

REDD+ Safeguards Information Systems under the UNFCCC

Key Concepts, Design Considerations and Practical Approaches



United Nations
Climate Change

© 2026 UNFCCC
All rights reserved

This publication is issued for public information purposes and is not an official text of the Convention in any legal or technical sense. Unless otherwise noted in captions or graphics, all matter may be freely reproduced in part or in full, provided the source is acknowledged.

For further information, contact:

United Nations Climate Change Secretariat
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany

Telephone: +49 228 815 10 00

List of Acronyms

CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CONAF	Corporación Nacional Forestal (Chile)
COP	Conference of the Parties
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism,
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
MRV	Measuring Reporting and Verification
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NS/AP	National Strategies or Action Plans (for REDD+)
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
SIS	Safeguards Information System
SoI	Summary of Information
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Table of Contents

List of acronyms.

- 1 REDD+ Safeguards and the Role of the SIS
- 2 Designing a Safeguards Information System
- 3 Sustaining the Safeguards Information System Over Time
- 4 REDD+ Safeguards and Article 6 Considerations

Introduction

REDD+ safeguards form an integral part of the REDD+ framework established through decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and recognised under Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement. Countries undertaking REDD+ activities are expected to promote and support the Cancun safeguards and to provide information on how those safeguards are addressed and respected throughout implementation.

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide a concise overview of the main concepts, requirements and practical considerations presented in the REDD+ Safeguards Information System (SIS) Toolkit. It is intended for policy-makers, REDD+ coordinators, safeguards specialists, Article 6 practitioners and other stakeholders seeking a high-level understanding of REDD+ safeguards and SIS design. Readers seeking detailed explanations, examples and implementation guidance are encouraged to consult the full toolkit and accompanying annexes.

In this briefing, you will find:

1

REDD+ Safeguards and the Role of the SIS

Cancun safeguards framework, SIS and Sol functions



2

Designing a safeguards information system

Core characteristics, indicators, governance, reporting



3

Sustaining the SIS over time

Capacity, financing, phased implementation, policy integration



4

REDD+ safeguards and Article 6 considerations

Paris Agreement context, Article 6.2 and 6.4 pathways



This briefing note is part of a series of REDD+ knowledge products, including briefing papers, toolkits and learning resources, developed under the UNFCCC. It is designed to be read alongside the full SIS Toolkit and its accompanying annexes. All materials are available on the [REDD+ Web Platform](#).

1. REDD+ Safeguards and the Role of the SIS

The safeguard requirements under the UNFCCC REDD+ decisions build upon the Cancun safeguards, which constitute the substantive environmental, social and governance requirements applicable to REDD+ implementation (Table 1). The SIS and the Summary of Information (Sol) operationalize transparency on how safeguards are addressed and respected throughout implementation.

By decision 1/CP.16[1], developing country Parties undertaking REDD+ activities are requested to develop a system for providing information on how the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout implementation. Subsequent COP guidance clarifies that the SIS supports national REDD+ strategies or action plans and provides information on how all Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected over time. In practical terms, the SIS functions as the domestic institutional and procedural arrangement through which a country organizes, compiles and makes available safeguards information.

The Sol is the international communication product through which countries provide information to the UNFCCC on how all Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation, to be provided periodically through national communications and, on a voluntary basis via the web platform on the [UNFCCC website](#). Together, the SIS and the Sol provide the agreed means for demonstrating, over time, how the safeguard requirements established under the Convention are being fulfilled.

Table 1: Cancun Safeguards

Safeguard	Safeguard requirement (as adopted under decision 1/CP.16, appendix I)
(a)	That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements.
(b)	Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty.
(c)	Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
(d)	The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of decision 1/CP.16.
(e)	That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16 are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits.[2]
(f)	Actions to address the risks of reversals.
(g)	Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

[1] UNFCCC, Decision 1/CP.16: The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 (2010), available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

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

2. Designing a Safeguards Information System

What is a Safeguards Information System?

