

# Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+): Safeguards



**E-Learning Series on International Frameworks  
that Support Indigenous Peoples, Local  
Communities, and their Territories and Areas**

# ACRONYMS

BeRT	Benefit and Risks Tool (UN-REDD)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
OPs	(World Bank) Operational Policies
REDD(+)	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (including conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
REDD+ SES	REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (of the UNFCCC)
SEPC	Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (UN-REDD)
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

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# INTRODUCTION

## Module Overview

This module aims to provide an introduction to some of the key social and environmental safeguards and standards addressing REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, including conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks). REDD+ aims to generate financial payments for carbon stored in forests, and to provide incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forests. This climate change mitigation strategy is being negotiated within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)). The module includes a review of: some international social and environmental safeguards and standards; some of the rights, benefits and responsibilities they imply; some of their potential relevance for local communities; and how national safeguards systems may be developed and applied in practice.

The module focuses on international REDD+ safeguards and standards that have developed within the UNFCCC system, and that are targeted to national REDD+ systems. The module does not address all REDD+ safeguards, or relevant safeguards from other sectors, including those that may apply at the project level and/or within the voluntary carbon market. (For a review of a more comprehensive set of available safeguards and standards see, among others, [FCMC 2012](#)).

This module is part of a toolkit for community facilitators on biocultural community protocols. The complete toolkit contains additional e-learning modules, including an introductory [REDD+](#) module, which readers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with. The toolkit and [e-modules](#) are available at: [www.community-protocols.org](http://www.community-protocols.org).

## Objectives

1. To gain an understanding of the UNFCCC REDD+ social and environmental safeguards.
2. To explore REDD+ social and environmental safeguards and standards initiatives of the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) international multi-stakeholder platform, the UN-REDD Programme, and the World Bank/Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).
3. To consider how countries may undertake the national safeguards development process.
4. To identify important rights, benefits, and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders within REDD+, as elaborated in the reviewed REDD+ safeguards and standards.
5. To explore how communities can engage with the REDD+ social safeguards and standards in support of their local priorities and plans.

## Key Concepts & Terms

### [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)

- An international treaty which aims to “stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”.

*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 (REDD+)*



- A mitigation mechanism under negotiation within the UNFCCC, which will aim to support developing Country Parties to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss. Decreasing forest destruction and degradation will reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, and thus assist in slowing the rate of climate change.

### Carbon

- An abundant chemical element that forms the building blocks of all life forms. Carbon is cycled between the earth's ecosystems, atmosphere, oceans and geosphere. Plants fix atmospheric carbon dioxide during photosynthesis, carbon makes up approximately 50% of tree biomass, and thus forests store a lot of carbon. When forests are destroyed carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere.
- Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, meaning that it traps heat generated from sunlight hitting the earth's surface and results in the earth's surface being warmer than it would be otherwise. Globally, the destruction and degradation of forests contributes approximately 12-17% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and is thus an important driver of climate change. However, the primary source of greenhouse gases is the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas.

### Climate change

- Climate refers to long-term weather patterns or 'average' weather over a time period of 30 years or more. Within the UNFCCC, 'climate change' is defined as a change of climate which is attributed to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability.

### REDD+ Safeguards



- Mechanisms - typically principles, guidelines, policies or processes - designed to reduce identified risks and prevent harmful or undesirable REDD+ outcomes. Some REDD+ safeguards, such as those of the UNFCCC, also aim to enhance the positive environmental and social impacts of REDD+. Some REDD+ safeguards lack specific performance criteria/levels and clarity on how they should be implemented in practice.

#### REDD+ Standards

- Typically outline a performance level that is required to be achieved. Standards include the prevention of risks associated with REDD+ and may also address whether positive social and environmental impacts have been attained through REDD+. Standards may be enforced through an evaluation of compliance, which may lead to certification or disqualification within the particular standard scheme. Some REDD+ standards contain a set of principles, criteria and indicators. Standards may be compulsory or voluntary.
- In the context of REDD+, the terms ‘safeguards’ and ‘standards’ are often used interchangeably and the distinction between them is not consistently defined.

#### Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

- An internationally recognized right of Indigenous peoples, and an increasingly recognized best practice and ethical standard with respect to all local communities, to give or withhold consent to proposed projects that may affect the lands they customarily own, occupy, or otherwise use. ‘Free’ relates to an independent decision-making process. ‘Prior’ means a right to have a say and to make a decision before plans are made and implementation begins. ‘Informed’ includes the right to legally accurate and relevant information that is accessible and understandable. ‘Consent’ is the decision based on a collective, independent, self-determined decision-making process of the community.

#### Full and effective participation

- The Cancun Agreements of the UNFCCC request that Parties developing and implementing national REDD+ strategies ensure the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to Indigenous peoples and local communities. Full and effective participation means the “meaningful influence of all relevant stakeholder groups who want to be involved throughout the process, and includes consultations and free, prior and informed consent” ([UN REDD 2012: SEPC, REDD+ SES 2012](#)).

#### Forest-dependent peoples

- People(s) who live in and have customary and/or statutory rights to their forests. They often have developed harmonious ways of life and traditional knowledge. They often are directly dependent upon forests and their products, e.g., for subsistence and trade, and may have few or no alternatives.

#### Indigenous peoples

- There is no official definition of ‘Indigenous’ within the United Nations (UN) system due to the diversity of Indigenous peoples. However, the UN system has developed an understanding of the term based upon self-identification; historical continuity; strong associations with territories and their natural resources; distinct social, economic, and political systems; distinct language; cultures and beliefs; and a resolution to maintain strong ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. For further details see [UNPFII Factsheet: Who are Indigenous Peoples?](#)

#### Customary rights

- Rights acquired by custom, belonging to people of a particular place. Collective and stewardship rights are often emphasised, and these rights may be linked to a responsibility to sustain natural resources for current and future generations.

- Under customary international law, Indigenous peoples have the rights to autonomy or self-government; the right to recognition and preservation of cultural identity; the right to traditional lands and natural resources; and the right to reparation and redress for wrongs suffered.

## Who is this E-learning Module Directed Towards?

This e-learning module may be useful if your community has any of the following:

- A significant area of forest and/or woodlands;
- Customary and/or statutory rights to forest land and/or access to forest resources;
- Livelihoods directly dependent upon forests and forest products;
- Community interest to explore the potential social and environmental impacts of REDD+;
- Contact from governments, organisations, or private companies interested in implementing a REDD+ project within your community or territory; or
- Interest to develop your own REDD+ project.



# THE REDD+ SAFEGUARDS & STANDARDS

## Why are Safeguards and Standards Needed in REDD+?

REDD+ presents many potential opportunities and risks to forest peoples. REDD+ will take place in the forested areas of developing countries. Globally, there are approximately 1.3 billion people who depend upon forests, including an untold number of Indigenous peoples.

The substantive and procedural rights of Indigenous peoples, local communities, and other forest-dependent communities (hereafter, for purposes of this module, ‘peoples’ or ‘communities’) could be affected by the implementation of REDD+ projects in their areas. REDD+ promises additional resources for protecting productive forests, enhancing ecosystem services, improving forest governance, securing tenure, and other so-called ‘co-benefits’, in addition to direct cash payments for avoided emissions. At the same time, none of these benefits are guaranteed, and there are serious concerns that REDD+ can lead to economic, cultural, or physical displacement, and that peoples’ rights may be undermined, including through restricted forest access and exacerbated land grabbing.

