Guidelines for the use of

REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards at country level[1]

Version 2, 9th November 2012

Introduction to these guidelines

This document provides guidelines on the steps to use the REDD+ SES at country level for country-led multi-stakeholder assessment of REDD+ program design, implementation and outcomes, the 'REDD+ SES process', and accompanies a separate document (REDD+ SES Version 2) that defines the principles, criteria and the framework for indicators, the 'REDD+ SES content'. Together, the REDD+ SES content and process provide a mechanism that can be used to show whether and how safeguards are being respected, including how multiple benefits are being delivered.

The ten step process for using the REDD+ SES is organized around three core elements (see flow chart Appendix 1):

1. Awareness raising/capacity building (page 8)

- **Governance:** a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure balanced stakeholder participation in the use of the standards

2. Establish the facilitation team (page 10)
3. Create the Standards Committee (page 11)

- **Interpretation:** adaptation of the indicators and assessment process to the country context

4. Develop plan for the REDD+ SES process (page 14)
5. Develop draft country-specific indicators (page 15)
6. Organize consultations on indicators (page 18)

- **Assessment:** collection of information to evaluate performance, review of the draft assessment report by stakeholders and publication.

7. Prepare monitoring and assessment plans (page 20)
8. Collect and assess monitoring information (page 23)
9. Organize stakeholder review of draft assessment report (page 25)
10. Publish the assessment report (page 26)

The ten steps do not necessarily need to be followed sequentially. Specifically, 'Step 1. Awareness raising/capacity building meetings and workshops' should be undertaken at any stage and even combined with other steps, and 'Step 3. Create the Standards Committee' could be undertaken at any time prior to approval of country specific indicators (Step 6), depending on the country context.

[1] 'Country level' refers to the level of the jurisdiction leading the REDD+ program, which could be national, state, provincial or other level.

The REDD+ SES process should be integrated with the overall process for design and implementation of the REDD+ program and with any other safeguard mechanisms being implemented in the country (UNFCCC, FCPF, UN-REDD, other multilateral and bilateral donors, national legal and policy frameworks etc.).

In addition to guidelines, this document also includes good practice guidance. The difference is defined as follows:

- **Guidelines** in this document must be followed for full application of the REDD+ SES to ensure consistency and quality in the use of REDD+ SES in each country
- **Good Practice Guidance** provides advice on good practices.

The process for developing Version 2 of these guidelines

A draft Version 2 of the 'Guidelines for the use of REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards at country level' (5th April 2012) was developed by the REDD+ SES international secretariat based on the 'Guidelines on the interpretation and application of the REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards at country level' (3 February 2010), 'Guidance on the process for using the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards at country-level' (13 July 2011)' and feedback from pilot countries using REDD+ SES during 2010 and 2011.

Each draft of Version 2 of these guidelines has been prepared by the REDD+ SES Secretariat based on feedback in countries using the standards and other stakeholders and has been reviewed and approved by the International Standards Committee before publication. A draft Version 2 of these guidelines was published on 5th April 2012 and comments were invited from members of the public during a 60-day period until 4th June 2012. Comments were received from five people/organizations. A new draft Version 2 of these guidelines was prepared based on these comments and a response was prepared to explain how each comment was addressed. The new draft Version 2 of these guidelines and the response to comments were published on 20th August 2012 and comments were invited during a 30-day period until 19th September 2012. Comments were received from four people/organizations and this final version of the guidelines was prepared based on these comments and deliberations at the International Standards Committee meeting in 30 October to 1 November 2012.

Version 2 of the Guidelines for the use of REDD+SES at country level is available in English and will be available in other languages including Spanish, French and Portuguese at www.redd-standards.org

Comments are welcome and should be submitted via the form provided at www.redd-standards.org and will be considered in a future revision.

Introduction to the REDD+ SES initiative

Need for the standards

While activities that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and contribute to conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) have the potential to deliver significant social and environmental benefits, many have also highlighted the serious risks notably for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and in particular for

marginalized[2] and/or vulnerable[3] social groups within these communities. Recognizing growing awareness at both international and national levels of the need for effective social and environmental safeguards, the REDD+ SES initiative aims to define and build support for a higher level of social and environmental performance from REDD+ programs.