The SIS is the national system through which countries organise, compile and make available information on how the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities. Under UNFCCC guidance, the SIS forms part of the agreed REDD+ framework and supports transparency on safeguards implementation over time. As such, it provides the basis for preparing the Sol and contributes to the conditions associated with REDD+ results-based finance.

Core Characteristics of an UNFCCC-Aligned SIS

UNFCCC guidance does not prescribe a single model or architecture for a SIS. Rather, Decision 12/CP.17[3] agrees that systems should be country-driven and implemented at the national level, taking into account national circumstances and respective capabilities, and recognising national sovereignty, legislation and relevant international obligations and agreements. Gender considerations are also explicitly recognised in this guidance. The same decision identifies a set of core characteristics that guide SIS design and implementation, including the expectation that systems build upon existing systems, as appropriate. These characteristics provide the foundation for SIS design. In practice (Table 2), they are translated into a series of interconnected design considerations relating to objectives and scope, indicators and information management, institutional arrangements, reporting processes and system sustainability.

Table 2: Translating decision 12/CP.17 SIS characteristics into national design requirements

COP-agreed SIS characteristic	Practical considerations	Illustrative country examples
Accessible, transparent and consistent, with regular updating	Consider to specify: (i) publication pathways (e.g. SIS web portal and/or official publications); (ii) update cycles; (iii) stakeholder access arrangements.	Indonesia operates a public SIS-REDD+ Web platform with regularly updated safeguard information; Papua New Guinea and Guyana publish safeguards information through dedicated SIS websites linked to their REDD+ strategies.
Transparent and flexible to allow improvements over time	Consider adopting a stepwise approach, starting with core indicators and information sources, combined with scheduled reviews and documented improvement plans.	Guyana explicitly applies a stepwise SIS approach, updating its SIS framework over time (e.g. SIS version updates reflected in later Sols); Chile designed its SIS in phases aligned with progressive implementation of its national REDD+ strategy.
Capacity to provide information on how all safeguards are addressed and respected	Consider structuring the SIS on a safeguard-by-safeguard basis, requiring explicit narrative and evidence for each Cancun safeguard, in accordance with encouragements provided in Decision 17/CP.21, para. 5 [4]	Mexico, Colombia and Indonesia structure safeguard reporting by safeguards (a–g), enabling systematic coverage; Guyana links safeguard information explicitly to different categories of REDD+ actions in its SIS framework.

[3] UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17: Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are addressed and respected, FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.2 (2011), available at: [UNFCCC, Decision 1/CP.16: The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 \(2010\)](https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cp17/eng/10a03.pdf), available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

[4] UNFCCC, Decision 17/CP.21: Further guidance on enhancing the consistency, transparency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the summary of information on how all safeguards are addressed and respected, FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.3 (2015), available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a03.pdf>

Table 2: Translating decision 12/CP.17 SIS characteristics into national design requirements

COP-agreed SIS characteristic	Practical considerations	Illustrative country examples
Country-driven and implemented at the national level	Consider clarifying institutional ownership, mandates and decision-making authority, consistent with national sovereignty and legislation.	Chile's SIS is led by CONAF and aligned with the national strategy; Indonesia's SIS-REDD+ is managed by national institutions under the REDD+ strategy; Nepal and Ghana situate SIS oversight within national REDD+ coordination bodies.
Building upon existing systems, as appropriate	Consider developing a systematic mapping of existing national systems and data sources (e.g. forest monitoring, environmental and social frameworks, land tenure systems, consultation	Guyana builds its SIS on its long-standing national MRV system; Indonesia integrates SIS data with existing forest monitoring and governance systems; Peru and Costa Rica draw SIS inputs from existing environmental and forestry information platforms.

Note: Examples are drawn from country submissions and SIS documentation provided in the [UNFCCC REDD+ info hub](#) and are provided for illustration only. They do not represent templates or minimum standards applicable to all national contexts.

Defining SIS Objectives

A foundational step in SIS design is clarifying the objectives and intended functions of the system.