REDD+ safeguards and standards - if effectively designed, implemented, and enforced - can go a long way to mitigating the risks and enhancing the benefits of REDD+ for communities. However, there are concerns about the scope, practical implications, and enforceability of these safeguards and standards. REDD+ safeguards and standards do not have the weight of binding law or policies. However, countries do have strong motivations to ‘translate’ many of them into national safeguards or otherwise implement them within their national REDD+ programmes, as described in more detail below.

## The Emergence of the REDD+ Safeguards within the UNFCCC



Within the UNFCCC, reducing forest loss has been framed as a mitigation issue, and this initial narrow focus on carbon and greenhouse gas emissions raised concerns from numerous stakeholders regarding perverse incentives or the ‘REDD+ paradox’ - that the financial valuation of forest carbon could result in dispossession of communities. Key concerns raised in these debates included the need for: good governance and law enforcement, secure land tenure and customary rights for communities, and recognition of the principle and right of FPIC. As a result, the Cancun Agreements not only specify five REDD+ activities (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as forest conservation, sustainable management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) but also establish safeguards and guidance for these activities.

## What are the UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards?

Within the UNFCCC, the ‘[Cancun Agreements](#)’ (collectively, the outcomes of the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, or COP) outline seven safeguards that countries implementing REDD+ should ‘promote and support’. In summary, they are:

- a) REDD+ 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 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;
- d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular Indigenous peoples and local communities, in REDD+ activities.
- e) Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that [REDD+ activities]... are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivise the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits.
- f) Actions address the risk of reversals; and
- g) Actions reduce the displacement of emissions.

While not part of the ‘safeguards’ per se, the Cancun Agreement (para. 72) also

*requests* developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national [REDD+] strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards... ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities.

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### Resources:

[Report of the Conference of Parties on its sixteenth session, held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010. Addendum. Part Two: Action taken \(UNFCCC\)](#)

[United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

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## Current Status of the REDD+ Safeguards within UNFCCC Negotiations

The broad scope of the REDD+ mechanism has been agreed within the UNFCCC. However, because a global climate agreement has not yet been reached, the precise nature of REDD+ remains unknown. Despite the lack of an exact REDD+ structure, numerous countries are developing and implementing REDD+ readiness, the first phase of REDD+, which will be followed by policy reform and then results-based actions.

Regarding the safeguards, [Decision 12/CP.17](#) of COP17 provides some guidance on systems that countries must establish in order to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected. It notes that the guidance system for providing information on the safeguards should be consistent with national sovereignty, and provide transparent and consistent information accessible by all stakeholders, be regularly updated, and be implemented at country level.

In November-December 2013, COP19 in Poland produced a set of seven REDD+ decisions termed the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (see [proceedings](#) para. 44). These decisions are available in the [COP 19 Report Addendum Part two: Action Taken](#). Decision 12/CP.19 concerns the timing and frequency of the summary information that countries will be required to provide on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected. This decision reiterates that developing country Parties should provide summary information periodically throughout the implementation of REDD+ activities, and that the information should be provided in national communications or other agreed channels, as well as voluntarily via the UNFCCC website. Within this decision, it was agreed that this information be provided after the start of REDD+ implementation activities, this is a concern as the application of the safeguards during the readiness and policy phases of REDD+ may not be made available. The decision also stated that the frequency of subsequent submissions be at the same time as national communications submissions for non-Annex I Parties (these are typically updated once every two years). Another Warsaw Framework decision (11/CP.19), acknowledges that national forest monitoring systems *may* provide information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected (para. 5), but does not go so far as to *require* that they do so.

The rather lenient and ambiguous requirements decided upon so far, including at COP19, could reduce the effectiveness of monitoring to determine how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. Prior to COP19, during the Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2013, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) invited submissions on the *type* of information that could be helpful for the safeguards information system to provide. Submissions can be made until September 2014, and SBSTA 41 (the 41<sup>st</sup> SBSTA meeting, which will take place between 1-12 December 2014) will consider the need for further guidance. In addition to the type of information a country must report, a means to assess the actual *performance* on safeguards implementation



**Figure 1:** Summary Timeline of the Evolution of REDD+ and Safeguards Issues within the UNFCCC

1979

- First World Climate Conference.

1994

- UNFCCC enters into force.

2005

- COP11 Montreal: Reducing emissions from deforestation (RED)

2007

- COP13 Bali: Bali Action Plan adopted, a basis for REDD+ negotiations.

2009

- COP15 Copenhagen: Draft text clarifies REDD+ scope, guiding

2010

- COP16 Cancun: REDD+ activities to be consistent with safeguards.

2011

- COP17 Durban: Agreed that regardless of source or type of funding,

2012

- COP18 Qatar: Consideration of the timing and frequency for system

2013

- COP19 Warsaw: seven decisions designated as the Warsaw Framework

is an important consideration, including criteria and indicators. The Indigenous Peoples Caucus has recommended that specific indicators which respect Indigenous peoples' rights be included, and furthermore that these should be aligned to existing rights instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169: The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169). Communities should participate in the determination of the content and characteristics of the safeguard information system, and the system should include indicators that address their specific needs and concerns. Opportunities for parallel monitoring and reporting by communities of the safeguards should also be considered.

One issue of concern within the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ decisions relates to decision 15/CP.19, addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. In a preambular paragraph, the COP *notes* "that livelihoods may be dependent on activities related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and that addressing these drivers may have an economic cost and implications for domestic resources,". This ambiguous text has been criticised as it could be interpreted to implicate Indigenous peoples, their traditional livelihoods, and uses of forests as drivers of deforestation. These concerns were

acknowledged in the COP19 [report](#), where it is stated that the paragraph “should not be interpreted to imply that traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples, based on natural resources, are drivers of deforestation. The livelihoods of indigenous peoples should not be negatively affected when addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation” [para. 42 (e)].

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### *Resources:*

[REDD Web Platform](#) (UNFCCC REDD information sharing web platform)

[UNFCCC SBSTA page on methodological guidance for activities relating to REDD+](#)

[Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development \(FIELD\) Guide for REDD+ Negotiators](#) (Available in English, Spanish and French and updated regularly)

Earth Negotiations Bulletin: [Reporting service for UNFCCC negotiations](#) (IISD Reporting Services)

[ECO Climate Negotiations Newsletter](#), a daily look at what is happening and should happen in the UNFCCC negotiations. (Published by non-governmental environmental groups and produced co-operatively by the Climate Action Network)

[Third World Network](#) includes news updates and briefing papers on UNFCCC negotiations

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## Guiding Questions for Self-Assessment

1. *What are the UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards?*
  - a. *International legally binding principles*
  - b. *Non-legally binding principles and guidelines*
  - c. *National policies for REDD+*
2. *Which UNFCCC decision outlines the safeguards?*
  - a. *The Doha Climate Gateway of 2012*
  - b. *The Copenhagen Accord of 2009*
  - c. *The Cancun Agreements of 2010*

Answers: 1(b); 2(c).



## What are Some Other Internationally Recognized REDD+ Safeguards and Standards?

While the UNFCCC safeguards are the only set directed to all Parties to the UNFCCC, other internationally recognized REDD+ safeguards and standards have been developing and are influencing many national and sub-national REDD+ initiatives. Over time, the safeguards debate has broadened, from the initial ‘do no harm’ perspective, i.e., preventing adverse outcomes of REDD+, to consider the potential of the safeguards and standards to enable positive social benefits to communities. Such benefits include meaningful participation, more secure land tenure, diversified livelihood options, and access to a share of the benefits. The broadening nature of this debate is reflected in several key safeguards initiatives, including:

- UN-REDD Programme’s Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) and related guidance;
- REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+SES), developed through a multi-stakeholder process facilitated by the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and CARE International; and
- Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) safeguards, including World Bank operational policies (OPs) and strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA).

