UN-REDD | REDD+ ACADEMY
PROGRAMME

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

UNDP
Empowered lives

UNEP

DEPARTMENT OF
MONGOLIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND TOURISM

REDD+
MONGOLIA

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REDD+ ACADEMY

REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND

FOREST DEGRADATION

LEARNING JOURNAL

8

REDD+ SAFEGUARDS UNDER THE UNFCCC

Director of UNREDD Mongolia National Programme
Tungalag.M

Dear Learner,

Welcome to the Mongolia REDD+ Academy journals, providing you with an overview of REDD+ planning and implementation, developed by some of the world's leading REDD+ experts. It has been designed to accompany you in your learning journey, covering all the main REDD+ topics, from the basics to the finer points of setting reference levels, monitoring, allocation of incentives and stakeholder engagement.

The modules presented in this journal will equip you with the necessary knowledge to better understand the various components of Mongolia's work on REDD+ readiness and in determining policies and measures to contribute towards the countries Forest and Climate Change National Strategy.

I encourage you to apply this knowledge and do your part to make REDD+ a success in Mongolia!

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE UN-REDD MONGOLIA NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Mongolia became a partner country of the UN-REDD Programme in June 2011 and National REDD+ Readiness Roadmap officially adopted by the Ministry of Environment and Green Development and Tourism. UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme based on National REDD+ Readiness Roadmap started to implement in September 2015 approved by the Programme Policy Board.

UN-REDD is a United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). The Programme was launched in 2008 to assist developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies. It builds on the expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The program is currently working in over 74 countries, mainly in tropical developing countries. Mongolia is the only country with significant amounts of boreal forest and being the most northerly country and faces unique climate change and ecological issues that are not observed in other countries.


In addition, support to Cook Islands, Gambia, Kribati, Marshall Islands, Niger, Palau, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tongo and Tuvalu.

MAIN GOAL

The overall goal of the UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme is to support the Government of Mongolia in designing and implementing its National REDD+ Strategy or Action Plan and in meeting the requirements under the UNFCCC Warsaw Framework to receive results-based payments. The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.

This comprises work on the four design elements for REDD+, 1 National Strategy &/or Action Plan, 2 National Forest Monitoring System, 3 Safeguards Information System, 4 Forest Reference Level.

The National Programme also counts on key national counterpart institutions and development partners to play active roles and take on specific responsibilities in maintaining the momentum in the REDD+ management processes and prioritizing and implementing those strategic options identified through the Programme.

National Strategy (NS) or Action Plan (AP)

NFMS including MRV

Safeguard Information system (SIS)

FREL / FRL
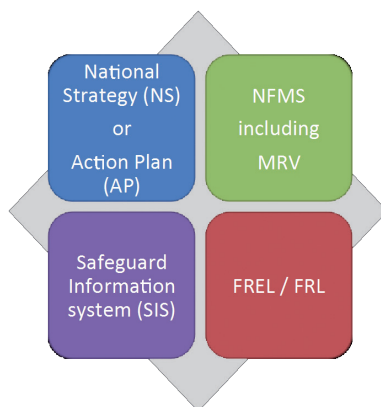
REDD+ Mongolia

As a signatory to both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, in 1992) and the Kyoto Protocol (1997), Mongolia is fully aware of the causes and potential impacts of climate change. Mongolia is therefore striving to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while maintaining its path of economic development. Mongolia's vast surface area includes approximately 17 million hectares of forest – an area roughly the size of Nepal. These forests can be categorised into two broad zones: northern boreal forests and southern Saxaul forests. The northern boreal forests cover approximately 13.2 million hectares and the southern saxual forest, which is largely an arid zone shrub vegetation covers 4.6 million (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mongolia, 2015). M ongolia's forests have great potential to contribute towards the country's sustainable development goals and innovative policies on Sustainable Development. This may arise through the provision of ecosystem services and goods, such as timber, non-timber forest products, water services, and biodiversity, provide resources for communities, such as non-timber forests products and firewood. The implementation of sustainable forest management strategies can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from reducing forests degradation and deforestation and enhance services and carbon stocks.

REDD+ ACADEMY

The REDD+ Academy is a coordinated REDD+ capacity development initiative led by the UN-REDD Programme and the UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit, which seeks to match the scale of the global climate change mitigation challenge and enable systematic, focused capacity development to deliver REDD+ on the ground.The REDD+ Academy is a comprehensive response to capacity building needs identified by the countries receiving

support from the UN-REDD Programme. The main aim of the REDD+ Academy is to empower potential "REDD+ champions" with the requisite knowledge and skills to promote the implementation of national REDD+ activities.The REDD+ Academy is also available (in English) on the following website and can do online tests and collect a certificate for completed courses:

http://unccelearn.org/login/index.php

UNITAR

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a principal training arm of the United Nations, working in every region of the world. We empower individuals, governments and organizations through knowledge and learning to effectively overcome contemporary global challenges. Our training targets two key groups of beneficiaries: the delegates to the United Nations and others who develop intergovernmental agreements establishing global norms, policies, and programmes, and the key national change agents who turn the global agreements into action at the national level.
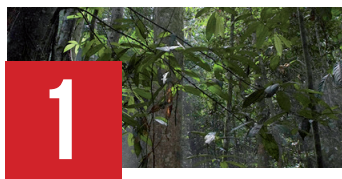
REDD+ Academy Journals in Mongolia

The REDD+ Mongolia journals have been developed from the REDD+ Academy journals, for more details on REDD+ National Program in Mongolia please see the following sites.