Role of the REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards

REDD+ SES can be used by governments, NGOs, financing agencies and other stakeholders to support the design and implementation of REDD+ programs that respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and generate significant social and environmental benefits. These standards are designed for government-led programs of policies and measures implemented at national or state, provincial, or other level and are relevant for all forms of fund-based or market-based financing. REDD+ SES provide countries[4] with a tool to address the REDD+ safeguards listed in Annex 1 of the Cancun agreement (UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16 appendix 1) (with the proviso that REDD+ SES do not address issues related to accounting for greenhouse gas emissions) consistent with the guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected agreed at the Durban UNFCCC conference of parties (UNFCCC decision 12/CP.17 Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected and modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels as referred to in decision 1/CP.16)[5] – see Appendix 3.

REDD+ SES were developed through extensive consultations to define high social and environmental performance of government-led REDD+ programs and they provide a comprehensive framework of key issues and elements of quality that can be used consistently across countries while enabling tailoring to the country context.

REDD+ SES provides comprehensive support for the development of a country's safeguards information system, providing a mechanism for country-led, multi-stakeholder assessment of REDD+ program design, implementation and outcomes to enable countries to show how internationally- and nationally-defined safeguards are being addressed and respected. The assessments are important for adaptive management to improve the design and implementation of the REDD+ program, as well as to build and maintain support for the REDD+ program among stakeholders, especially those concerned about the potential risks of the REDD+ program, including local people potentially affected by the program, or national and international observers. A country can use REDD+ SES to support monitoring and reporting on safeguards throughout implementation of the REDD+ program and to develop a safeguards information system that can respond to UNFCCC guidelines and donor or other reporting needs.

[2] 'Marginalized' people or groups are those that have little or no influence over decision-making processes. Marginalization may be related to a range of factors including gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and religion. The REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards explicitly adopt a differentiated approach that seeks to identify and address marginalization in all its forms.

[3] 'Vulnerable people or groups are those with high exposure to external stresses and shocks (including climate change); and with high sensitivity and low adaptive capacity to adjust in response to actual or expected changes due to their lack of secure access to the assets on which secure livelihoods are built (socio-political, cultural, human, financial, natural and physical). Forest dependency may be an important factor affecting vulnerability particularly where the REDD+ program itself may change access to forest resources. In many situations marginalization exacerbates vulnerability, e.g. marginalization by gender.

[4] 'Country' refers to the jurisdiction leading the REDD+ program, which could be at national, state, provincial or other level.

[5] A table showing correspondence between REDD+ SES Version 2 and UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards is provided in Appendix 1.

Each country developing a REDD+ program will need a safeguards system that ensures that the social and environmental risks and opportunities of REDD+ are effectively addressed. The country safeguards system consists of:

- policies, laws and regulations that set out the safeguards for REDD+;
- a safeguards information system for monitoring and reporting on safeguards implementation;
- a grievance and redress mechanism that enables stakeholders affected by REDD+ to receive feedback and appropriate responses related to the implementation of safeguards.

In order to establish these key elements of a safeguards system, along with the institutions and processes and procedures that are essential to operationalize them, countries will need to go through a development process. This will involve, in the first instance, definition of goals of the safeguards system or country-level interpretation of safeguards for REDD+; understanding the possible risks and benefits of the REDD+ program; establishing why the safeguards are needed, for example in response to international commitments such as the UNFCCC safeguards and those required by donors as well as development priorities and stakeholder concerns within the country, and defining the safeguards priorities. The definition of goals provides the basis for development of the safeguards system, which involves a review and gap analysis of existing policies, laws, regulations, institutions and procedures leading to development of new ones as needed, and a similar process for establishment of the grievance and redress mechanism and the safeguards information system. In each case, the elements of the safeguards system should be established by building from and strengthening any relevant existing elements and developing new elements as needed through a transparent and participatory process.

REDD+ SES and other international safeguards initiatives such as those developed by the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) process of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) or the Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) and associated tools of the UN-REDD Programme can help in different ways with the development of a country safeguards system. By providing a comprehensive framework of key issues to address with respect to the social and environmental performance of a REDD+ program, REDD+ SES is a useful input to the country-specific interpretation of safeguards and can be used to complement other relevant frameworks such as the UNFCCC safeguards, donor safeguards, other relevant international commitments and the UN-REDD SEPC. The multi-stakeholder process for developing country level indicators for REDD+ SES can support awareness-raising, capacity building and consultations to enable effective stakeholder participation in country-specific interpretation of safeguards for REDD+ and in the development of the elements of the safeguards system. The SESA process and UN-REDD tools such as the Benefits and Risks Tool (BeRT) and the Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) provide particular support for gap analysis and development of policies, laws and regulations, institutions, processes and procedures. REDD+ SES, in contrast, provides particular support for development of the safeguards information system. These different initiatives can therefore provide complementary support and can be used together with existing national processes to support development of the country safeguards system.