### UN-REDD SEPC and related guidance

The [UN-REDD Programme](#)<sup>1</sup> is supporting some countries in getting ready for REDD+, including by developing tools and guidance to enhance the benefits and reduce the risks of REDD+. These tools and guidance include the following:

- [Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria \(SEPC\)](#) aimed at addressing social and environmental issues in UN-REDD National Programmes and other UN-REDD Programme funded activities, and supporting countries in developing their national approaches to REDD+ safeguards in line with the UNFCCC.
- [UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#) (Working Final version<sup>2</sup>) that outline a framework for seeking and obtaining FPIC in the context of REDD+.
- A [Legal Companion](#) to the FPIC Guidelines which outlines international law and emerging State practice affirming FPIC.
- Draft [Benefit and Risks Tool \(BeRT\)](#) to help apply the SEPC in developing national REDD+ programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> UN-REDD is a partnership of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Working Final’ version means that there will be periodic updates based on application of the guidelines, as well as continued input and feedback from governments, Indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, practitioners and experts, partners and colleagues.



### Principles of the UN-REDD Programme [SEPC](#)

- Principle 1: Apply norms of democratic governance, as reflected in national commitments and Multilateral Agreements.
- Principle 2: Respect and protect stakeholder rights in accordance with international obligations.
- Principle 3: Promote sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction.
- Principle 4: Contribute to low-carbon, climate-resilient sustainable development policy, consistent with national development strategies, national forest programmes, and commitments under international conventions and agreements.
- Principle 5: Protect natural forest from degradation and/or conversion.
- Principle 6: Maintain and enhance multiple functions of forest including conservation of biodiversity and provision of ecosystem services.
- Principle 7: Avoid or minimise adverse impacts on non-forest ecosystem services and biodiversity.

### REDD + Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES)

[REDD+ SES](#) support the design and implementation of national REDD+ programmes, to help ensure respect for community rights and to help generate additional social and environmental benefits.

### REDD+ SES [Principles \(Version 2\)](#)

- Principle 1: The REDD+ program recognizes and respects rights to lands, territories and resources.
- Principle 2: The benefits of the REDD+ program are shared equitably among all relevant rights holders and stakeholders.
- Principle 3: The REDD+ program improves long-term livelihood security and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with special attention to women and the most marginalized and/or vulnerable people.
- Principle 4: The REDD+ program contributes to good governance, to broader sustainable development and to social justice.
- Principle 5: The REDD+ program maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Principle 6: All relevant rights holders and stakeholders participate fully and effectively in the REDD+ program.
- Principle 7: The REDD+ program complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions and other instruments.

### Forest Carbon Partnership Facility/World Bank

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) provides financial and technical assistance for REDD+ readiness activities and supports pilot REDD+ projects. Activities under the FCPF must comply with the operational policies (OPs) that serve as the World Bank's project safeguards. Relevant OPs cover a range of environmental and social issues (see below). However, these OPs are currently under review and their specific content may thus change.

### Policy Objectives of Relevant World Bank OPs

1. **Environmental Assessment** (OP 4.01): To help ensure the environmental and social soundness and sustainability of investment projects; and to support integration of environmental and social aspects of projects into the decision making process.
2. **Natural Habitats** (OP4.04): To promote environmentally sustainable development by supporting the protection, conservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of natural habitats and their functions.
3. **Indigenous Peoples** (OP 4.10): To design and implement projects in a way that fosters full respect for Indigenous Peoples' dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness and so that they: (a) receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits; and (b) do not suffer adverse effects during the development process.
4. **Involuntary Resettlement** (OP 4.12): To avoid or minimize involuntary resettlement and, where this is not feasible, to assist displaced persons in improving or at least restoring their livelihoods and standards of living in real terms relative to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher.
5. **Forests** (OP 4.36): To realize the potential of forests to reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, integrate forests effectively into sustainable economic development, and protect the vital local and global environmental services and values of forests.
6. **Physical Cultural Resources** (OP 4.11): To preserve physical cultural resources and avoid their destruction.

The Bank OPs are difficult to directly apply to national REDD+ programme *readiness* activities because they are designed to screen (investment) projects. The FCPF and World Bank therefore require governments supported by their Readiness Fund to follow the World Bank's Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), and develop an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) (as defined under [OP4.01](#)) to help ensure consistency with OPs in the readiness phase.

### How do the REDD+ Safeguards and Standards Relate to One Another?

The safeguards and standards reviewed here vary, including in terms of their focus, comprehensiveness, and specificity (see Table 1). They therefore have somewhat different implications for the rights, benefits, and responsibilities of impacted communities.

Although the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards were agreed upon in 2010, they have not been comprehensively applied during many of the national REDD+ activities undertaken to date. Similarly, other REDD+ safeguards and standards initiatives have been under development and are being integrated in national REDD+ readiness efforts in uneven ways, often only after national policies, pilot projects and other readiness activities are under way. Critiques in the application of safeguards and standards so far include: lack of mechanisms and procedures ensuring sufficient FPIC, limited REDD+ information available to communities, absence of indicators and reporting mechanisms to monitor the performance of safeguards implementation, failure of REDD+ project plans to incorporate community rights and reference to the safeguards, insufficient community participation particularly during the initial planning stages, and absence of procedures to record and respond to community comments.

**Table 1:** Comparative Summary of Safeguards and Standards Key Features (Adapted from Campese 2011: Table 2)

Safeguard/ Standards	UNFCCC	UN-REDD	REDD+ SES	FCPF (World Bank)
<b>Key components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General safeguards to be ‘promoted and supported’ by Parties to the UNFCCC (Cancun Agreements)</li> <li>• Developing guidance on reporting how safeguards are being addressed and respected (Safeguards Information System)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching principles and supporting criteria (SEPC)</li> <li>• Guidance on seeking free, prior, and informed consent</li> <li>• Related guidance and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles for REDD+ programs</li> <li>• Process, impact, and policy criteria that must be met to deliver the principles</li> <li>• Indicators to demonstrate compliance, including some tailored indicators developed by stakeholders in participating country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Bank Operational Policies (OPs) - noting that these are currently under review</li> <li>• (Limited) guidance on SESA and ESMF</li> </ul>
<b>Level of specificity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General / high-level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles and criteria somewhat specific</li> <li>• Most detailed guidance is on FPIC</li> <li>• BeRT tool aims to help in application of principles and criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most detailed and specific overall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPs vary in specificity</li> <li>• Most detailed (though not strongest) guidance regarding displacement and Indigenous peoples</li> <li>• Moderately detailed SESA and ESMF guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Coverage of issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly focused on avoiding/ mitigating negative impacts</li> <li>• Some (weaker) focus on benefits generation</li> <li>• Does not address equitable benefit sharing or good governance and sustainable development more broadly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on both avoiding/ mitigating adverse impacts and enhancing (social) benefits</li> <li>• Covers and goes beyond issues in UNFCCC safeguards</li> <li>• Aims for compliance with international human rights instruments and other international agreements (including UNDRIP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farthest reaching on generating significant, additional social benefits, in addition to ‘do no harm’</li> <li>• Strong rights focus overall</li> <li>• Covers and goes beyond issues in UNFCCC safeguards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly focused on avoiding/ mitigating negative impacts</li> <li>• Weak attention to benefits generation</li> <li>• Includes only consultation (not consent)</li> <li>• Not specific to REDD+ (alignment with UNFCCC safeguards less clear)</li> </ul>

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### Resources:

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[Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria \(SEPC\)](#). UN-REDD Programme. UNREDD/PB8/2012/V/1.

[Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#). UN-REDD Programme, January 2013. (Working Final version).

[Legal Companion](#) to the UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent. UN-REDD Programme, January 2013.

[REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards](#). Version 2, September 2012.

[Table A1 - Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies—Policy Objectives and Operational Principles](#). World Bank, 2005.

## Guiding Questions for Discussion and Self-Assessment

1. Consider the key principles of the other internationally recognized REDD+ safeguards and standards. Discuss the main ways in which they differ.
2. Which of the safeguards or standards only includes consultation and not consent?
  - a. REDD+SES
  - b. FCPF (World Bank)
  - c. UN-REDD

Answer: 2(b).

## RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

### How might the REDD+ Safeguards and Standards Apply to My Country?

A key concern raised about REDD+ safeguards and standards is whether or not, and how, governments and other actors can be held accountable for them, including because the REDD+ mechanism itself and the Safeguards Information System are still under negotiation in the UNFCCC. The safeguards have been described as non-binding principles. At the same time, there are strong motivations for compliance with the UNFCCC safeguards and other safeguards and standards. Knowing the motivations that governments or other actors have to follow the safeguards and standards may empower communities in their advocacy. Noting that not all safeguards or standards may be relevant in your country, Table 2 lists some circumstances in which some safeguards and standards will apply.

**Table 2:** Why Might My Country Use Safeguards or Standards?

UNFCCC Safeguards	UN-REDD SEPC	REDD+ SES	FCPF/ WB OPs and SESA/ ESMF
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipated that they will eventually become part of legally binding agreement on REDD+</li> <li>• All Parties to the UNFCCC should “support and promote” safeguards in their national REDD+ programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected of UN-REDD Programme funded countries in the readiness phase</li> <li>• Helps ensure compliance with UNFCCC safeguards and human rights instruments under the UN framework and international law, including UNDRIP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completely voluntary</li> <li>• Helps ensure compliance with UNFCCC safeguards and many international human rights</li> <li>• Measurable indicators to assess whether principles and criteria are being met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition for receipt of funding from FCPF Readiness Fund, and in due course Carbon Fund</li> <li>• Utilizes widely recognized minimum standards in World Bank OPs</li> </ul>
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## Guiding Questions for Discussion

Drawing on Table 2, consider the following key questions to determine which safeguards and standards your country might be responsible for:

- *Is your country signatory to the UNFCCC? (Find out [here](#))*
- *Is your country a developing country (non-Annex I Party), as defined under the UNFCCC? (Find out [here](#))*
- *Are there national REDD+ readiness/implementation activities underway? If so, are they supported by the UN-REDD Programme (find out [here](#)) or the World Bank (FCPF / Forest Investment Programme)? (Find out [here](#))*
- *Is your country using or otherwise participating in REDD+ SES? (Find out [here](#))*

## National Safeguards Development Processes

Most developing countries that will participate in REDD+ will have a national REDD+ safeguards development process. The UNFCCC and other safeguards are only broad guidelines. The UNFCCC text stresses that countries have sovereign rights and responsibilities to establish their own ‘country-led’ safeguard priorities. The international safeguards will be further refined and adapted from relatively general principles to operational statements that can be implemented, in a meaningful way, in the political, cultural, socio-economic, and ecological context of a country. Further, there may be national or local social and environmental concerns (or opportunities) which are not addressed

by the international safeguards or standards, but which will be important within a national REDD+ safeguards system. National systems may also have to add provisions to ensure that safeguards are practically applicable at all phases and levels of REDD+. For example, some national safeguards systems may incorporate more project specific components, such as the Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance Standards being applied in some REDD+ pilot projects.





Engagement in national safeguards development processes may be important to many communities. Through these processes, governments and other stakeholders will interpret what the international safeguards and standards will mean for communities in a specific country. It may be important for communities to know what kind of national safeguards development process your country will support, what stage that process is at, and how communities are or can be involved. If your country is supported by UN-REDD or the FCPF, the key documents which countries submit to these donors, including Readiness Proposal Plans and progress reports, are accessible by clicking on the relevant country name (see [here](#) for UN-REDD and [here](#) for the FCPF).

### ***National safeguards monitoring, reporting, and grievance resolution mechanisms***

As discussed above, Parties to the UNFCCC will be required to report information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected within national REDD+ activities. However, the specific information, which will be reported is still being negotiated under the UNFCCC. These UNFCCC negotiations can be an important place for community engagement and advocacy now. In the longer term, awareness of a government's safeguards monitoring and reporting processes under the UNFCCC will likely continue to be important for communities impacted by or interested in REDD+.

If your country is following FCPF, UN-REDD, or REDD+SES safeguards or standards, it may already be developing monitoring and reporting mechanisms that communities may want to learn about and seek to influence or leverage.

Finally, fully developed national safeguards systems will need a grievance mechanism. Credible, reliable, accessible, and well governed mechanisms will be critical to ensuring that the safeguards are, in fact, adhered to. In the Readiness Preparation Proposal template of the UN-REDD/FCPF it is suggested that a feedback and grievance redress mechanism be operational early in the Readiness Preparation Proposal implementation phase. REDD+ SES refers to the need to establish a grievance mechanism under Principle 6: Stakeholder Participation. The UN-REDD is currently preparing a Guidance Note that will outline principles and a methodology for strengthening or establishing national level grievance mechanisms for REDD+. At this early stage, there is limited experience on grievance mechanisms for the REDD + safeguards. (For example, see the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples in Panama withdrawal from the UN-REDD National Joint Programme in Panama discussed below.) The development, utilisation, and outcomes of national grievance mechanisms will be an important area of learning and action in the future.

### **Guiding Questions for Discussion**

1. *Utilizing the links provided in the sections above:*
  - a. *Determine whether your country is signatory to the UNFCCC and whether the UN-REDD or World Bank FCPF is providing support for REDD+.*
  - b. *If your country is engaging with UN-REDD and/or FCPF locate your country page(s) and download the relevant Readiness Proposal Plans, documents, and progress reports.*

### **What are Some Key Community Rights, Benefits, and Responsibilities Reflected in the UNFCCC Safeguards?**

The UNFCCC safeguards 'support and promote' respect for many procedural and substantive community rights, and other core human rights. They also promote some additional benefits

and identify responsibilities that forest communities and other actors will be held accountable for if they are to participate and share in benefits (e.g., carbon credit payments). Table 3 explores some of the rights, benefits, and responsibilities reflected in the UNFCCC safeguards.