Website: www.reddplus.mn   Facebook: REDD+ in Mongolia   Twitter: REDD+ in Mongolia
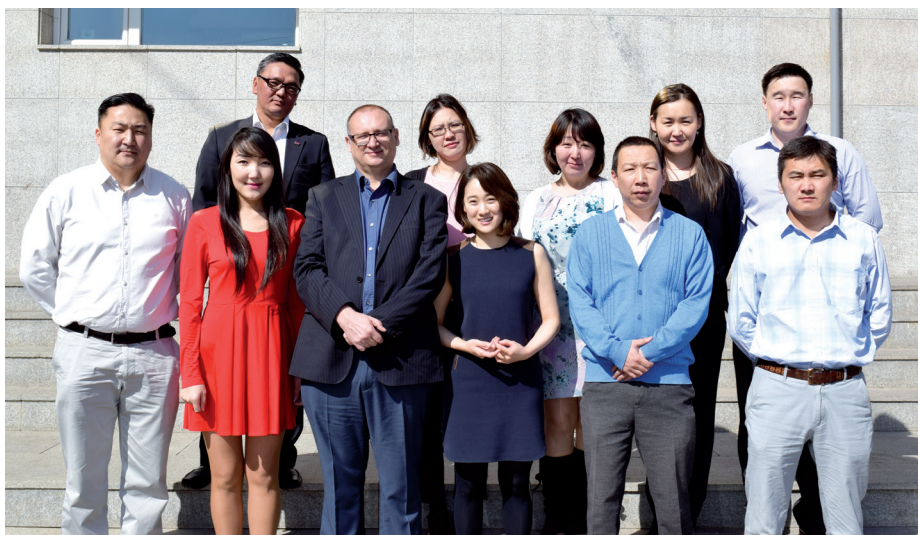
Programme management unit, UN-REDD Mongolia national programme

LEARNING MODULES

1 FOREST, CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

2 UNDERSTANDING REDD+ AND THE UNFCCC

3 DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION (DDFD)

4 NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

5 NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING SYSTEMS (NFMS) FOR REDD+

6 FOREST REFERENCE EMISSION LEVELS

7 POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

8 REDD+ SAFEGUARDS UNDER THE UNFCCC

9 REDD+ FINANCE

8

REDD+ SAFEGUARDS UNDER THE UNFCCC

THIS MODULE WILL DISCUSS THE CONCEPT OF SAFEGUARDS AND SAFEGUARD INFORMATION SYSTEMS (SIS) FOR REDD+ UNDER THE UNFCCC.

THE MODULE CONTAINS SECTIONS ABOUT:

- REDD+ safeguard requirements under the UNFCCC, including the seven 'Cancun' safeguards
- A country approach to meeting (or exceeding) these safeguard requirements
- Considerations and generic steps in designing a safeguard information system (SIS)
- Considerations for the content and structure for a summary of safeguards information, and
- UN-REDD tools available to support countries in designing and applying the country approach to REDD+ safeguards

CONTENTS

KEY MESSAGES

- The seven Cancun safeguards are broad aspirational principles that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities "do no harm" to people or the environment, as well as "do good" and enhance social and environmental benefits;

- Developing countries seeking to implement national REDD+ strategies/action plans (NS/APs) under the UNFCCC should meet three fundamental safeguard-related requirements in order to be eligible for results-based payments;

- Individual countries will need to work out how the safeguards will be applied - or operationalized - in their own specific contexts;

- There is no blueprint for a country approach; each will be different and will reflect the specificities of national contexts as well as what the country defines as the overall goals and scope of safeguards application.

- The development of a Safeguards Information System is integral to the country approach to safeguards;

INTRODUCTION

This module will discuss the concept of safeguards and safeguard information systems (SIS) for REDD+ under the UNFCCC, it will include sections on:

- REDD+ safeguard requirements under the UNFCCC, including the seven 'Cancun' safeguards;

- A country approach to meeting (or exceeding) these safeguard requirements;

- Considerations and generic steps in designing a safeguard information system (SIS);

- Considerations for the content and structure for a summary of safeguards information; and

- UN-REDD tools available to support countries in designing and applying the country approach to REDD+ safeguards

REDD+ SAFEGUARDS

'Safeguards' usually refer to processes or policies designed to mitigate risks. The seven safeguards associated with REDD+, as agreed under the UNFCCC, are broad

aspirational principles that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities 'do no harm' to people or the environment, as well as 'do good' and enhance social and environmental benefits.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, REDD+ implementation has the potential to deliver important social and environmental benefits (also called "co-benefits", "multiple benefits" or "non-carbon benefits" of REDD+), but there is also the potential for risks to communities and to the environment. These benefits and risks will vary depending on the REDD+ actions a country implements to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as where and how they are implemented. Table 8.1 summarizes some of the potential environmental and social benefits and risks of REDD+.

TABLE 8.1: POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS OF REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

	BENEFITS	RISKS
SOCIAL	• Strengthened livelihoods and improved access to natural resources • Improved forest governance and law enforcement • Protection of territories and cultures of indigenous peoples and local communities • Increased community voice and participation in decision-making • Clarified/secured tenure and resource rights	• Land speculation, land grabbing and land conflicts • Conflicts among stakeholders or resource users • Exclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities from decision-making • Contested land and resource rights

| ENVIRONMENTAL | • Maintenance and restoration of:
  – Biodiversity – forest species and ecosystems of conservation concern
  – Ecosystem services – e.g. water quality, erosion control, timber and non-timber forest products, pollination, local climate regulation, cultural values
• Intact and connected forests are more ecologically stable (resilient and resistant) to climate change impacts | • Displacement of deforestation/ degradation pressures to areas important for biodiversity or ecosystem services
• Intensified agriculture impacts on non-forest biodiversity
• Replacement of natural forest with plantation
• Planted forests with few tree species, or non-native species |

Source: UNREDD Programme

UNFCCC REDD+ SAFEGUARD REQUIREMENTS

To provide protection against risks, and promote potential benefits beyond climate change mitigation, Parties to the UNFCCC adopted broad guidance and a set of seven safeguards to be applied to REDD+ activities (COP16, 2010). These 'Cancun safeguards' (see Box 8.2) are to be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities, and information is to be provided on how they are being **addressed** and **respected** throughout REDD+ implementation (COP 16, 2010; COP 17, 2011).

BOX 8.2: THE CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

"When undertaking [REDD+] activities, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

That action complements or is consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;

α) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;

β) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by 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;

χ) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities;

δ) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the [REDD+] actions 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;

ε) Actions to address the risks of reversals;

φ) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions."