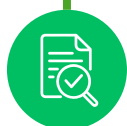
Domestic Level

At the domestic level, the SIS can support REDD+ governance by informing decision-making, identifying safeguards-related risks and gaps, supporting corrective actions and facilitating transparency and accountability to stakeholders.



International Level

At the international level, the SIS provides the information needed for the preparation of Sols and supports safeguards-related reporting under the UNFCCC, which builds trust among international partners.



Article 6 of the Paris Agreement

Where countries choose to pursue REDD+ activities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, information generated through the SIS may also contribute to broader reporting and governance processes related to environmental integrity, transparency and sustainable development.

Defining Scope

Once objectives have been clarified, the scope of the SIS is often defined in a manner that reflects national implementation circumstances and reporting needs. In practice, SIS scope is frequently structured around the REDD+ activities being implemented, the phases of implementation covered and the safeguards information outputs being generated. Experience from existing SIS frameworks indicates that safeguards information is often linked to REDD+ actions and interventions, rather than being presented solely at the level of policies or institutions. This can help demonstrate how safeguards are addressed and respected in implementation and allow safeguards information to reflect the different characteristics of direct implementation actions and enabling or policy actions.

Indicators and Safeguards Information

UNFCCC decisions do not prescribe the use of indicators or metrics. However, many countries use indicator-based approaches to organize and present safeguards information. Indicators can support consistent reporting by translating broad safeguard requirements into information that can be compiled and communicated through the SIS. In practice, countries often align indicators with their national interpretation of the Cancun safeguards and tailor them to different types of REDD+ actions. This helps ensure that safeguards information remains relevant to the context in which REDD+ activities are being implemented. Box 1 presents cross cutting indicator design principles.

Box 1: Cross-cutting indicator design principles

Based on experience from Sol reporting and existing SIS frameworks, the following design considerations may be useful when developing country-specific indicators:

- **Clear and specific:** each indicator is defined with sufficient precision, including a clear description, rationale and identified data source (e.g. “existence of a publicly available Free Prior Informed Consent guideline for REDD+”, rather than “safeguard policies in place”).
- **Fit for UNFCCC reporting:** indicators support the preparation of Sols, by capturing not only whether safeguards are addressed, but how they are implemented in practice.
- **Balanced approaches:** combining qualitative indicators (narratives, case studies, process descriptions) with quantitative indicators (counts, frequencies, areas, percentages) provides a fuller picture of safeguards implementation.
- **Adaptable over time:** indicator frameworks can be refined as REDD+ actions evolve, capacity improves, and reporting needs change.
- **Differentiation by type of REDD+ action:** indicators can be adapted to reflect different types of REDD+ actions. For example, indicators for direct implementation activities (such as forest conservation or restoration) may focus on site-level processes and outcomes, while indicators for enabling actions (such as policy reforms or land-use planning) may focus on governance processes, participation and institutional arrangements.

Countries such as Guyana and Indonesia demonstrate that a structured yet flexible indicator framework allows SIS reporting to mature over successive reporting cycles, improving clarity, credibility and usefulness without requiring wholesale redesign.

Institutional Arrangements and Governance



Coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement

Experience from existing SIS frameworks indicates that institutional arrangements and governance structures play an important role in the implementation of safeguards information systems. In practice, SIS arrangements often identify a lead institution responsible for coordination, define responsibilities across the safeguards information chain and establish mechanisms for coordination among institutions involved in REDD+ implementation. Multi-stakeholder engagement also features prominently in many SIS arrangements, including processes through which Indigenous Peoples, local communities, civil society organisations and other stakeholders contribute information, review safeguards information or provide feedback.



Information review and quality assurance

Country practice also demonstrates a range of approaches to information review and quality assurance. These may include internal technical review processes, inter-agency validation procedures and stakeholder review mechanisms. Such arrangements can support the consistency, transparency and credibility of safeguards information and contribute to the gradual strengthening of SIS arrangements over time.