Components of the standards

REDD+ SES Version 2 provides the principles, criteria and indicators that form the 'REDD+ SES content' and this document defines the 'REDD+ SES process'. Together, the REDD+ SES content and process provide a mechanism that can be used to show how safeguards are being addressed and respected, including how multiple benefits are being delivered.

The REDD+ SES consist of principles, criteria and indicators which define issues of concern and conditions to be met to achieve high social and environmental performance and a process for assessment.

- **The principles** provide the key objectives that define high social and environmental performance of REDD+ programs.

- **The criteria** define the conditions to be met related to processes, impacts and policies in order to deliver the principles.

- **The indicators** define quantitative or qualitative information needed to show progress achieving a criterion. REDD+ SES Version 2 separates the indicators into:

    - **'essence'** of an indicator - the core idea – followed by
    - **'qualifiers'** - key elements of quality describing important aspects of process or outcome, important elements that should be addressed in the scope of the indicator and other specific points that must be taken into account.[6] The essence and all the qualifiers of each indicator are required to demonstrate high performance. The qualifiers are not optional elements. In some cases, the essence ensures sufficient quality of information and no qualifiers are included.

Each of the framework indicators aims to assess one aspect that is important to address to achieve the criterion. The indicators can generally be characterized into three main categories:

- **Policy indicators** assess policies, strategies, legal frameworks, and institutions related to the REDD+ program that should be in place.

- **Process indicators** assess whether and how a particular process related to the REDD+ program has been planned, established and implemented.

- **Outcome indicators** assess the impacts of the REDD+ program.

A combination of these different types of indicators can ensure that the indicators are sufficient to assess effectively the performance of a country's REDD+ program against the principles and criteria.

At principle and criteria levels the standards are generic (i.e. the same across all countries). At the indicator level, there is a process for country-specific interpretation to develop a set of indicators that are tailored to the context of a particular country. For this reason the international version of the standards includes only a "framework for indicators" that is intended to guide the country-specific interpretation process rather than provide specific indicators that must be used in each country. A justification must also be provided for any changes to the framework for indicators that are made during the country-specific interpretation process.

[6] Note that the word 'includes' at the beginning of a qualifier means 'the scope of this indicator includes……'. The word 'including' at the beginning of a qualifier is used when the qualifier should be read as a specific part of the indicator sentence. 'Applies to' at the beginning of a qualifier means 'this indicator applies to……'.

Using REDD+ SES at country level

All the countries participating in the REDD+ SES initiative are following the same country-led multi-stakeholder process, which involves a ten step process organized around three core elements: governance, interpretation and assessment.

- **Governance:** a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure balanced stakeholder participation in the use of the standards
- **Interpretation:** adaptation of the indicators and assessment process to the country context
- **Assessment:** collection of information to assess performance of the REDD+ program against the country-specific indicators, review of the draft assessment report by stakeholders and publication.

The multi-stakeholder process for using the REDD+ SES at country level engages government, civil society and private sector in the development, review and approval of country-specific indicators and of reports assessing performance of the REDD+ program against the indicators. This multi-stakeholder approach:

- Facilitates dialogue that help to build consensus and trust between diverse stakeholders, including women and marginalized and/or vulnerable groups
- Enhances the quality and credibility of the multi-stakeholder self-assessment
- Promotes shared ownership by government and civil society
- Increases transparency and accountability.

Tailoring of the indicators and the assessment process to the country context through broad stakeholder consultation:

- Ensures the standards and assessment process are relevant and meaningful
- Builds understanding and ownership of rights holders and stakeholders.

Countries may use REDD+ SES:

- For good practice guidance – using parts of REDD+ SES content and process to strengthen their approach to developing a safeguards information system (not applying REDD+ SES)
- To provide a framework for reporting on performance using most of the REDD+ SES content and process – applying REDD+ SES as the basis of their safeguards information system (not fully applying REDD+ SES)
- To provide a comprehensive mechanism for reporting on performance following these guidelines – fully applying REDD+ SES for their safeguards information system in a way that is consistent across countries.

