



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### **ADVICE ON THE APPLICATION OF RELEVANT SAFEGUARDS FOR BIODIVERSITY WITH REGARD TO 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 (REDD+)**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In decision X/33, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with partners and Parties, to provide advice on biodiversity aspects of 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 (REDD+), for approval by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting, including on the application of relevant safeguards for biodiversity.
2. Based on views submitted by eight Parties and two non-governmental organizations (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/19), a series of four expert workshops held in 2010 and 2011, and a review of available peer-reviewed literature, the Executive Secretary prepared a note on advice on the application of relevant REDD+ safeguards for biodiversity, as well as on possible indicators and potential mechanisms to assess impacts of REDD+ measures on biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/8).
3. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), at its sixteenth session, considered this note and adopted recommendation XVI/7.
4. SBSTTA also requested the Executive Secretary to provide a revised version of the advice on REDD+ safeguards, based on views received by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting.

\*\* Reposted for technical reasons.

\* UNEP/CBD/COP/11/1.

5. In response to this request by SBSTTA, the Executive Secretary issued notification 2012-066, soliciting views on the advice on relevant country-specific biodiversity safeguards for REDD+ contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/8. Submissions were received by Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, the European Union, Mexico, Myanmar, Norway, and the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> Based on the submissions received, bearing in mind the range of views expressed, the Executive Secretary prepared a revised version of the advice on REDD+ safeguards annexed to this note.

6. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the annex in conjunction with SBSTTA recommendation XVI/7.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, Cuba submitted comments on the Annex of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/8.

*Annex*

**ADVICE ON THE APPLICATION OF RELEVANT REDD+ SAFEGUARDS FOR BIODIVERSITY**

1. With reference to relevant decisions and documents of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the term REDD+ refers to ‘reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries’.
2. The REDD+ safeguards discussed in this note are the ones adopted in UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, paragraph 2.
3. Application of safeguards for biodiversity in the context of REDD+ should address the following possible risks to biodiversity and indigenous and local communities:<sup>2</sup>
  - (a) The conversion of natural forests to plantations and other land uses of low biodiversity value and low resilience;
  - (b) Displacement of deforestation and forest degradation to areas of lower carbon value and high biodiversity value;
  - (c) Increased pressure on non-forest ecosystems with high biodiversity value;
  - (d) Afforestation in areas of high biodiversity value;
  - (e) The loss of traditional territories and restriction of rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to access, use and/or ownership of land and natural resources;
  - (f) Lack of tangible livelihood benefits to indigenous and local communities and lack of equitable benefit-sharing;
  - (g) Exclusion of indigenous and local communities from designing and implementation of policies and measures;
  - (h) Loss of traditional ecological knowledge.
4. Safeguards, if designed and implemented appropriately, will reduce the risks and enhance multiple benefits of REDD+, thus supporting the credibility and long-term success of REDD+ activities.
5. When planning and implementing REDD+ activities, countries should address safeguards as early as possible. Financial support is required to support countries to meet the requirements for implementing safeguards.
6. Countries are in different stages of preparations for REDD+, and the approach to safeguards needs to take this into account. There is a need to further enhance capacity across developing countries, at several levels, to address safeguards and to fully integrate biodiversity concerns into the planning and implementation of REDD+ strategies or activities.
7. Addressing safeguards should go hand in hand with aiming to enhance multiple benefits from REDD+ activities for biodiversity and for indigenous and local communities. Inter-sectoral coordination and synergies among and within relevant Ministries are of utmost importance to ensure timely and effective application of safeguards, and achieving multiple benefits of REDD+. Existing national forest programme processes could be used to accelerate progress and create synergies with overall national forest policy frameworks.

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<sup>2</sup> From the final report of the Global Expert Workshop on Biodiversity Benefits of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, Nairobi, Kenya, 20-23 September 2010 (UNEP/CBD/WS-REDD/1/3).

8. Clarifying tenure issues remains an urgent challenge for many aspects of REDD+, including for applying safeguards related to indigenous and local communities. This will require nationally specific solutions. Impacts on indigenous and local communities and benefit-sharing are closely linked to solving land tenure and rights issues, including the rights to the carbon stored in forests in accordance with national circumstances and laws.

