

Country approaches to safeguards



Forests play a crucial role in providing clean water.

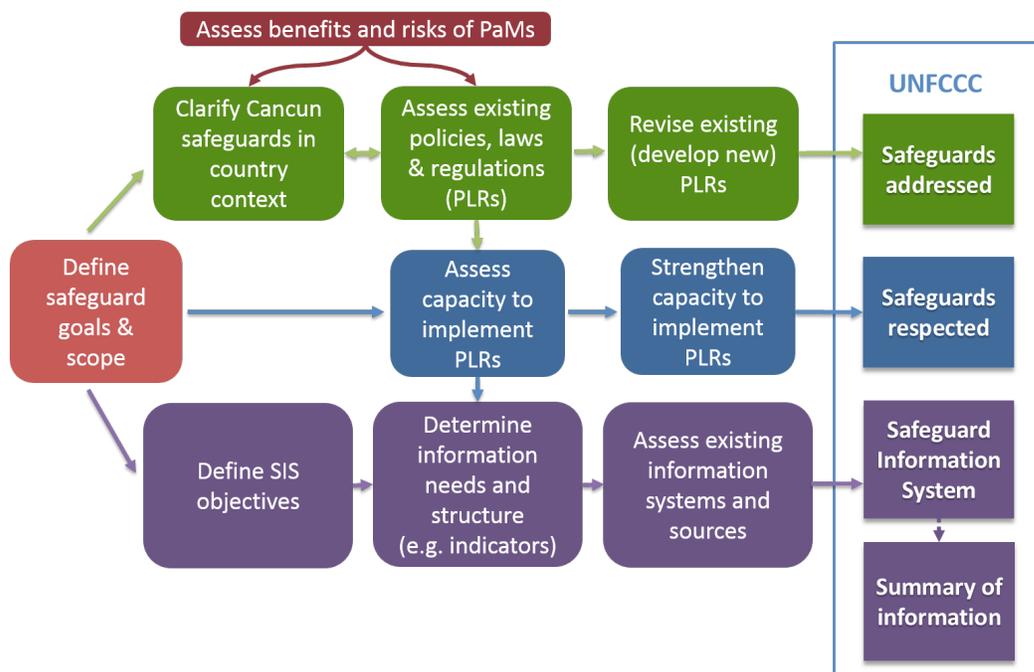
As agreed in Cancun in 2010 at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-COP16), a set of seven safeguards are to be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities. These are known as the Cancun safeguards. The UN-REDD Programme has developed a framework and tools to assist countries to take flexible “country approaches” that reflect their national circumstances, in responding to the Cancun safeguards and other related UNFCCC decisions¹. Such a flexible approach helps to reduce REDD+ social and environmental risks and enhance the benefits.

Components of a country approach to safeguards

A country approach to safeguards is likely to comprise three core elements (Figure 1):

- 1. Policies, laws and regulations (PLRs)**, which define, on paper, what needs to be done to address the Cancun safeguards;
- 2. Institutional mandates, procedures and capacities**, to ensure that safeguards are being respected;
- 3. A safeguards information system (SIS)**, which makes available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected. A summary of information is to be regularly submitted to UNFCCC, once REDD+ activities have started.

These components should draw as much as possible on existing PLRs, institutions, processes, procedures and information.



The Cancun safeguards ask that REDD+ actions are consistent with biodiversity conservation.

Figure 1: A country approach to safeguards may address potential benefits and risks of REDD+ policies and measures (PAMs) through defining a set of Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) (green), implementing those PLRs (blue) and providing information on the process and outcomes (purple).

UN-REDD Programme assistance and tools

The Country Approach to Safeguards Tool (CAST) was designed by the UN-REDD Programme to support planning at the country level for activities related to REDD+ safeguards and SIS. CAST can help countries identify and prioritize activities (and/or review activities undertaken to date) to develop or further develop their approach to safeguards in the context of the national REDD+ strategy and/or action plan. It also clarifies how the processes and tools of various safeguards initiatives correspond, and suggests relevant information resources.

The new Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT) can help countries to review existing PLRs and identify those that address risks and enhance benefits from REDD+. If these existing PLRs do not cover all of the benefits and risks associated with REDD+, or if they are facing enforcement challenges, UN-REDD can help to promote improved implementation of these PLRs to meet the objectives of the country approach to safeguards. The UN-REDD Programme can also help to identify existing information sources and systems relevant to the development of a country's SIS, and provide technical assistance on indicator development and data collection if desired.

Technical assistance on this work area can be provided to partner countries through the UN-REDD Programme's National Programme or Targeted Support mechanisms.

Snapshot case study: Costa Rica

Costa Rica received direct support from the UN-REDD Programme for the design of its Safeguards Information System (SIS) through the Programme's Targeted Support mechanism. Costa Rica's National Forest Finance Fund, FONAFIFO, is the government institution responsible for REDD+ in Costa Rica. It has worked to develop the conceptual framework and methodology for the country's SIS. This has involved a consultative process with national REDD+ stakeholders, including Costa Rica's REDD+ Secretariat and representatives from indigenous territories, local communities and relevant institutions. FONAFIFO has also reviewed Costa Rica's legal framework, including relevant PLRs and national planning instruments. Proposals for indicators for the SIS, on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected, have been presented to, and reviewed by, national REDD+ stakeholders. The UN-REDD Programme support concluded in December 2014, with completion of a detailed SIS proposal.



Sustainable forest management for REDD+ in Costa Rica will benefit from a participatory planning process.

Endnotes

¹ Decision 1/CP.16 'Cancun Agreements'. Decision 12/CP.17 'Durban Guidance'. Decision 12/CP.19 Warsaw Framework.

To find out more about UN-REDD Programme support and resources on safeguards, please contact the UN-REDD Safeguards Coordination Group: safeguards@un-redd.org

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For more information about the UN-REDD Programme's safeguards work: <http://bit.ly/1jZ0GEg>

For the Country Approach to Safeguards Tool (CAST), see: <http://bit.ly/1NBXLhg>

For the Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT), see: <http://bit.ly/1LJK2Vm>