**Table 3: UNFCCC Safeguards and Considerations for Communities**

Safeguards	Some considerations for communities (rights, benefits, and responsibilities)
(a) REDD+ actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All REDD+ stakeholders, including governments, investors, non-governmental organisations, and participating communities, will have <b>responsibilities</b> to uphold national forest policy and law, and the provisions in relevant international agreements.</li> <li>• In many countries, making REDD+ consistent with community <b>rights</b> and ensuring greater <b>benefits</b> will require strengthening the equity, implementation, and just enforcement of forest policy and law, as well as in other sectors (land, agriculture).</li> <li>• Particularly relevant international instruments and treaties to your country may be signatory or party (respectively) include UNDRIP and the <a href="#">Convention on Biological Diversity</a> (CBD).</li> </ul>
(b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparent and effective forest governance can generally help ensure respect and enjoyment of community <b>rights</b> and the generation of additional <b>benefits</b>.</li> <li>• Communities involved in REDD+ will also be <b>responsible</b> for forest governance.</li> <li>• The scope of this safeguard is relatively narrow. Other important forest governance considerations include accountability, equity/fairness, justice, and participation.</li> <li>• REDD+ governance will also involve other sectors (e.g., land, agriculture) and the broader governance environment, which are not reflected here.</li> </ul>
(c) Respect for their knowledge and rights, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting UNDRIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This safeguard explicitly calls for respect of community <b>knowledge</b> and <b>rights</b>, including under UNDRIP.</li> <li>• REDD+ could result in harm to traditional livelihoods as changes in forest access, management, and utilisation may be required.</li> <li>• Focusing upon the carbon value in forests may undermine other social and cultural values.</li> <li>• In practice, the potential loss of traditional ecological knowledge under REDD+ has largely been absent from REDD+ debates.</li> </ul>
(d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in REDD+ activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation is an important <b>procedural right</b> in itself.</li> <li>• Meaningful participation can also help to ensure identification and respect for <b>substantive rights</b> and the generation/claiming of additional <b>benefits</b>.</li> <li>• This safeguard does not itself explicitly define what ‘full and effective’ participation means, and the information to be reported under safeguards is not yet clear. This opens it to weak interpretations in practice.</li> <li>• However, according to UN-REDD and REDD+SES definitions, ‘full and effective’ participation includes consultations and FPIC.</li> <li>• FPIC for Indigenous peoples would also be supported by safeguard (c) above, in its acknowledgement of UNDRIP.</li> </ul>

Safeguards	Some considerations for communities (rights, benefits, and responsibilities)
(e) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that REDD+ activities are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivise the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes into account community <b>rights</b> related to sustainable livelihoods and interdependence on forests, as reflected in UNDRIP.</li> <li>• Explicitly promotes the enhancement of ecosystem service related environmental and social <b>benefits</b>, though does not clarify which benefits, does not relate benefits to costs, and does not address equitable sharing.</li> <li>• Aims to prevent the conversion of natural forests to plantation forests, a valid concern which has been voiced during the REDD+ negotiations. However, due to the absence of an internationally agreed forest definition, the Food and Agriculture Organisation forest definition is generally used. This definition includes some plantations (rubber wood, cork oak, and Christmas trees) and areas with bamboos and palms. These are granted the same status as natural forests. Within REDD+, countries can select their own definition of forest, but many utilise this definition as a basis.</li> <li>• Communities participating in REDD+ will also be <b>responsible</b> for contributing to/maintaining forest conservation, which may require changes in or limits to forest/resource access and use.</li> <li>• It will be important that conservation efforts comply with other safeguards, including respect for <b>knowledge</b> and <b>rights</b>.</li> </ul>
(f) Actions address the risk of reversals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a <b>responsibility</b> to maintain forests under REDD+ in perpetuity, which may limit or change future development options.</li> <li>• Also implies a <b>responsibility</b> to monitor, report, and verify forest carbon changes over time.</li> <li>• If forest carbon is not maintained, <b>benefits may be lost</b> and agreements may be nullified, and the distribution of risks for failed projects is not addressed by the safeguards.</li> <li>• Those communities without clear, legal tenure may not be eligible to participate or benefit, though may bear costs in practice.</li> </ul>
(g) Actions reduce the displacement of emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges that REDD+ interventions to reduce deforestation and thus greenhouse gas emissions in one area may result in a shift of the deforestation activities to another area and the consequent production of higher emissions there.</li> <li>• As such displacement can be at local, provincial, national, or cross-national scales, this safeguard creates a <b>responsibility</b> to coordinate and address this risk at all scales.</li> <li>• At the local level, this may create a <b>responsibility</b> to restrict or change forest use and future land use. For example, in some places it may be interpreted to restrict forest communities from participating in shifting cultivation.</li> </ul>

While the UNFCCC safeguards address many important rights and responsibilities, they are not comprehensive. Some risks and opportunities these safeguards may not address (depending on how they are interpreted by national governments) include:

- Securing communities' carbon rights (see below);
- Ensuring equitable sharing of REDD+ costs and benefits;
- Promoting 'good' governance and sustainable development (broadly defined and taking account of other sectors);
- Explicitly demanding accountability of all parties to the safeguards and other responsibilities; and
- Ensuring access to justice (complaints mechanisms).

More generally, the UNFCCC safeguards leave a great deal open to national interpretation and qualification under national law.

## How do the Other Safeguards and Standards Address Community Rights, Benefits, and Responsibilities?

REDD+ safeguards developed outside of the UNFCCC system, including those reviewed here, may also help protect rights, promote additional benefits, or describe certain responsibilities of relevance to your community. These other initiatives tend to go further than the UNFCCC safeguards in the scope of issues addressed. However, they do not necessarily have the same influence or motivation for Parties' compliance (discussed above). Some of the rights, benefits, and responsibilities in the UN-REDD, REDD+SES, and FCPF safeguards and standards are reviewed in Table 4. This analysis is meant only to provide a starting place for your inquiries into if and how these provisions specifically apply in your national and local context.

**Table 4:** Comparative Analysis of Rights, Benefits, and Responsibilities Supported by Safeguards and Standards Outside the UNFCCC. (Source: Adapted from Campese 2011: Table 2.)

X → component, but not strong or operational focus

XX → strong focus

While the table aims to reflect core content of the safeguards and standards, specific language varies across the sources.

Rights, benefits, and responsibilities within national REDD+ programmes	UN-REDD	REDD+SES	World Bank OPs
<b>Livelihoods</b>			
Do not make vulnerable people worse off ('do no harm')	XX	XX	X
Enhance livelihood security/ wellbeing (including from ecosystem services)	XX	XX	
Promote sustainable development or poverty reduction	XX	XX	X
Equitably share REDD+ costs and benefits	X	XX	(X)
Support small-scale/ community forest ownership			X
Make REDD+ activities consistent with adaptation needs	X	X	
<b>Governance</b>			
Support and promote good governance broadly	XX	XX	
Transparency	XX	XX	X
Accountability	XX	XX	X
Equity, equality and/or social justice generally	XX	XX	
Gender equality	XX	X	
Full and effective participation	XX	XX	X
Information sharing (all stakeholders, including communities, understand rights, responsibilities, risks, and opportunities)	XX	XX	X
Meaningful representation (including marginalized and/or vulnerable groups)	X	XX	

Rights, benefits, and responsibilities within national REDD+ programmes	UN-REDD	REDD+ SES	World Bank OPs
Give particular attention to vulnerable populations	X X	X X	X
Access to justice, including law enforcement and dispute/ grievance mechanisms	X X	X X	X
Recognize / protect communities' carbon rights	X	X X	
Respect for/ support for communities' own decision making structures	X X	X X	X
Supporting capacity (including rights holders' and stakeholders' capacity to act upon rights, responsibilities, risks, and opportunities)		X X	X
Financial management / governance quality	X	X X	
Tenure security		X	X
Respect for communities' knowledge and collective rights, including resource access	X X	X X	X
Specific commitment to free, prior, informed consent	X X	X X	Consult
Respect for human rights broadly	X X	X X	
Avoiding economic or physical displacement	X X	X X	(X X )
Coherent with related national policy and institutional infrastructure	X X	X X	X
<b>Environment</b>			
Maintains forests, including avoiding leakage and addressing risks of reversal	X X	X	X X
Enhances forests	X	X	X
Maintains other ecosystems/ ecosystem services	X X	X X	X X
Enhances other ecosystems/ ecosystem services	X X	X X	X
Maintains biodiversity	X X	X X	X
Enhances biodiversity	X	X X	X
Consistent with precautionary principle			X
Avoid/ prevent pollution			(X )

## What Other Rights and Mechanisms Should My Community be Aware of?

While REDD+ safeguards aim to be comprehensive, they are relatively general and, without incorporation into national law or policy, are difficult to enforce. However, REDD+ is just one mechanism; it will be implemented within a much broader context. Communities may want to be aware of other international, national, and local frameworks that contain provisions directly related to their forests. These may include:

- Multilateral environmental treaties ratified by the government such as the [CBD](#).
- Multilateral human rights treaties ratified by the government, such as ILO 169, and other international instruments signed by the government such as [UNDRI](#).