Source: UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I, paragraph 2

The body of UNFCCC decisions related to safeguards applicable to REDD+ activities can be summarized as follows:

- Countries should promote and support the Cancun safeguards while implementing REDD+ activities (Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I);
- Implementation of the safeguards and information on how these are being addressed and respected should support national strategies or action plans (Decision 12/CP.17);
- Countries should develop a system for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities, consistent with UNFCCC

guidance (Decision 1/CP.16, para 71; Decision 12/CP.17);

- Once the implementation of REDD+ activities has started, countries should periodically submit a summary of information on how the safeguards are being / have been addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities to the UNFCCC (Decision 12/CP.17; Decision 12/CP.19);

- Summaries of information on safeguards should be submitted through National Communications or other agreed communications channels and, on a voluntary basis, via the REDD web platform (Decision 12/CP.17; Decision 12/CP.19);

- To be eligible for results-based finance, countries should have an SIS in place and should have submitted their most recent summary of information on safeguards before receiving results-based payments (Decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 64; Decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 4); and

- [The summary of information should include: which REDD+ activities are covered by the safeguards; description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances; description of existing relevant systems and processes; information on how each safeguard has been addressed and respected; improved information provided over time (draft decision _/CP.21)][1].

OTHER REDD+-RELEVANT SAFEGUARDS INITIATIVES

A number of international organisations and initiatives have safeguards frameworks that could be relevant to REDD+ safeguards, depending on the country's context. There are also nationally determined frameworks/standards, such as national forest certification systems. Some of the more important safeguard initiatives relevant to REDD+ include:

- World Bank Operational Policies: safeguard policies that apply to REDD+ pilot programs that the World Bank supports or finances through the Forest Investment Program (FIP)[2], Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)[3] and BioCarbon Fund[4]. The FCPF applies Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Frameworks (ESMF) to ensure REDD+ readiness and demonstration activities comply with these World Bank Operational Policies;

- REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+SES)[5] : an initiative

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[1] Note that, at the time of writing, this guidance on summary of safeguards information content constituted a draft decision proposed by the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice for approval at the 21st Conference of the Parties.

[2] http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/node/5

[3] https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/

[4] https://wbcarbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=BioCF&ItemID=9708&FID=9708

[5] http://www.redd-standards.org/

of the of the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA)[6] and CARE International that supports voluntary best-practice standards, used through multi-stakeholder processes to support effective implementation and credible information provision on safeguards, for government-led REDD+ programs. Countries and subnational territories participate in the Initiative, using the content and process of the REDD+ SES in different ways, either as good practice guidance, as the basis§ for their SIS, or as a quality assurance standard;

- Various forest certification schemes (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council[7]), agricultural commodity standards and emissions offset standards (e.g. Verified Carbon Standard Jurisdictional Approach[8]), applied to certify sustainability of production and/or emissions reductions achieved through particular REDD+ projects and programmes.

Source: UNREDD Programme

COUNTRY APPROACHES TO SAFEGUARDS

As the Cancun safeguards described above are necessarily general statements of principle, individual countries will need to work out how the safeguards will be applied - or operationalized - in their own specific contexts.

A country approach to safeguards allows a country to respond to international

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[6] http://www.climate-standards.org/

[7] https://ic.fsc.org/

[8] http://www.v-c-s.org/

safeguard frameworks by building on existing governance arrangements that, combined with national policy goals, can be used to operationalize the Cancun safeguards. The 'governance arrangements' targeted by the country approach comprise three core elements that together ensure social and environmental risks from REDD+ are reduced and that benefits are enhanced:

I.   **Policies, laws and regulations** (PLRs) which define, on paper, what needs to be done in order to support REDD+ activity implementation in a manner consistent with Cancun (and other) safeguards, i.e. how safeguards are being addressed;

II.   **Institutional arrangements** - their mandates, procedures and capacities to ensure that the relevant PLRs are actually implemented in practice, i.e. how safeguards are being respected; and

III. **Information systems** which collect and make available information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation.

A country may find developing a country approach to safeguards to be beneficial for several reasons:

• It can help countries to operationalize the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards, which aim to ensure social and environmental risks are minimized and benefits of REDD+ are enhanced, and to meet the UNFCCC safeguards requirements to access results-based payments;

• It can help countries to assess what the Cancun safeguards mean in their specific national context, and which benefits and risks are most relevant to the REDD+ actions planned under its evolving NS/AP;

• It can help countries to determine the safeguards goals that they wish to achieve, taking into consideration national policies and international frameworks/commitments;

• It can contribute to design of more sustainable REDD+ actions, by taking into account wider socio-economic issues and environmental concerns that are likely to be important in addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (as well as overcoming the barriers to more effective/extensive 'plus activities'[9]);

• It can help engender country ownership and help ensure that the safeguards goals are appropriate to national circumstances and

_____
[9] Conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

contribute to national sustainable development and green growth goals;

- It can help countries accommodate the safeguards requirements of organizations providing payments for results from REDD+ actions in a single coordinated process;

- It can help build the confidence of investors as well as those providing payments for REDD+ results, because safeguards can reduce risk, a key factor in investment decisions for results-based REDD+ actions;

- It can help build domestic confidence in and increase the legitimacy of REDD+ by demonstrating commitment to treat safeguards in a comprehensive yet context-specific manner;

- It can serve as a cost-effective means to help countries achieve and keep track of long-term governance improvements, as it builds upon the existing governance arrangements (policies, institutions and information systems) of a country to address and respect REDD+ safeguards, rather than develop entirely new ones; and

- It can provide countries with the flexibility to explore applying the safeguards across the forestry sector or to other sectors relevant to REDD+.

How to develop a country approach to safeguards

There is no blueprint for a country approach; each will be different and will reflect the specificities of national contexts as well as what the country defines as the overall goals and scope of safeguards application. However, drawing on practical experiences, some generic steps can be identified, as illustrated in Figure 8.3, which may be useful for countries planning to develop their country approach to safeguards. Countries may decide to undertake all of these steps or just one, in any number of sequences, depending on their specific context. Each key generic step is briefly explained below.