Information management and reporting



Platforms and repositories

Experience from existing SIS frameworks indicates that safeguards information is commonly generated across multiple institutions and systems. In practice, countries often use information platforms, repositories or other information management arrangements to organise, store and make available safeguards information over time. These arrangements can support transparency, accessibility and continuity while facilitating the compilation of safeguards information from different sources.



Integration with existing national systems

A recurring feature of SIS implementation is the use of information generated through other national systems. Depending on national circumstances, safeguards information may draw upon grievance redress mechanisms, national forest monitoring systems, biodiversity and environmental information systems, land-use planning frameworks and other relevant governance processes. Through this integrative role, the SIS provides a consolidated view of how safeguards are addressed and respected across REDD+ implementation.



Evolution over time

Experience from country practice indicates that SIS arrangements often evolve over time as REDD+ implementation expands, institutional arrangements mature and reporting needs develop.

Information generated through the SIS supports the preparation of the Summary of Information (Sol), which serves as the principal communication product for reporting to the UNFCCC on how safeguards are addressed and respected. While UNFCCC guidance provides flexibility regarding format and content, Sols commonly present information on safeguards in the national context, the measures through which safeguards are addressed, and evidence of how safeguards are respected in implementation.

Readers seeking additional detail on information management, reporting processes and country examples are encouraged to consult Part II of the full SIS Toolkit and accompanying annexes.

3. Sustaining the Safeguards Information System Over Time

Experience from existing SIS frameworks indicates that sustaining safeguards information systems over time involves more than initial system design. As REDD+ implementation evolves, institutional responsibilities change and reporting needs develop, SIS arrangements frequently evolve alongside them. In this context, sustainability relates to the continued generation of relevant, accessible and credible information on how safeguards are addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

Consistent with decision 12/CP.17, SIS arrangements are country-driven, flexible and capable of improvement over time. Experience from country practice suggests that SIS arrangements are often approached as ongoing institutional functions that support REDD+ implementation, safeguards reporting and transparency across successive reporting cycles.



Institutional capacity and Human Resources

Institutional capacity is a recurring consideration in SIS implementation. The collection, management, analysis and communication of safeguards information often involve multiple institutions and technical disciplines, requiring clear institutional mandates, defined responsibilities and appropriate technical expertise. In practice, countries have adopted a range of approaches to strengthen SIS-related capacity, including training, development of internal guidance, designation of safeguards focal points and integration of SIS responsibilities within existing government functions. Experience from countries with more established SIS arrangements indicates that embedding safeguards responsibilities within permanent institutions can contribute to continuity, institutional memory and the long-term operation of SIS functions.



Financial Resources and Long-Term Resourcing

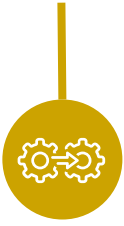
Long-term sustainability is also influenced by financial and organizational considerations. Establishing a SIS often involves initial investments in consultations, institutional mapping, platform development and system design. Over time, however, recurring functions such as information management, reporting, stakeholder engagement, maintenance and system updates become increasingly important. Country experience suggests that sustainability is strengthened when SIS functions are integrated into broader REDD+ programmes, institutional mandates and national budget structures, rather than being implemented solely through short-term projects or external support.



Phased Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Experience from existing SIS frameworks indicates that SIS development often occurs as a gradual and iterative process. Rather than being established as fully developed systems from the outset, SIS arrangements frequently evolve through successive phases of implementation. In practice, this stepwise progression can support the testing of institutional arrangements, refinement of indicators and information flows, identification of practical challenges, and progressive strengthening of safeguards information over time. As implementation experience grows and additional information becomes available, SIS arrangements often expand in scope, coverage and level of detail.

SIS arrangements commonly evolve through periodic adjustments to indicators, data sources, reporting approaches and institutional arrangements. Lessons emerging from safeguards reporting, stakeholder engagement and REDD+ implementation can contribute to the refinement of SIS processes and information over time, supporting their continued relevance and usefulness.