- National laws and policies on forests, land, agriculture, development, climate change, etc.
- Local (customary or statutory) laws concerning forests and related resources.

## Guiding Questions for Discussion

1. *Is your country a party to the CBD?*
2. *Does your community identify as Indigenous? If so, how can you utilise UNDRIP to assert your rights within REDD+?*

# WHAT MIGHT THE REDD+ SAFEGUARDS & STANDARDS MEAN FOR MY COMMUNITY?

## Some Opportunities and Challenges in How Safeguards and Standards May be Interpreted and Implemented

As noted above, REDD+ presents many potential risks and opportunities for communities. The national and local level application of REDD+ safeguards and standards can mitigate these risks and enhance these opportunities. However, the intent of safeguards and standards can be difficult to realize in practice. Further, depending on how they are interpreted by governments or other actors, they may even introduce new challenges or risks for communities. Some of these potential opportunities and challenges are explored below. However, the actual impacts of safeguards and standards will vary by context. Communities may wish to discuss how REDD+ safeguards and standards - if implemented - may impact them.



As discussed above, the safeguards and standards discussed here apply primarily to national REDD+ systems. Additional or different safeguards or standards may apply to individual, project level REDD+ initiatives in your country or territory.

### Land Tenure

- **Opportunities:** While not a safeguard itself, the Cancun Agreements request countries participating in REDD+ to address “land tenure issues”, as insecure or unclear land tenure has been identified as a driver of deforestation and degradation in many countries. Land tenure reform is advocated to clarify the holders of rights and their responsibilities, and it can enhance REDD+ effectiveness, efficiency and equity. Land tenure reform should be aligned with the safeguards, thus it should recognize customary tenure and rights, and the

*de facto* occupation, management, and use of lands and forests. Formal recognition of communities' land tenure rights may strengthen rights to participate meaningfully in REDD+, and could reduce tenure related conflicts and the risks of large-scale or forced land acquisitions, exclusion from lands, and loss of access to forest resources.

- **Challenges:** The rapid formalization of land tenure incentivized by REDD+ poses risks to some vulnerable communities. For example, if safeguards are not fully followed, legal tenure may be granted to outside parties because customary regimes are not recognized, due to corruption or other reasons. Recognition of customary tenure may also be conducted through processes or on terms that are not determined by or favourable to the communities whose lands are at stake. Further, latent land/boundary conflicts may become heightened in efforts to clarify tenure arrangements for REDD+.

### ***Carbon Rights***



Key REDD+ benefits - including payment for reduced emissions - will be closely tied to 'carbon rights'. 'Carbon rights' are a relatively new concept, which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Under the UNFCCC there is no legal regime for the allocation of carbon property rights; ultimately the rights to carbon will be determined by countries through national legislation. (Although in the absence of existing laws, carbon rights have been defined in individual contracts within existing REDD+ projects, for example, within the voluntary market.) Ownership and/or rights to land, soil, forests, and trees may influence carbon rights - e.g., the people who have tenure over the trees may 'own' the carbon. However, carbon rights could also be separated from these rights. The interpretation of carbon rights, including how these rights are included in legislation and the design and implementation of REDD+, will have significant implications for communities. For example, recognition of carbon rights may influence who gets a share of the 'benefits', and thus whether or not benefit sharing arrangements are equitable. The determination of carbon rights and related issues of benefit access are a critical aspect of REDD+. Communities may want to participate in the decision-making process and, where

necessary, have access to impartial legal advice to support effective negotiations. Some communities have utilised participatory mapping to identify their land and rights to forest resources.

- **Opportunities:** UN-REDD SEPC and REDD+ SES address community carbon rights security to a degree (in addition to forest, land, and tenure rights) and thus bring this issue into the safeguards and standards discussion.
- **Challenges:** Carbon rights are not addressed by the UNFCCC safeguards, and how these rights will be defined and respected in practice under any of the safeguards or standards remains to be seen.

### ***Free, Prior, and Informed Consent***

- **Opportunities:** UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards imply a right to FPIC (by noting UNDRIP) and UN-REDD and REDD+SES safeguards explicitly recognize it. In this sense, these safeguards can advance FPIC both for REDD+ and more generally for forest and land use investment.

- **Challenges:** As enforcement of the safeguards and standards remains difficult, and national interpretation will vary, this right may not always be realized. Even where FPIC is sought, the processes are often not fully effective or appropriate due to obstacles in national laws, policies, and practices. Community experiences with REDD+ demonstrate that ineffective FPIC can result from factors such as: insufficient time for ‘prior’ decision-making to be achieved, and lack of appropriate information regarding the purpose, duration, risks, benefit-sharing, and procedures of REDD+ projects. Where there is such insufficient time or inadequate understanding, “consent” cannot be considered to have been given.

### ***Full and Effective Participation***

- **Opportunities:** Promotion and support for full and effective participation under the REDD+ safeguards and standards is critical to ensure that community members understand the responsibilities, risks, and opportunities involved, and are able to effectively claim rights and benefits in REDD+. Some safeguards and standards (UN-REDD SEPC and REDD+SES) define what they mean by ‘full and effective’ participation.
- **Challenges:** In practice, there are many degrees of participation, and the determination of what constitutes ‘full and effective’ participation may vary. For example, there is a risk that processes will not provide sufficient time or resources to effectively and meaningfully engage communities, and/or will provide for consultation but not for substantive influence on REDD+ outcomes.

### ***‘Good’ Governance***

- **Opportunities:** REDD+ safeguards and standards generally recognize and promote the importance of ‘good’ forest governance. Improvements in forest governance through REDD+ initiatives can not only help ensure REDD+ related rights and benefits are realized, but also have ‘spill over’ effects in other arenas, e.g., natural resource governance more generally.
- **Challenges:** Governance is a complex and contested concept, and ‘good’ governance is value laden. The UNFCCC safeguards refer to relatively narrow factors of governance (transparency and effectiveness) while other safeguards and standards (e.g., REDD+ SES and UN-REDD) use more comprehensive concepts of ‘good’ governance. Further, safeguards and standards do not elaborate the levels of governance to be addressed. The (positive and negative) impacts of REDD+ on communities will be influenced by governance at all levels. Finally, the UNFCCC safeguard on governance is limited to forest programmes, while the equity and effectiveness of REDD+ will be impacted by governance of forests and other sectors (land, agriculture), as well as the broader political/economic context.