FIGURE 8.3 GENERIC STEPS TO DEVELOPING A COUNTRY APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDS
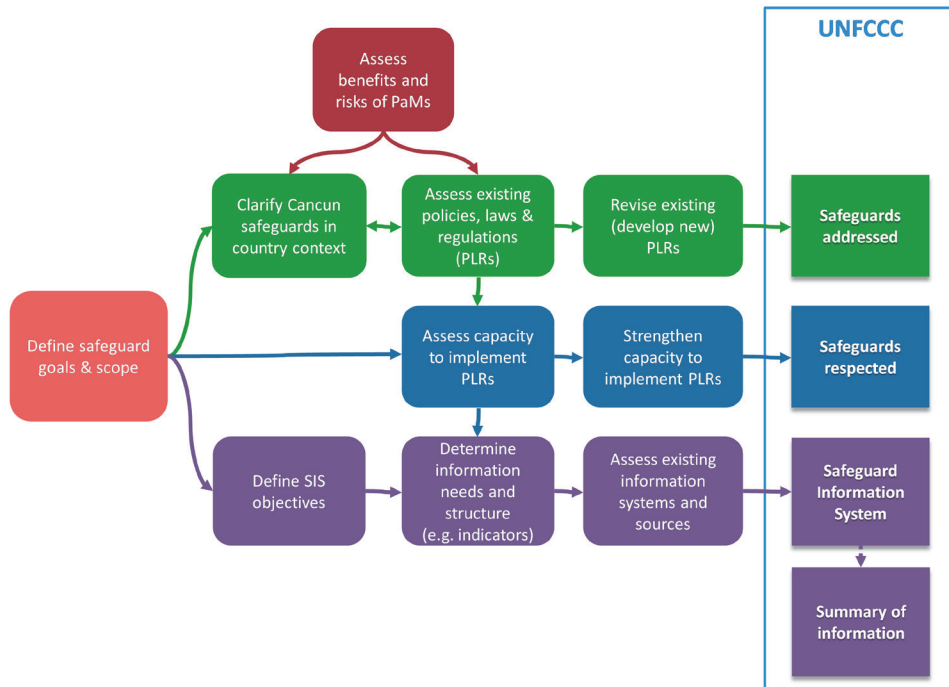
Source: UN-REDD 2015. REDD+ Safeguards Module 2: Country Approaches to Safeguards. United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), Geneva.

I.   DEFINING SAFEGUARD GOAL AND SCOPE

In this context, defining safeguard goals refers to what safeguard frameworks the country chooses to apply for REDD+, and whether the country chooses to develop and include safeguards beyond those of the UNFCCC. The requirements around the Cancun safeguards are basic preconditions to be eligible for results-based payments under the UNFCCC, but a country may also want to consider other bi-/multi-lateral safeguards requirements, e.g. World Bank Operational Policies, as part of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Carbon Fund. Consideration may be given to safeguards requirements and expectations of both investors in REDD+ results-based activities as well as those of buyers of verified emissions reductions/enhanced removals. Defining safeguards goals could additionally mean considering what national policies could benefit from addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards. Safeguards goals will reflect the country's budgetary and capacity constraints, as well as what the country hopes to achieve in terms of its ambition for REDD+ contributions to broader sustainable development and green growth. This could mean a focus only

on international requirements under the UNFCCC to obtain results-based payments from REDD+, or could also include the use REDD+ to catalyze broader sustainable development and green growth and meet domestic policy goals.

Defining the scope of safeguards application will depend on how a country chooses to implement REDD+. A country may wish to integrate REDD+ into wider forestry sector strategies or, even broader, as a cross-sectoral mechanism including sectors that may be related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, such as agriculture and biomass energy although this may imply the need for significantly more resources and may be a longer-term objective beyond meeting basic UNFCCC requirements. REDD+ safeguards could be applied to a broader scope than specific REDD+ actions for results-based payments, if sufficient capacities and resources are available, and a country opts to do so, e.g. applied to the whole forestry sector as means to attract other sources of foreign investment, and achieve domestic policy goals, in the sector.

Safeguards goal and scope setting have typically been conducted through a series of stakeholder consultations, led by national government REDD+ focal points. Such consultative processes are highly iterative, with progress at each step informing and refining previous steps in the development of a NS/AP.

Source: UNREDD Programme

II. **ADDRESSING SAFEGUARDS**

What 'addressing' the safeguards means will vary by country, but it may be thought of as comprising three key steps:

    I.   Clarifying Cancun safeguards in the country context;

    II.   Assessing existing safeguards-relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs)[10]; and over time

    III.   Revising existing and developing new PLRs, as necessary, to ensure they cover the identified risks and potential benefits associated with REDD+ actions.

The first step entails clarifying ('specifying' or 'unpacking') each of the seven Cancun safeguards according to the country's particular circumstances and may include consideration of key issues with regard to each Cancun safeguard in relation to the main benefits and risks associated with proposed REDD+ actions. This clarification exercise could be informed by a (expert or participatory) benefit and risk assessment of the REDD+ actions being considered for the NS/AP. This implies that a country will need to have some degree of clarity on proposed REDD+ actions or strategic options before starting to analyze how safeguards can be addressed.   The breakdown of the broad *principles* embodied in the Cancun safeguards into country-specific themes can be used to develop *criteria*, *indicators* or *narrative statements* as a means to further structure information in a country's SIS (see determining information structure below Table 8.4). Table 8.4 presents an illustrative example of key issues that may come up when clarifying the Cancun safeguards, based on an international legal best practice perspective, and could inform country-specific descriptions of each safeguard in accordance with their national circumstances.

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[10] Note that PLRs are largely thought of as national state legislation, but could also encompass subnational ordinance in large federal countries where each state has some autonomy to legislate for its jurisdiction. There can be non-state PLRs too; the private sector typically operates by individual corporate social responsibility policies, as well as collective industry best-practice standards. Indigenous peoples' and local communities cultural norms could also contribute to addressing and respecting safeguards, in addition to PLRs codified by government.