9. Fair and effective land zoning and land-use planning at the national level would facilitate and ensure that risks to biodiversity and indigenous and local communities are addressed in a way consistent with development priorities. Particular attention to biodiversity issues may be needed when aiming to increase the forest area in the context of REDD+, aiming for multi-functional forest landscapes.

10. Lack of tangible livelihood benefits to indigenous and local communities and lack of equitable benefit-sharing between relevant stakeholders are possible threats to the success of national REDD+ strategies, and addressing these issues should be a priority.

11. Effective safeguards hold the potential to promote and support national forest governance, ensure forest tenure security and promote sustainable forest management and trade in sustainable forest products. Where appropriate, REDD+ activities should build on effective community-based governance systems, and acknowledge the shared responsibility of national governments in strengthening community-based institutions of indigenous and local communities with regards to the conservation, sustainable use and management of forests and of biodiversity and natural resources.

12. Successful implementation of safeguards is dependent on a transparent safeguards information system. Identifying risks to biodiversity and to indigenous and local communities, and assessing how these risks are addressed through relevant safeguards at national level, should include a process of risk identification and risk mitigation.<sup>3</sup>

13. Existing biodiversity-related national level processes, policies, laws, regulations and experiences could support the further integration of biodiversity concerns into national REDD+ programmes, including the application of safeguards. For example, in many countries, National Biodiversity and Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) or national or regional criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management already contain elements relevant for biodiversity safeguards. Other examples include national forest programmes, forest and protected area legislation, mechanisms for payments for ecosystem services, and Community Based Natural Resource Management. Well-designed national forest monitoring systems, and measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems including the use of remote sensing, as well as monitoring, for REDD+ can also yield valuable biodiversity-relevant information without additional costs.

14. Specifically, national REDD+ safeguard processes could benefit from national experience in using the following guidance under the Convention on Biological Diversity:

- (a) The expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity (decisions VI/22 and IX/5);
- (b) Voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment (decision VIII/28);
- (c) The Ecosystem Approach, and relevant operational level guidance (decisions V/6 and VII/11);
- (d) The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (decision VII/12);
- (e) The Akwé: Kon voluntary guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding sacred sites and lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities (decision VII/16);

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<sup>3</sup> Such as process is outlined, for example, in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/8, section II, figure 1.

(f) Elements of the Tkarihwaié:ri<sup>4</sup> Code of Ethical Conduct (decision X/42) as they pertain to research, access to, use, exchange and management of information concerning traditional knowledge, innovations and practices for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; and

(g) Spatially explicit information on biodiversity priority areas, for example as developed by many countries in their national ecological gap analysis under the programme of work on protected areas (decision VII/28).<sup>5</sup>

15. In addition, national experiences with respect to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources, including the granting of prior and informed consent (PIC) and the establishment of mutually agreed terms (MAT), in accordance with Access and Benefit-sharing obligations under the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties could also apply to and benefit national REDD+ safeguard processes.

16. To ensure that experience from the implementation of these CBD decisions and other relevant information can inform and support the implementation of REDD+, Parties and relevant organizations should make use of communication hubs<sup>6</sup> and relevant fora to exchange information on a regular basis, drawing on national information systems on how REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected.

17. In addition, national REDD+ safeguard processes could also benefit from experience under frameworks supporting countries in addressing the REDD+ safeguards of UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16, including:

(a) The UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC);

(b) The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Fund Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Common Approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards for Multiple Delivery Partners;<sup>7</sup> and

(c) The REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards.<sup>8</sup>

18. Moreover, at the project level, REDD+ projects could benefit from experience in the application of safeguards under major project standards.<sup>9</sup>

19. The Convention on Biological Diversity could contribute to the work of UNFCCC and relevant initiatives and programmes in addressing and applying REDD+ safeguards<sup>10</sup> by disseminating information on implementation of relevant CBD guidance listed above; by supporting further capacity-building efforts; and by helping to monitor the contribution of REDD+ to achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as per decision X/33.