### ***Gender***

- **Opportunities:** Integration of gender issues, including women’s equality, is of particular interest in REDD+ as women and men have different power, roles, rights, and responsibilities in forest governance, management, and utilisation. Women often have an intimate knowledge of forest landscapes, from using and managing forest resources. They can therefore provide useful insights for REDD+ activities, and their active engagement may be a critical factor in REDD+ success at the local level. Women are also often particularly vulnerable to loss of access to forest resources, and face particular barriers to full and effective participation. The UNFCCC Cancun Agreement (para. 72) requests

Parties to address ‘gender considerations’. The UN-REDD SEPC includes a specific criterion (no.8) on promoting and enhancing gender equality, gender equity, and women’s empowerment. As gender equity is a fundamental human right and UN-REDD follows a human rights-based approach, it is the duty of countries working with UN-REDD to meet these obligations. REDD+ SES (V.2) recognizes women among the vulnerable groups that should be specifically accounted for, and calls for ‘gender sensitivity’ in, *inter alia*, FPIC, information sharing, and participation. Further, existing international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and policy frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals that promote gender equality and empower women provide a strong mandate for the gender issues integration in REDD+. Stakeholder engagement processes should ensure equitable participation and representation of women and men in decision-making. As an additional benefit, promoting greater gender equality and women’s participation in REDD+ can create space for such advances more broadly.



- **Challenges:** While ‘gender considerations’ are mentioned, gender equality and equity are not explicitly stated with the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards, and thus the mandate from them is weak. Existing inequalities regarding control over resources and influence in decision-making processes could even be exacerbated by REDD+, resulting in women not contributing effectively to REDD+ design, implementation, or monitoring processes, and not being rewarded in benefit-sharing mechanisms. Experience in other sectors also demonstrates that norms around gender equality change slowly, and the rapid pace of REDD+ readiness activities in some countries makes it challenging to address such issues in an effective manner. In some contexts, national or local norms may be in conflict with international human rights norms on gender equity, which could further exacerbate difficulties.

### ***Redress and Grievance Mechanisms***

- **Opportunities:** National REDD+ systems should involve grievance mechanisms. Safeguards and standards provide some clearer touch points against which stakeholders, including communities, can measure whether or not a grievance is warranted.
- **Challenges:** Even if safeguards or standards have been clearly elaborated, there will be many (practical and political) challenges to establishing just and effective grievance mechanisms. Grievance mechanisms should be developed in the early stages of REDD+. Their objective should be to restore consent, and they should be designed with communities, so that they are culturally appropriate. They should also be proportional, accessible, and transparent, and offer appropriate protection to rights-holders including communities. If negotiations fail, rights-holders should be able to access impartial legal advice and independent arbitration. Within the grievance mechanism, there should be a clear process for the withdrawal of community consent.

### ***The Risk of Non-compliance with Safeguards or Standards***

A more general challenge in the application of safeguards and standards will be ensuring that they are interpreted by governments and other actors in ways that fully respect and promote community rights, and that they are then effectively implemented and enforced. The safeguards and standards are not easily enforceable in the absence of their incorporation into national policy or law. Progress in developing national safeguards systems thus far has been slow. At this early stage, it is difficult to predict how interpretation and compliance at the national and local levels will play out in practice.

### *Resources:*

[Carbon Rights in REDD+: Exploring the implications for poor and vulnerable people](#) (World Bank & REDD-Net).

[Rights in Action: Free, Prior, Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples](#) (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact), and [video](#).

[Training manual on free, prior and informed consent REDD+ for indigenous peoples](#) (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact & International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs).

[Free, Prior and Informed Consent in REDD+: Principles and approaches for policy and project development](#) (RECOFTC & GIZ).

[Indigenous Peoples and REDD+](#) (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact) video highlighting the central role that Indigenous peoples should play in REDD+.

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) An international convention on rights for women.

[Mapping for Rights](#) Congo Basin Initiative showing participatory mapping (Rainforest Foundation)

## **Community Experiences**

The REDD+ safeguards and standards are relatively new and the procedures to facilitate their implementation are being developed, trialled, and refined (see the Rights and Responsibilities section above). Nevertheless, national REDD+ readiness activities and pilot projects have produced relevant experiences and highlighted some challenges.

- In February 2013, the National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples in Panama withdrew from the UN-REDD National Joint Programme due to complaints relating to the lack of mechanisms for full and effective participation, non-recognition of representative institutions of Indigenous peoples, non-compliance of agreements, inadequate procedures, lack of good faith, and the failure of the State and the United Nations to fulfil their responsibilities. These complaints refer to violations of the collective human rights of Indigenous peoples. UN-REDD responded with a proposal for independent mediation and the immediate implementation of a mid-term evaluation of the National Programme. An independent Investigation and Evaluation Team reported that faults in the national programme design, and lack of a proper participatory process hampered the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples.
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Civil Society Working Group for Climate and REDD+ withdrew their participation from the national REDD+ process in June 2012. They cited several concerns including dysfunction of the governance structure and concern that the Information, Education and Communication budget was not allocated, which in turn curtailed community involvement and meant that REDD+ consultations did not reach the community level. In September 2013 the working group, which includes Indigenous



peoples, undertook a self-evaluation of their involvement in REDD+ and, based upon the findings, they developed a strategy for further engagement in REDD+. A positive aspect of the REDD+ process is that it has provided an opportunity for stakeholders to raise the issue of security of land tenure for debate at the national level. However these discussions have not yet resulted in any concrete improvements for communities.

- In Tanzania, the [National REDD+ Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) commit to developing a national safeguards system, but do not themselves establish such safeguards. The National REDD+ Task Force (the inter-ministerial government body leading REDD+ readiness activities) launched a national social and environmental safeguards development process. It sets out with the aim of being inclusive and comprehensive, providing for stakeholder consultation in safeguards development and drawing on UN-REDD SEPC, REDD+ SES and FCMC policies in addition to the UNFCCC safeguards. However, its success in meeting its aims remains to be seen.



These examples indicate that, despite a plethora of information on the safeguards and standards at the international level, national level safeguards development and implementation processes are fraught with difficulties. If REDD+ is to benefit communities, and avoid doing harm, developing and implementing strong safeguards is crucial. It is vital that national and local processes are monitored and documented at every stage to ensure that the intents of the safeguards are achieved.

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### **Resources:**

[Is REDD-readiness taking us in the right direction? Case studies from the Accra Caucus](#) (Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change)

[REDD+ safeguards: more than good intentions? Case studies from the Accra Caucus](#) (Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change)

[Briefing paper on REDD+, Rights and Indigenous Peoples: Lessons from REDD+ Initiatives in Asia](#) (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact & International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs)

[Social Safeguards and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the REDD+ Process of Cameroon](#) (WWF and CED)

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## **Guiding Questions for Discussion**

*The following questions are intended only as guides for broader discussion within your community about the issues raised in this section:*

- *Within your area or territory, what are the land and forest tenure arrangements? Who holds forest tenure rights - the state, private individuals, customary occupants, local government, communities, joint-management bodies or a variety of these? What will these arrangements mean for your community under REDD+?*
- *How do women and men access, use and/or own forests differently within your community? How might REDD+ impact men's and women's roles differently? Are there processes within your community to ensure women participate in decision-making concerning forests? Are these processes sufficient for gender equality or could they be improved?*



## TAKING ACTION

### How Can My Community Connect with Others on REDD+ Issues?

The UNFCCC hosts the [REDD Web Platform](#) which shares REDD+ information from Parties, relevant organisations, and stakeholders on capacity building efforts, demonstration activities, and mobilisation of resources for REDD+. The contact details for National Focal Points, who can provide information on in-country UNFCCC actions, can be accessed by going to the [Parties to the Convention and Observer States](#) webpage and selecting the relevant country link.