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An international review mechanism is under development to assess the quality of the process followed to use REDD+ SES at country level and the extent to which the guidelines in this document have been fully applied (further information on the review process will be published on www.REDD-standards.org as it becomes available). The international review will act as a mechanism to offer feedback, guidance and support to countries using REDD+ SES and will also act as a quality control mechanism for claims made in relation to the use of the REDD+ SES.

Use of REDD+ SES must be integrated with other safeguard mechanisms that the country may be using or has a commitment to use, such as the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment process of the FCPF, the UN-REDD Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) and/or Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA), safeguards requirements and processes of other multilateral and bilateral donors, or requirements and processes of the national legal and policy framework. In particular, REDD+ SES contributes to the Readiness Plan Proposal (R-PP) process by supporting the implementation of component 2d 'Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment' and 4b 'Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards'. Integration with other safeguards mechanisms should happen as early as possible in the process. The REDD+ SES process should be integrated into the overall REDD+ readiness budget at country level.

The evolution of the REDD+ SES initiative

REDD+ SES were developed through a participatory and inclusive process from May 2009 through workshops in four developing countries and two public comment periods leading to publication of Version 1 in June 2010. An International Standards Committee representing a balance of interested parties including governments, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, community associations, social and environmental NGOs and the private sector oversees the initiative. The Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and CARE International serve as the international secretariat of the REDD+ SES initiative with technical support from the Proforest Initiative.

Ecuador, the State of Acre in Brazil, Nepal, and the Province of Central Kalimantan in Indonesia are using the REDD+ SES. They are all following the same country-led multi-stakeholder process detailed in this document. A number of other countries/provinces are starting to use REDD+ SES including Guatemala, Mexico, San Martin Region in Peru, Amazonas State in Brazil, Liberia, and Tanzania. More information is available at www.redd-standards.org.

1. Awareness-Raising / Capacity-Building

Who: awareness raising and capacity building for relevant rights holders & stakeholders, such as representatives from: government agencies, civil society, indigenous peoples and community-based organizations

Outputs: meetings, workshops and other methods to raise awareness of the REDD+ program, potential impacts, and REDD+ SES and other safeguard mechanisms

Step 1 is important at the start of the process, and should be conducted at any stage, as needed

1 .1 Objectives

- To raise awareness of the social and environmental safeguards, including standards, how they are applied and how to promote quality and credibility in their use.
- To raise awareness and get feedback from stakeholders on potential social and environmental impacts (positive and negative, and socially differentiated impacts) of REDD+.
- To raise awareness of different safeguard mechanisms (UNFCCC, FCPF, UN-REDD, other multilateral and bilateral donors, national legal and policy frameworks) including obligations under UNFCCC to develop a country-led safeguards information system for REDD+.
- To provide information on the REDD+ SES initiative so that the objectives and the multi-stakeholder process are well understood.
- To facilitate effective participation of rights holders and stakeholders in the REDD+ SES process, with special attention to women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

1.2 Guidelines

1.2.1 Relevant rights holders and stakeholders for the social and environmental aspects of REDD+ must be included in the awareness raising and capacity building, including representatives of relevant government agencies, civil society organizations including Indigenous Peoples organizations, community-based organizations and women's organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

1.3 Good Practice Guidance

1.3.1 While awareness raising and capacity building are important at the start of the process, they should be conducted at any stage as needed to enable effective participation of relevant groups in the process.

1.3.2 Issues covered in awareness raising and capacity building should include but are not limited to: REDD+ program, potential impacts, REDD+ SES and other safeguard mechanisms, gender dimensions, Indigenous Peoples issues, human rights etc.

1.3.3 When information on climate change and REDD+ has not been covered during previous awareness raising and capacity building, it should be covered prior to raising awareness on social and environmental safeguards.

1.3.4 It may not be advisable to cover all these objectives for all groups at the same meeting. Some of these objectives may have already been covered during earlier consultations/workshops on REDD+ or REDD+ SES in the country.

1.3.5 It may be more appropriate to hold separate meetings or regional meetings with some stakeholder groups such as Indigenous Peoples and local communities, paying special attention to women and vulnerable or marginalized groups.

1.3.6 It will be important to ensure that members of any REDD+ planning or advisory group already established in the country are included, which may be more effective through a focused event designed specifically for them. This could be combined with planning for the implementation of the REDD+ SES process.

1.3.7 The meetings and workshops should be coordinated with those planned for other relevant processes, such as the FCPF SESA process or for UN-REDD, for example through the focal points for these and other relevant initiatives.It is also useful to contact and involve multi-stakeholder groups working on other, related processes such as national or regional land-use planning, forest governance initiatives (e.g. FLEGT), agricultural sustainability initiatives etc. These meetings and workshops can also provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the planning process and strategies of the REDD+ program.