TABLE 8.4 ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CLARIFYING THE CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (a) - [REDD+] actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	• Consistency with international commitments on climate; contribution to national climate policy objectives, including those of mitigation and adaptation strategies; • Consistency with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals; contribution to national poverty reduction strategies; • Consistency with international commitments on the environment; contribution to national biodiversity conservation policies (including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans) and other environmental and natural resource management policy objectives; • Consistency with State's human rights obligations under international law, including the core international human rights treaties1 and ILO 169, where applicable; • Consistency and complementarities with the objectives of the national forest programme; • Coordination among agencies and implementing bodies for REDD+, national forest programmes and national policy(ies) that enact the relevant international conventions and agreements; • Consistency with other relevant international conventions and agreements.
Safeguard (b) - Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty	• Access to information • Accountability • Land tenure • Enforcement of the rule of law • Adequate access to justice, including procedures that can provide effective remedy for infringement of rights, and to resolve disputes (i.e., grievance mechanisms) (NB: overlaps with Safeguard (c)). • Gender equality • Coherency of national/subnational legal, policy and regulatory framework for transparent and effective forest governance • Corruption risks • Resource allocation/capacity to meet institutional mandate • Participation in decision-making processes (overlaps with Safeguards (c) and (d))

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (c) - Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by 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	• Definition/determination of indigenous peoples and local communities • Right to compensation and/or other remedies in the case of involuntary resettlement and/or economic displacement • Right to share in benefits when appropriate • Right to participate in decision making on issues that may affect them • Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) • Recognition and protection of indigenous peoples' and local communities' traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, intellectual property
Safeguard (d) - The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities [in REDD+ actions]	• Identification of relevant stakeholders - those who may affect, or be affected by, specific REDD+ actions • Legitimacy and accountability of bodies representing relevant stakeholders • Mechanisms or platforms to facilitate participatory processes during 1) design, implementation and monitoring of REDD+ architecture, particularly national strategies/action plans, and associated social and environmental safeguard measures • Functional feedback and grievance redress mechanisms • Recognition and implementation of procedural rights, such as access to information, consultation and participation (including FPIC) and provision of justice • Transparency and accessibility of information related to REDD+ (NB: overlaps with Safeguard (b))
Safeguard (e) - [REDD+] actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that REDD+ actions 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	• Definition of natural forest and understanding of the distribution of natural forest • Understanding the potential impacts of REDD+ policy options on biodiversity and forest ecosystem services. • Conservation of natural forests; avoiding degradation, or conversion to planted forest (unless as part of forest restoration). • Identification of opportunities to incentivise enhanced environmental and social benefits through design, location and implementation of REDD+ actions • Conservation of biodiversity outide forest.

Safeguard	Possible Key Issues
Safeguard (f) - Actions to address the risks of reversals	• Analysis of the risk of reversals of emissions reductions, also referred to as 'non-permanence'. • National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) may be designed to detect and provide information on reversals. • Plausible reference scenarios for REDD+ that give a reasonable indication of the risk of deforestation in the absence of REDD+. If this is underestimated, then REDD+ successes may be at a greater risk of reversal.
Safeguard (g) - Actions to reduce displacement of emissions	• Actions that address the underlying and indirect drivers of deforestation and land use change rather than only direct drivers at specific locations • Actions to reduce displacement of emissions from specific REDD+ actions at local (e.g. across REDD+ project boundaries) or national (to other jurisdictions within the country) levels • National Forest Monitoring Systems designed to detect and provide information on displacement at national, subnational and local levels • Analysis of possible reasons for displacement of emissions, such as ineffective implementation of REDD+ actions, or REDD+ actions that are not designed to address underlying (local, subnational, national) drivers of deforestation and forest degradation • Selection and design of REDD+ actions taking into consideration the risk of emissions displacement; displacement risk analysis for the selected REDD+ actions, including risk of emission displacement to other ecosystems, e.g. through draining of peatlands for agricultural use or displacement of pressures on forests to a neighbouring jurisdiction

In addition, an assessment of how effectively the existing PLRs address, on paper, the benefits and risks of planned REDD+ actions can be undertaken, with findings being validated through stakeholder workshops. This assessment should identify any significant weaknesses, gaps and inconsistencies in the PLR framework that may need to be strengthened, filled or resolved in order to better address Cancun safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation. Based on the findings of such an assessment, existing texts of laws might be amended or new provisions drafted in order to strengthen the PLR framework, or new regulations drafted to support the operationalization of PLRs. These processes are often time-consuming, and as such it may be a good idea to build on ongoing reform processes.

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[11] These include the following: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (2003), International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2010), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008).

REFLECTION POINT

What are the key PLRs in your country that could address the priority benefits and risks associated with proposed REDD+ actions in your evolving national strategy/action plan?

III.   **RESPECTING SAFEGUARDS**

As with 'addressing' the safeguards, what it means to 'respect' the safeguards will depend on the country. In the context of a generic country approach as illustrated in Figure 7.1, this may entail demonstrating: a) how well the PLRs identified under 'addressing' are actually being implemented in practice; and b) the environmental and social *outcomes* of PLR implementation. Do the PLRs put in place to mitigate, manage or remove environmental and social risks of REDD+, and enhance the benefits, actually work in practice? In this generic country approach, respecting safeguards may follow a similar process to that of addressing safeguards:

I.   Assessing institutional mandates, procedures and capacities to implement PLRs; and

II.   Strengthening those institutional arrangements to improve PLR implementation.

Assessing government institutional capacities to implement national and subnational PLRs may, ultimately, involve collecting information on the outcomes of REDD+

implementation in terms of social and environmental benefits and attempting to link them to the institutions' effectiveness in supporting PLR implementation.

Assessing institutional capacities is likely to be more challenging than identifying how PLRs address safeguards on paper, but periodic assessment should be able to demonstrate incremental improvements in respecting safeguards, which can help assure those entities providing REDD+ results-based payments. As with the PLR assessments, institutional capacity assessments for respecting safeguards might best be done by a team of experts, with results being shared and validated through a multi-stakeholder consultation process.

REFLECTION POINT

Select two or three PLRs from the previous reflection point. How are these PLRs implemented? Do they work in practice?

