safeguards implementation and reporting.

Institutional arrangements, reporting procedures and safeguards-related responsibilities may be refined over time to reflect implementation experience, evolving information needs and institutional learning

Annex. Preliminary Indicators and Information Sources for Cuba's Safeguards Information System (SIS)

Introduction

This Annex presents a preliminary set of indicators and information sources intended to support the progressive development of Cuba's Safeguards Information System (SIS).

The proposed indicators derive from the national interpretation of the Cancun Safeguards, the national approach to safeguards, the safeguards framework described in this Summary of Information (SOI), and the assessment of risks, benefits and information needs undertaken during the REDD+ readiness process. They are intended to support the monitoring, management, and reporting of information on how the Cancun Safeguards are addressed and respected in Cuba.

The indicators presented below should be considered indicative and subject to review as implementation experience increases, institutional arrangements evolve, and additional information becomes available. The list does not establish mandatory reporting requirements but rather provides an initial framework for identifying information needs, potential sources of information and institutional responsibilities relevant to safeguards implementation and reporting.

As implementation of the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector progresses, indicators, methodologies, and institutional responsibilities may be further refined to reflect specific implementation arrangements, information needs, and reporting requirements.

Table A1. Preliminary Indicators for Monitoring the Cancun Safeguards

Safeguard	Proposed Indicator	Potential Information Source	Responsible Institution(s)
A. Consistency with national forest programmes and relevant international agreements	Forest-related targets incorporated into national climate, forestry, and development instruments	NDC, PNDES, Forestry Programme	MINAG, CITMA
	Number of national policies and programmes supporting forest-sector climate actions	National policy documents	MINAG
	Forest-sector actions contributing to implementation of national climate and biodiversity objectives	National reports	MINAG, CITMA

	Alignment of safeguards reporting with national policy frameworks	SOIs and related reports	MINAG
B. Transparent and effective forest governance	Number of approved forest management plans	Administrative records	SEF, DSEF
	Number of forest inspections conducted annually	Inspection reports	SEF, CGB
	Number of forest infractions detected and addressed	Enforcement records	SEF, CGB
	Availability of forest-monitoring reports and governance information	NFMS reports	DSEF
	Number of grievances, complaints or observations received through existing institutional mechanisms	Administrative records	MINAG, SEF
	Percentage of grievances or complaints addressed or resolved	Institutional records	MINAG, SEF
	Number of governance-related corrective measures adopted	Administrative reports	SEF, CGB
C. Respect for knowledge and rights	Number of stakeholder organizations participating in safeguards-related processes	Consultation records	MINAG
	Participation of producers, cooperatives, and social organizations in forest-sector climate actions	Participation reports	ANAP, ACTAF
	Number of activities incorporating local knowledge into forest management and restoration initiatives	Project reports	GAF, INAF
	Percentage of women participating in safeguards-related processes	Participation records	FMC, MINAG
	Number of activities specifically addressing	Institutional reports	FMC, MINAG

	gender equality and social inclusion		
D. Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders	Number of consultation and stakeholder-engagement activities conducted	Consultation records	MINAG
	Number of stakeholder groups participating in safeguards-related processes	Participation reports	MINAG
	Participation of territorial stakeholders in safeguards-related consultations	Consultation reports	Provincial and municipal authorities
	Percentage of women participating in consultation and validation processes	Participation records	FMC
	Number of recommendations or observations incorporated into safeguards-related products	Consultation reports	DSEF
	Number of training and capacity-building activities conducted	Training reports	MINAG, ACTAF
E. Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity	National forest-cover trend (ha)	NFMS	DSEF
	Area of natural forest maintained under conservation or sustainable management	Forest records	GAF, SEF
	Area included within protected areas containing forest ecosystems	SNAP reports	CNAP
	Area reforested or restored annually	Restoration reports	GAF
	Area of mangrove ecosystems restored	Restoration reports	GAF, CITMA
	Area affected annually by forest fires	Fire reports	CGB, SEF
	Biodiversity-related information generated through national monitoring programmes	CNAP and CITMA reports	CNAP, CITMA

F. Actions to address the risks of reversals	Annual area affected by forest fires	Fire monitoring systems	CGB, SEF
	Area restored following fires, hurricanes, or other disturbances	Restoration reports	GAF
	Trends in forest carbon stocks	NFMS and FREL updates	DSEF
	Number of prevention and control actions implemented	Protection reports	CGB
	Information on climate-related disturbances affecting forests	Sectoral reports	MINAG, CITMA
	Indicators related to forest resilience and recovery	Monitoring reports	INAF, DSEF
G. Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions	National trend in forest-cover change	NFMS	DSEF
	Spatial distribution of forest loss and forest gain	GIS analyses	DSEF
	Area under reforestation and restoration by province	Restoration reports	GAF
	Trends in drivers of forest loss and degradation	Analytical reports	DSEF, INAF
	Land-use change assessments supporting displacement analysis	GIS and territorial planning information	DSEF, INOTU
	Indicators related to territorial monitoring of forest dynamics	NFMS reports	DSEF

Table A2. Cross-Cutting Indicators

Theme	Proposed Indicator
Gender Equality	Percentage of women participating in safeguards-related activities
Gender Equality	Number of activities implementing gender-responsive approaches
Participation	Number of stakeholder groups participating in safeguards processes
Participation	Number of territorial stakeholders involved in consultations and validation activities
Capacity Building	Number of safeguards-related training and capacity-building events conducted annually
Governance	Number of grievances, complaints or observations received

Governance	Percentage of grievances, complaints or observations addressed or resolved
Governance	Public availability of safeguards-related reports and information
Transparency	Number of safeguards-related products publicly disseminated
Information Management	Number of institutions actively contributing information to the SIS
Information Management	Percentage of reporting institutions submitting information according to agreed procedures
Climate Resilience	Area of forests restored or rehabilitated following disturbances
Biodiversity Conservation	Area of protected forest ecosystems monitored through national systems
Social Inclusion	Participation of women and social organizations in safeguards-related processes
SIS Development	Number of safeguards indicators operationalized within the SIS

Future Development of Indicators

The indicators presented in this Annex represent a preliminary framework for safeguards monitoring and reporting. Future improvements may include:

- establishment of baselines and reporting frequencies;
- refinement of methodologies and quality-control procedures;
- incorporation of additional biodiversity and ecosystem-services indicators;
- strengthening of gender-responsive and social-inclusion indicators;
- development of indicators related to grievance management and conflict resolution;
- improved monitoring of risks of reversals and displacement of emissions;
- greater integration among forest, biodiversity, social and climate information systems; and
- refinement of indicators based on implementation experience generated through the Climate Action Plan for the Forest Sector and the progressive development of the SIS.

Consistent with Cuba's gradual strengthening approach to safeguards, the indicators, methodologies, and institutional responsibilities presented in this Annex are expected to evolve over time as institutional capacities, information systems and safeguards implementation arrangements continue to mature.