Anchoring SIS Functions in National Policy

Experience from country practice indicates that safeguards and SIS functions are often reflected within broader national policy and governance frameworks. In many countries, references to the Cancun safeguards and relevant UNFCCC guidance have been incorporated into REDD+ strategies, safeguards frameworks, climate policies, institutional mandates or related governance arrangements. These approaches can provide greater clarity regarding roles and responsibilities and support the integration of safeguards considerations within broader REDD+ governance processes.

Taken together, institutional capacity, financial resourcing, phased implementation, continuous improvement and policy integration represent recurring features of many SIS arrangements. While approaches vary according to national circumstances, experience from existing SIS frameworks suggests that integrating safeguards functions within established institutions, policy frameworks and governance processes can support the continuity of safeguards information and reporting over time.

For additional guidance on institutional capacity, resourcing, phased implementation and policy integration, readers are encouraged to consult Part III of the full **SIS Toolkit**.

4. REDD+ Safeguards and Article 6 Considerations

REDD+ Safeguards within the Paris Agreement



Key framework linkage

Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement explicitly recognizes and encourages implementation of the existing REDD+ framework established under the Convention. As a result, REDD+ safeguards, the SIS and the Sol continue to operate within the framework established through UNFCCC COP decisions while functioning within the broader context of the Paris Agreement.

Where countries choose to pursue REDD+ activities under Article 6, information generated through an existing REDD+ safeguards architecture may, depending on national arrangements and applicable CMA guidance, contribute to governance, transparency and safeguards-relevant reporting processes associated with those activities. This reflects the continued relevance of safeguards information in contexts where REDD+ outcomes are used internationally.

Article 6.2 and Article 6.4: Different Contexts for Safeguards Information

The relationship between REDD+ safeguards and Article 6 differs depending on whether REDD+ activities are pursued under Article 6.2 or Article 6.4.

Article 6.2

Under Article 6.2, there is no centrally prescribed safeguards system. Relevant expectations are reflected primarily through Party-defined governance arrangements and reporting obligations, including information related to environmental integrity, transparency, sustainable development and the management of environmental and social impacts as decided by countries as part of Glasgow decision in decision 2/CMA.3. In this context, information generated through a REDD+ SIS may contribute to reporting narratives and governance processes associated with REDD+ activities that form part of a cooperative approach.

Article 6.4

Under Article 6.4, environmental and social considerations are operationalized through mechanism rules, procedures and tools, including stakeholder consultation requirements, grievance processes and the Sustainable Development Tool. For REDD+ activities falling within the scope of Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement, the submission of a Sol is mandatory[5]. Information generated through a SIS may also provide national or programmatic safeguards context and contribute to coherence between REDD+ safeguards arrangements and Article 6.4 implementation processes.

Across both Article 6.2 and Article 6.4 contexts, the Cancun safeguards remain the substantive safeguards framework for REDD+ under the Convention, while the SIS continues to provide information on how those safeguards are addressed and respected throughout implementation. Information generated through the SIS may therefore contribute to a range of governance, transparency and reporting functions associated with REDD+ activities pursued under Article 6.

[5] See paragraph 15d of the A6.4 Leakage Standard, A6.4-SBM016-A13, at: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/A6.4-SBM016-A13.pdf>

Institutional Coordination and the Role of the Sol



The Summary of Information (Sol)

The Sol provides a consolidated report of how the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation. As the principal communication product generated through the SIS, it brings together information on safeguards governance arrangements, implementation measures and safeguards-related evidence across REDD+ activities. In contexts where REDD+ activities are pursued under Article 6, information presented through the Sol may also be relevant to domestic transparency and reporting processes associated with those activities.

The relationship between the SIS, the Sol and Article 6 processes reflects the broader role of safeguards information within REDD+ implementation. Information generated through SIS arrangements may contribute to a range of governance and reporting functions while remaining anchored in the Cancun safeguards and the safeguards framework established under the Convention.

For further discussion of the interaction between REDD+ safeguards, Article 6.2 and Article 6.4, readers are encouraged to consult Part IV of the full SIS Toolkit.