Safeguard information systems

Integral to the country approach to safeguards is the development of a SIS. This complex topic is discussed in a separate section below.

An iterative approach to developing a country approach to safeguards is advisable, which not only takes into consideration the country's goals and scope for REDD+ safeguards, but also considers what is already in place, building on the results of each successive step. Throughout the process, stakeholder consultation will be essential.

An SIS is one of the four core elements to have in place for REDD+ implementation (COP16, 2010) in order for a country to receive results-based payments (COP 16, COP 19):

- National REDD+ strategy or action plan;

- National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Reference Level;

- National Forest Monitoring System; and

- System for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the REDD+ activities (i.e. a 'SIS').

Further guidance on SIS design was provided at COP 17 in Durban and COP 19 in Warsaw, notably:

- Consistency with Cancun guidance;

- Accessibility and periodic provision of information: providing transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;

- Improvement over time: being transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;

- Comprehensiveness: providing information on how all Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected;

- Country driven: being driven by the country and implemented at the national level; and

- Utilizing existing systems: building on them as appropriate.

An SIS should, wherever possible, build on existing information systems in order to provide information on the way the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities. It is acknowledged, for example, in decision 11/CP.19, that REDD+ countries' national forest monitoring systems for REDD+ may provide relevant information for the SIS.

Source: UNREDD Programme

Potential steps to develop an SIS

Defining SIS objectives, or the different domestic and international information needs to which the SIS should respond – which at a minimum would be the UNFCCC requirement of providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions. Information on how environmental and social benefits and risks are being managed in forestry and other land-use sectors could also contribute to a range of other domestic objectives, such as:

- Accessing funding: in addition to eligibility for results-based payments under REDD+, investments in REDD+ activities may be enhanced through providing information on risk management/benefit enhancement that can be used to

attract (public and private) investors.

- Improving national REDD+ strategy or action plan implementation: through information forming the basis for refined actions to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and barriers to 'plus' activities, i.e. can contribute to adaptive management.

- Increasing the legitimacy of REDD+: through improved transparency, stakeholder consultation and participation, and provision of information to domestic stakeholders.

- Reforming policies based on evidence: through using safeguards information to inform decision-making at country, regional or local levels.

Countries might consider investing in SIS development and operations at scales commensurate with the objectives chosen for the SIS.

DETERMINING INFORMATION NEEDS AND STRUCTURE, which could include identifying key issues from the national clarification of the Cancun safeguards, and deciding on a framework for structuring and aggregating the information. This step comprises two inter-related sub-steps that need to be considered together:

I. ***Information needs*** – what *specific* information is needed, in relation to the *specific* benefits and risks of proposed REDD+ actions, to demonstrate appropriate PLRs are in place (addressing safeguards) and are being adequately implemented (respecting safeguards); and

II. ***Information structure*** – how will this information be aggregated and organized in the SIS?

Safeguards information needs will be determined by the identified benefits and risks of REDD+ actions, together with the PLRs required to mitigate these risks and maximize the benefits. A country need not attempt to collect information on all possible aspects of each safeguard, but can focus efforts on collecting the information most relevant to priority benefits and risks associated with key REDD+ actions comprising the NS/AP. Of course, those actions and priorities may change over time, and safeguards information needs can be expected to evolve with a phased implementation of the NS/AP as different REDD+ actions are implemented.

Based on identified information needs, existing sources of information should be identified and assessed, and if necessary, new information should be collected to help fill information gaps in order to demonstrate that all Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected.

The information structure will depend on a great many factors including, among other things:

- The scope of safeguard application chosen by the country;

- The scale[11] of REDD+ intervention (national, subnational or local);

- The specific objectives of the SIS and the different end users of the information; and

- The capacity and resources available to implementing institutions.

Source: UNREDD Programme

Two basic options present themselves on how to structure information in a SIS:

I.   A narrative description of how the key elements of each safeguard have been addressed   and respected, through policies, laws, regulations and their implementation on the ground. This would likely rely on the clarification of the safeguards; or

II. A hierarchical structure of principles, criteria and/or indicators.

Although not required by any UNFCCC COP decision, some countries working towards articulating their SIS have chosen to structure information in a hierarchical form, comprising one or more of the following components:

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[11] The UNFCCC calls for a national-level SIS, but the NS/AP may be operationalized through a variety of different modalities of differing scales, e.g. national-level policy intervention; subnational land-use planning; registry of site-based projects; hybrid of these and other modalities; etc. Information for the SIS may be generated/available at a subnational level; aggregation of information from different geographic scales will be an important consideration when determining the information content and structure of the SIS.

- **Principles** (P) – broad aspirational statements of intent, i.e. statements of objective. A number of countries are choosing to adopt, or adapt and augment, the Cancun safeguards as national REDD+ safeguard principles.

- **Criteria** (C) – more specific statements of thematic content that elaborate the principles. The step of clarifying the Cancun safeguards, in effect, could establish sets of criteria for each safeguard.

- **Indicators** (I) – detailed information used to demonstrate changes over time. Wherever, and as much as possible, identification of indicators should be based on existing sources of information. Novel indicators may be considered in cases where a distinct information need, important to demonstrate safeguards are being respected, is not met by existing sources. However, it is useful to note here that some countries have chosen to establish large numbers of novel indicators for their SIS; however, there is growing concern about the sustainability - due to a lack of institutional mandate and operational budget to collect information against these novel indicators - of this approach.

When taking decisions on what exactly to assess and how to do so (e.g. how many indicators to use, or the extent of field-based research, if any), it is important to take into account capacity and resource limitations or needs, keeping in mind that developing an SIS is likely to be a stepwise process.

REFLECTION POINT

How might information be structured in your country's SIS?

ASSESS EXISTING INFORMATION SOURCES OR SYSTEMS RELEVANT TO SAFEGUARDS, in order to make best use of the country's existing processes and ensure sustainability, countries should, to the extent possible, 'build upon existing systems' in order to meet their safeguards information needs. The mandates and reporting responsibilities, e.g. to international conventions, of institutions involved in REDD+ can help identify systems and sources of relevance to the SIS. As mentioned above, undertaking an assessment of PLRs related to safeguards can help map out these institutional mandates and responsibilities.