Governance

The institutional structures and decision-making processes that govern the use of REDD+ SES in each country ensure the participation of a balance of rights holders and stakeholders:

- A multi-stakeholder Standards Committee provides oversight,
- A joint government and civil society facilitation team organizes the process.

2. Establish the Facilitation Team

Who: government (typically one person) and non-government (typically one or two people)

Outputs: team to organize meetings, prepare drafts, organize consultations, organize data collection, data analysis and compilation and stakeholder review of assessment reports, etc.

2.1 Objectives

- To facilitate the process of interpreting and applying REDD+ SES in the country.[7]

2.2 Guidelines

2.2.1 A facilitation team composed of government and non-governmental technical experts facilitates the process of interpreting and applying the standards in each country. The facilitation team acts as a secretariat, playing a support role to the decision-making Standards Committee.

2.2.2 The responsibilities of the facilitation team include:

- Organize meetings of the country-level Standards Committee and ensure record keeping, minute taking and circulation of papers to the committee members.
- Organize consultations with stakeholders and public comment periods and compile comments received.
- Prepare drafts of the country-specific indicators and responses to comments received during stakeholder consultations, with support of relevant stakeholders and/or experts, for review, discussion and approval by the country-level Standards Committee.
- Organize the implementation of the assessment process, including collecting and analyzing information on social and environmental performance of the REDD+ program, and preparing drafts of a report of performance against the standards for review by stakeholders and approval by the country-level Standards Committee.
- Ensure coordination with other relevant processes and safeguard mechanisms.
- Learn from and contribute to the development of good practice for the use of the REDD+ SES through the participation of at least one member of the facilitation team in all international exchange and learning events of the REDD+ SES initiative.

[7] Country' refers to the jurisdiction leading the REDD+ program, which could be at national, state, provincial or other level.

2.3 Good Practice Guidance

2.3.1 It is suggested that the facilitation team be limited to one government staff and one to two non-governmental staff, each allocating a significant part of their time to the REDD+ SES Initiative. The total amount of time required for all the members of the team combined will vary according to the country but is likely to be at least 50-100% of a person.

2.3.2 The work of the facilitation team, such as the preparation of drafts of indicators, assessment reports and responses to comments, may benefit from the support of a small technical working group composed of relevant stakeholders or experts.

2.3.3 Efforts should be made to ensure that the facilitation team has a good understanding of gender dimensions, indigenous peoples' issues, human rights and other relevant issues including their context at international and national level.

3. Create the Standards Committee

Who: representatives of interested parties (government departments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, NGOs, private sector, etc.). Where appropriate, use the same multi-stakeholder committee created for other aspects of REDD+ program or for other safeguards mechanisms.

Outputs: a committee to ensure balanced stakeholder oversight of use of REDD+ SES

3.1 Objectives

- To ensure balanced oversight in the use of REDD+SES in the country including review and approval of country-specific indicators, the assessment process and the assessment report.

3.2 Guidelines

3.2.1 The committee membership must include a balance of interested parties including those potentially affected by the REDD+ program and the standards, and those with expert knowledge related to the standards. The categories of key stakeholder groups relevant to the REDD+ program which should participate in the committee include but are not limited to:

- Government departments (including different departments relevant to REDD+ such as economic development, forestry, agriculture, gender/women, rural development, environment and regional/local government),
- Indigenous Peoples
- Local communities

- Civil society non-governmental organisations (including both environmental and social NGOs).

- Private sector (including those involved with drivers of deforestation and REDD+ implementation, as appropriate)

3.2.2 Women's interests and rights must be effectively represented, notably within Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society representation or through inclusion of a separate category for women.The role of this committee is to oversee and support the use of REDD+ SES in the country. The responsibilities of the committee include:

- Oversee the use of REDD+ SES, including interpretation and assessment, in the country in question, assisting and guiding the facilitation team and ensuring that the REDD+ SES content and process in the country are effectively adapted to the country context following these guidelines.

- Provide guidance and assist the facilitation team to ensure effective participation of relevant stakeholder groups in the interpretation and application of the REDD+ SES.

- Review and approve the plans for the use of REDD+SES that are prepared for the interpretation and the assessment phases (Steps 4 and 7)..