The Webpages of the World Banks' [FCPF](#), [UN-REDD](#), and [REDD+SES](#) provide information on their activities, meeting outcomes, and resource materials. The Asia Indigenous Peoples [Climate Change Monitoring and Information Network](#) contains REDD+ information and materials specifically targeted to Indigenous people in the Asia region. [The REDD Desk](#), a collaborative resource for REDD+ readiness, provides REDD+ information and an independent database of REDD+ activities on the ground. [REDD-Monitor](#) provides regular news, views, and critical analysis on REDD+.

### Discussing our Community's View, Priorities & Strategies

Although there are many challenges within REDD+, it is a mechanism within the UNFCCC that communities may wish to engage with in order to achieve positive outcomes, or at least to help ensure that rights are respected and no harm is done. Communities and their supporting organisations can advocate for the highest principles and standards regarding the REDD+ safeguards and their implementation within their own countries.

If your community is interested to explore the REDD+ safeguards and standards further, you may wish to discuss certain views, priorities and strategies for engaging (or not) with REDD+. For example, it could be helpful to consider how your community would respond to the following guiding questions:

- *How is our community organised?*
- *What should we do, and who should we approach, if we want to initiate our own REDD+ activities in our land or territories?*
- *What international and national rights should we be aware of? What customary laws and values apply?*
- *What is the key information we need to know in order to make an ‘informed’ decision regarding whether or not we consent to REDD+?*
- *If we consent to REDD+ and engage, but encounter problems, how can we air our grievances? What is the grievance process and is there any accountability?*

You may also want to consider and discuss, in advance, how your community would respond to different scenarios that REDD+ may bring. Some hypothetical scenarios and questions you might ask follow:

- *Your government informs you that your forests have been selected for REDD+ pilot project implementation within national level REDD+ readiness activities. Did the government seek and secure your consent? Are your tenure rights clear and secure within your national system? Who is funding these pilot projects? Who is implementing them? What safeguards or standards will they use? What will your roles, benefits and risks be? What recourse to action/ grievance do you have if these projects go forward without your consent (or in ways that, in practice, were not part of your agreement)?*
- *A private company wants to implement a REDD+ project in your area and are seeking permission or the carbon rights to be signed off to them for the 20 year duration of the project. How is the community represented and who has the authority to make this decision? What (use, access) restrictions will the project imply for the project area and the surrounding area? How will the community members be compensated (now and over time)? What are the communities’ rights and responsibilities if the project succeeds? What would be the case if it fails?*
- *In your country, REDD+ readiness is supported by the World Bank through its delivery partner FCPF, which only requires consultation not consent for REDD+ implementation. Will you engage with them? If so, how?*
- *An NGO wants to implement REDD+ project in your area and is suggesting a partnership with you community. Will you engage? If so, on what terms?*
- *Your government is developing national REDD+ safeguards, drawing on UNFCCC safeguards and other international REDD+ safeguards and standards. Will you engage with them? How? What issues can be raised?*

## Communicating Our Views to Others

If your community has been approached concerning REDD+ in your area, FPIC must be followed and your community could provide specific guidance, such as your community protocol or other community-defined procedures or customary laws. Through the FPIC process your community can negotiate and then decide whether or not to give consent to engage further in REDD+.

If your community is interested in developing your own REDD+ project or activities, you can determine what partners you want to work with (if any) and the terms for such partnerships. This could also be facilitated by providing specific guidance to potential partners, such as your community protocol or other community-defined resources.

More generally, your community can communicate its views by engaging in national REDD+ development processes. Some ideas on possible entry points are below, though these will vary by country.

### *Ideas for Advocacy & Action*

- Participate in and prepare submissions for international negotiations;
  - UNFCCC Conference of Parties;
  - The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII);
  - The Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Contact community representatives within the FCPF, UN-REDD, and REDD+SES initiative:
  - If your country receives support for REDD+ from the FCPF, ‘Forest Dependent Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest Dwellers’ are official observers to the FCPF, and their representatives are selected through the UNPFII. These representatives can express their views but have no voting rights to any decisions of the Participants Committee, which is the main decision-making body of the FCPF.
  - UN-REDD has a policy Board, and Indigenous peoples are represented by the Chair of UNPFII as a full member and three observers, one from each UN-REDD region (Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America-Caribbean). The Policy Board makes decisions by consensus of its members.
  - The REDD+SES initiative is overseen by an International Steering Committee representing governments, Indigenous peoples, community associations, environmental and social NGOs, and private sector. Most committee members are from developing countries.
- Meet with your UNFCCC National Focal Point to discover how to participate in REDD+ processes and to find out details of REDD+ pilot project activities.
- Network with community-based organisations and civil society organisations promoting community rights and rights-based approaches to REDD+.
- Explore why some organisations and communities are opposed to REDD+, understand their objections, and consider their relevance to your community.



## SUMMARY

This e-module has explored the concept and practice of REDD+ safeguards’ and standards’ emergence, development, and early implementation experiences. Developing countries participating in REDD+ will probably undertake a national REDD+ safeguards development process, where they will adapt and translate the safeguards for implementation. Communities



or their representatives can seek to participate in these national processes, so that their views and needs are reflected in national safeguards frameworks. Comparison of the different internationally recognised safeguards and standards illustrates important differences and similarities that communities may want to consider in their efforts to influence national processes in their best interests. Early experiences of national REDD+ processes has also shown that communities and civil society groups can withdraw their participation from REDD+ and call for improved processes. The outcomes of such actions should be carefully scrutinized to determine whether any resulting changes are sufficient to meet community requirements.



REDD+ project implementation at the community level requires community analysis of safeguards to weigh up risks and potential benefits particular to their unique contexts. Some early experiences of communities with national REDD+ processes has shown that often the full and effective participation of communities and recognition of their rights has not been attained. Given this, it will be important for communities and their representatives and partners to monitor REDD+ readiness actions and implementation, and to air their grievances effectively if they are to claim their rights. If communities feel that the safeguards process is failing and their rights are not being sufficiently recognised, the option to withdraw consent and negotiate for improvements can be called upon.

Discussion around REDD+ safeguards has in some cases opened up the space for debate regarding forests, resource tenure, and community rights issues. Through targeted advocacy, action, and constructive engagement, communities could utilize these spaces to positively influence REDD+ processes so that their rights are recognised.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Other Relevant E-modules

To learn more, please see the introductory [REDD+](#) e-module, which seeks to prepare communities and their allies to engage proactively. There are also a number of other international frameworks that are relevant. Please visit the e-modules webpage of the [community protocols](#) portal for the following topics (some forthcoming):

- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#)
- [Introduction to the United Nations Human Rights System](#)
- Other International Human Rights Instruments including International Labour Organization Convention NO. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

- [Traditional Knowledge and Customary Sustainable Use of Biodiversity](#)
- [Access and Benefit Sharing](#)
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Impact Assessments

## Bibliography & Further Reading

### [Analysing REDD+: Challenges and choices](#)

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### [Integrating REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards and Standards in Tanzania](#)

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### [REDD+ Social Safeguards and Standards Review](#)

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### [Safeguarding Forests and People: A Framework for Designing a National System to Implement REDD+ Safeguards](#)

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### [UN-REDD Publications: Policy Brief Series](#)

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## Contact & Request for Feedback

This e-learning module is part of a toolkit for community facilitators on biocultural community protocols. The complete toolkit, including additional e-learning modules, is available at: [www.community-protocols.org](http://www.community-protocols.org).

We welcome any and all feedback on the content and use of the e-learning modules and toolkit. If you have any suggestions for improvement, would like more information, or would like to request a hard copy of the toolkit, please contact Holly Jonas ([holly@naturaljustice.org](mailto:holly@naturaljustice.org)).



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