An assessment of information systems and sources should not only identify existing information, but also information gaps that might be resolved by modifying existing systems to accommodate new information (e.g. new indicators), or developing new ones. Given the array of themes covered by the safeguards, one information source (or system) is unlikely to be able to provide all of the information needed for an SIS.

Examples of information systems and sources that may provide relevant contributions to an SIS include, but are by no means limited to:

- National population censuses;

- National forest monitoring systems (NFMS);

- Systems supporting national implementation of other international conventions, e.g. biodiversity data centres and networks;

- Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMS) ;

- Sustainable forestry and agricultural commodity standards (including auditing reports) ;

- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) Timber Legality Assurance Systems (TLAS), etc. ;

- Grievance redress mechanisms[12];

- Cadastral databases;

- Information sources used to assess Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); and

- Registries of site-based projects, e.g. expansion of sustainable management of forests through certification of production forest management units.

In assessing existing information sources and systems, two key aspects will be critical:

I.   What **functions** will the SIS need to perform to meet the desired country objectives?

II.   What **institutional arrangements** are in place to ensure these functions are adequately operational?

Each of these two core aspects is described in more detail here:

I.   What **functions** will the SIS need to perform to meet the desired country objectives? An effective and operational SIS should perform one or more of the following key functions, as decided by the country: collection, management, analysis, interpretation, quality assurance and validation, dissemination of information. Assessing safeguards-relevant PLRs can help determine which government (and possibly non-government) institutions are mandated and capacitated to carry out the desired functions of the SIS

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[12] Grievance redress mechanisms could be a particularly cost-effective source of safeguards information as they can demonstrate how problems have been tackled and resolved, rather than trying to present a more costly comprehensive assessment of how safeguards are being addressed and respected.

(and prepare the summary of information on safeguards). The role of non-state actors – civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the private sector – in complementing state institutional mandates and capacities, can also be an element of consideration in the process of assigning functional responsibilities within the SIS.

The generic main functions of a SIS may include:

- Information collection and management – primarily concerned with determining what information is to be included in the SIS, where this information will come from and how it will be brought together. Also includes identification or selection of information collection and management methods, in addition to assessing the advantages and disadvantages of modifying existing systems to include new information and methods of collection and management;

- Information analysis and interpretation – making sense of the information, particularly important if primary/secondary data are to populate the SIS. Different analyses and interpretations will serve the different objectives of the SIS, including the preparation of a summary of information for submission to the UNFCCC, as well as other domestic information products for different stakeholders at national, subnational and local levels;

- Information quality control and assurance - two functions, which can also be considered as information verification (at the point of collection – making sure information is accurate) and validation (post-analysis – making sure interpretation is accurate) are entirely optional SIS functions[13]. It should be noted, however, that the quality of the SIS, and the robustness of its information can be significantly improved with inclusion of quality control and/or assurance functions[14]; and

- Information dissemination[15] and use – once analyzed and interpreted, information should be communicated to, and may be used by, the different target audiences – both international (e.g. donors) and domestic (e.g. local communities) - indicated in the SIS objectives. Information dissemination may involve exploration of technological solutions (such as existing and novel web portals), which provide access to information to different users.

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[13] There is no UNFCCC requirement to verify or validate safeguards information.

[14] Particularly as these functions, compared to others, lend themselves to greater levels of civil society or local community participation (resulting in greater stakeholder trust) in the SIS's operations.

[15] Information dissemination is the only SIS function required under the UNFCCC. All other potential SIS functions, with the exception of quality control and assurance, are implied: information cannot be disseminated if it has not first been collected, managed, analysed and interpreted.

The role of non-state actors – civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, and private sector – in complementing government institutional mandates and capacities, could be considered during the process of assigning functional responsibilities within the SIS, e.g. private forest and agricultural land owners, together with indigenous peoples and local communities could contribute or validate information on outcomes of implementation of REDD+ actions; third party verification of practices adhering to sustainable forestry and agricultural commodity standards could provide information on whether the safeguards are being respected; etc.

II.   What institutional arrangements are in place to ensure these functions are adequately operational? The existing PLR framework will define the mandates and functions of existing public institutions that might contribute to the SIS. Consideration should be given to how those mandates and functions operate in practice to see what institutional (financial, human, technological) capacities could be strengthened to improve SIS functioning. This will be particularly relevant when attempting to demonstrate how the safeguards have been respected, which ultimately may necessitate information on outcomes of national PLR implementation.

New institutional arrangements, such as information sharing arrangements, might be considered horizontally, across government line ministries and between departments, and also vertically up (and down) administrative hierarchies, to feed subnational information, from multiple localities, into a single national SIS. Lastly, the role of non-government institutions should also be considered. Industry standards and corporate social responsibility policies, and even customary norms of indigenous peoples and local communities, could contribute to SIS functions as well as sources of information.

Where the assessment of existing information sources or systems has highlighted that some information requirements cannot be met on the basis of what is already available, suitable arrangements may need to be found for closing those gaps. This may involve building the capacity of relevant institutions to implement PLRs, as well as expanding, changing or creating mandates and protocols for information collection and management.

REFLECTION POINT

What existing information systems and sources may be able to provide information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected for your SIS?

SUMMARY OF SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION

Provision of a summary of information on how all the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation is one of the three key requirements on safeguards that countries need to meet under the UNFCCC to access results-based payments. The summary of safeguards information should be submitted to the UNFCCC via National Communications (and voluntarily, directly to the UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform), with the same frequency as their National Communications and starting when REDD+ activities are first implemented (Decision 12, COP17).