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<sup>4</sup> Pronounced {Tga-ree-wa-yie-ree}, a Mohawk term meaning “the proper way”.

<sup>5</sup> CBD Technical Series 24 *Closing the Gap: Creating ecologically representative protected area systems*, [www.cbd.int/ts](http://www.cbd.int/ts)

<sup>6</sup> For example the Rio Conventions Pavilion, [www.riopavilion.org](http://www.riopavilion.org), see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/27.

<sup>7</sup> The material elements of the FCPF *Common Approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards for Multiple Delivery Partners* are based on several World Bank safeguard policies, in particular Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01), Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04), Forests (OP/BP 4.36), Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12), and Indigenous Peoples (OP/BP 4.10).

<sup>8</sup> The REDD+ SES initiative is overseen by a multi-stakeholder International Standards Committee and is facilitated by a secretariat composed of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and Care International with technical support from the Proforest Initiative ([www.redd-standards.org](http://www.redd-standards.org)).

<sup>9</sup> These include the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standards and the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS),

<sup>10</sup> Without prejudging ongoing or future negotiations under the UNFCCC.

20. The following guidance adopted in decision X/33, paragraph 8, should be taken into account when developing and implementing REDD+ activities:<sup>11</sup>

(a) Consider the achievement of multiple benefits, including ecological, social, cultural and economic benefits, between ecosystem-based approaches for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities;

(b) Implement ecosystem-management activities, including the protection of natural forests, natural grasslands and peatlands, the sustainable management of forests considering the use of native communities of forest species in reforestation activities (...);

(c) In forest landscapes subject to harvesting, clearing and/or degradation, implement, as appropriate, improved land management, reforestation and forest restoration prioritizing the use of native communities of species, to improve biodiversity conservation and associated services while sequestering carbon and limiting the degradation and clearing of native primary and secondary forests;

(d) When designing, implementing and monitoring afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration activities for climate-change mitigation consider conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services through, for example:

- (i) Converting only land of low biodiversity value or ecosystems largely composed of non-native species, and preferably degraded ones;
- (ii) Prioritizing, whenever feasible, local and acclimated native tree species when selecting species for planting;
- (iii) Avoiding invasive alien species;
- (iv) Preventing net reduction of carbon stocks in all organic carbon pools;
- (v) Strategically locating afforestation activities within the landscape to enhance connectivity and increase the provision of ecosystem services within forest areas;

(e) Enhance the benefits for, and avoid negative impacts on, biodiversity from 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, and other sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation and sustainable-use activities, taking into account the need to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities in relevant policy-making and implementation processes, where appropriate; and to consider land ownership and land tenure, in accordance with national legislation;

(f) Where appropriate, promote biodiversity conservation, especially with regard to soil biodiversity, while conserving and restoring organic carbon in soil and biomass, including in peatlands and other wetlands as well as in grasslands, savannahs and drylands;

(g) Based on national circumstances, increase positive and reduce negative impacts of climate-change mitigation and adaptation measures on biodiversity, *inter alia*, based on results from strategic environmental assessments (SEAs)<sup>12</sup> and environmental impact assessments (EIAs) that facilitate the consideration of all available climate-change mitigation and adaptation options;

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<sup>11</sup> The following sub-paragraphs (a)-(j) are sub-paragraphs (m)-(q) and (s), (u), (v), (y) and (z) in the original paragraph 8 of decision X/33.

<sup>12</sup> [Decision VIII/28](#) (Voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment).

(h) In planning and implementing effective climate-change mitigation and adaptation activities, including renewable energies, take into account impacts on biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services and avoid the conversion or degradation of areas important for biodiversity through:

- (i) Considering traditional knowledge, including the full involvement of indigenous and local communities;
- (ii) Building on a scientifically credible knowledge base;
- (iii) Considering components of biodiversity important for its conservation and sustainable use;
- (iv) Applying the ecosystem approach; and
- (v) Developing ecosystem and species vulnerability assessments.

(i) Take into account the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services when planning and undertaking climate change related activities by using a range of valuation techniques;

(j) Consider, as appropriate, incentives to facilitate climate change related activities that take into consideration biodiversity and related social and cultural aspects, consistent and in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international obligations.

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