A summary of safeguards information might take the form of a simple narrative summary, a summary of information by indicator, or a detailed PCI framework. Draft text agreed at SBSTA 42 (UNFCCC/SBSTA/2015), which remains to be formally adopted at COP 21 in Paris, has offered further methodological guidance regarding the summary of information. Information on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected should be provided in a way that ensures transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness. Countries should provide information on which REDD+ activity or activities are included in the summary of information, and are strongly encouraged to include the following elements, where appropriate:

α) Information on national circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards;

β) A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;

χ) A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting safeguards, including the information systems referred to in decision 12/CP.17, in accordance with national circumstances; and

δ) Information on how each of the safeguards has been addressed and respected, in accordance with national circumstances.

Countries are encouraged to provide any other relevant information on safeguards in the summary of information, and to improve the information provided over time, taking into account a stepwise approach.

All of a country's safeguards work, including for example the country-specific clarification of the Cancun safeguards, PLR assessment and SIS, may contribute to the summary of information. Countries may wish to provide a basic or more detailed summary of information on how they are respecting and addressing the Cancun safeguards, to assure investors in REDD+ activities and buyers of verified emissions reductions/enhanced removals that any social or environmental risks associated with their investments have been mitigated or avoided, and benefits enhanced.

REDD+ countries should view the submission of information on safeguards as an opportunity to showcase what is underway as well as planned (rather than a risk if all Cancun safeguards are not yet comprehensively addressed and respected).

In summary, the content of the summary could contain information on four key aspects:

I. How has the country 'clarified' the Cancun safeguards in its own specific context of REDD+ actions and associated environmental and social risks and benefits of those actions?

II. How is the country addressing the safeguards (e.g., through identification of relevant policies, laws and regulations to tackle anticipated benefits and risks from implementation of REDD+ actions)?

III. How is the country respecting the safeguards (e.g., through the implementation of the relevant PLRs and documentation of associated outcomes)?

IV. Any supplementary information on process, such as an overview of the country's approach to safeguards; or a description of the design and development process for the national SIS.

EXERCISES

1. What are the three 'fundamental safeguard-related requirements' developing countries are required to meet to be eligible for results-based payments?
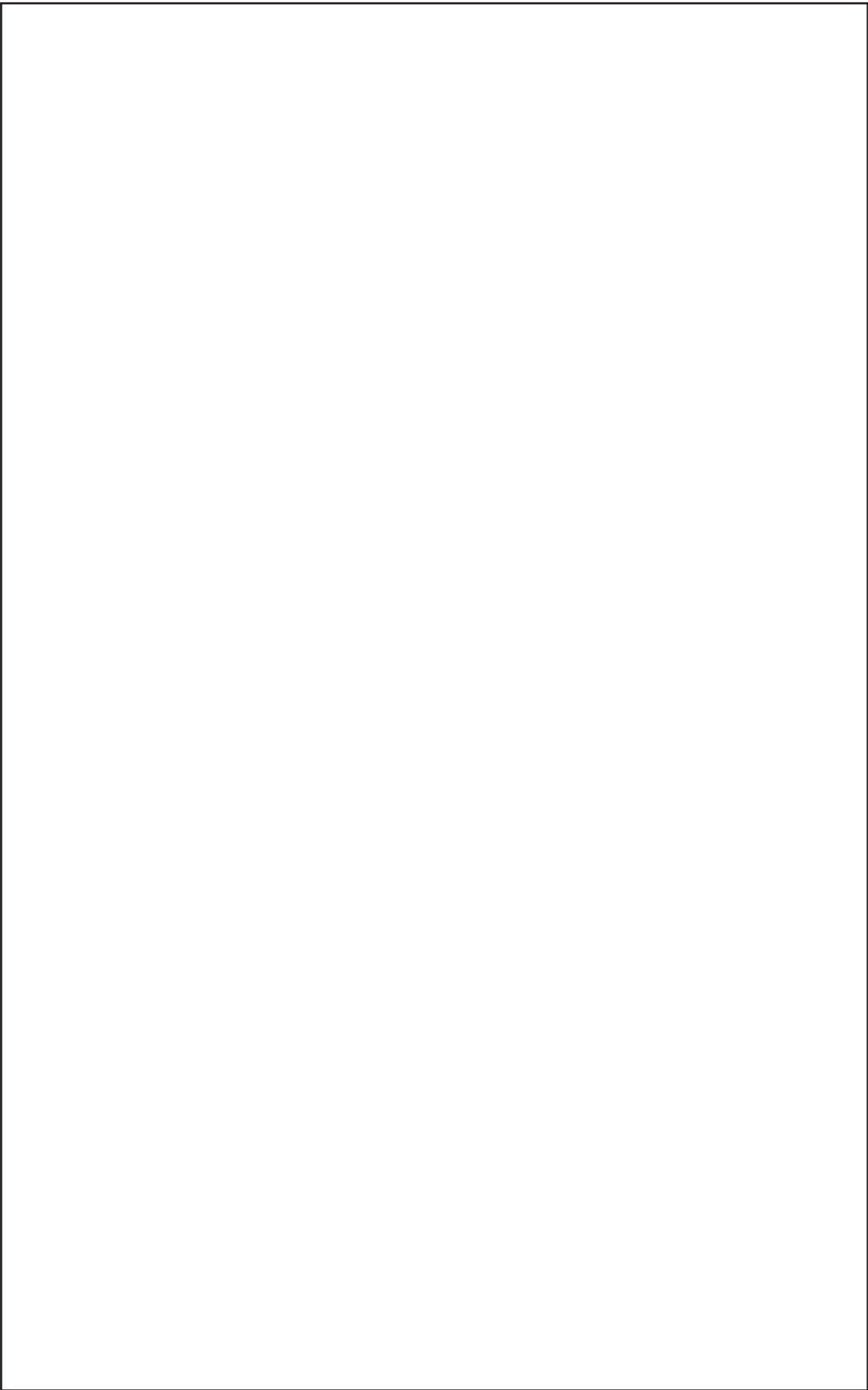
    I.

    II.

    III.

2. Exercise: Identifying potential benefits and risks of REDD+ actions

In the space below write down some examples of benefits and risks of possible REDD+ actions specific to your own country context.	
REDD+ action:	
Potential benefits	Potential risks

In the space below write down some examples of benefits and risks of possible REDD+ actions specific to your own country context.	
REDD+ action:	
Potential benefits	Potential risks

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