- Review and approve draft versions of the country-specific indicators prepared for public comment, and the final version, ensuring that the indicators are appropriate and sufficient 'to assess the performance of their country's REDD+ program against the REDD+ SES principles and criteria'.

- Review and approve draft versions of reports on social and environmental performance of the REDD+ program against the REDD+ SES principles, criteria and indicators that are developed for stakeholder review and the final version of the report for publication.

- Promote effective integration of REDD+ SES with other safeguard frameworks/processes being applied to the country's REDD+ program e.g. national REDD+ safeguards, FCPF SESA, UN-REDD and safeguards required by other multilateral and bilateral agreements.

3.2.3 The committee defines and adopts its terms of reference, including internal rules and regulations that cover issues such as the decision-making process, criteria and a process for becoming a new member of the committee and the duration of membership. The decision-making process should strive for consensus but also include a voting mechanism that ensures that no group can dominate or be marginalized. In countries where no multi-stakeholder body already exists, the process for creating the first committee is defined by the facilitation team.

3.2.4 The creation of the committee and all documentation about it must be transparent and accessible to interested people, so the call for nominations, terms of reference and meeting reports shall all be made publicly available, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website. The information shall also be posted on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org) with links to the relevant documents.

3.3 Good Practice Guidance

3.3.1 While it is better to create the Standards Committee as early as possible in the process of using the REDD+ SES, in practice, the committee can be created after the launch of the first consultations on the country-specific indicators. It is important that the committee is created in time to approve the final version of the country-specific indicators and the response to comments.

3.3.2 Where appropriate, it is important to build from and integrate with existing structures created for REDD+ planning and implementation or for another safeguards mechanism such as FCPF SESA or the UN-REDD Joint National Programme. Where an appropriately balanced multi-stakeholder body exists, unnecessary duplication of structures should be avoided. In other cases, it will be necessary to establish the country-level standards committee as a separate entity to ensure an adequate stakeholder balance. It may be appropriate to include a representative or focal point from another safeguards process in the Standards Committee.

3.3.3 It is important to liaise with committees or working groups created for other related initiatives such as land-use planning or forest governance.

3.3.4 There can be some flexibility in categories depending on the specific groups that need to be included in a particular country.

3.3.5 In cases where a lot of people from a particular stakeholder group want to be involved, subgroups or 'consultative groups' could potentially be created that nominate a representative or representatives to be on the country-level Standards Committee.

3.3.6 Experience suggests that having only one person representing a commonly-marginalized group is not enough to allow them to engage fully in the debate, so it is recommended to have more than one representative for some categories. It may be the case that some groups would not accept or be comfortable with being represented by others.

3.3.7 In principle, the stakeholder groups should identify their own representatives to ensure legitimacy. In practice, this may require active facilitation by the body that has overall oversight of the REDD+ program, or a multi-stakeholder REDD+ group, or the facilitation team to call for nominations and propose a process for selecting representatives.

3.3.8 Representation will be more effective if a clear accountability mechanism is defined to ensure that members of the committee report to and receive feedback from the people they represent.

3.3.9 Experience suggests that it helps to ensure continuity if full members have nominated replacements in case a member cannot attend the meeting.

3.3.10 Experience shows that it is hard to manage with more than 20 people involved in a decision-making group so it is proposed that the maximum membership of the country-level Standards Committee should be 25 and preferably it should not exceed 15.

Interpretation

Country-specific interpretation adapts the REDD+ SES content and process to the country context, making the international REDD+SES relevant and effective for the country, and includes:

- Creation of **country-specific indicators** (the principles and criteria remain the same across all countries)
- Design of the **country-specific assessment process**

4. Develop Plan for the REDD+ SES Process

Who: led by the facilitation team with relevant stakeholders as appropriate

Outputs: well defined timeline of activities and responsibilities for the REDD+ SES process

4.1 Objectives

- To define a detailed timeline of activities and responsibilities for the creation of the country-level Standards Committee and for the interpretation phase, and overall plans for the performance assessment, including a process for effective integration of REDD+SES with other safeguard mechanisms.

4.2 Guidelines

4.2.1 An plan for the REDD+ SES process shall be developed that specifies the methods, timing and responsibilities for all the steps in the REDD+ SES process, with particular detail for ongoing awareness raising/capacity building, creation of the Standards Committee (if not already existing) and the development of country-specific indicators including consultations, approval and publication.

4.2.2 This activity is led by the REDD+ SES facilitation team, ensuring collaboration with, and input from, other individuals or groups working on REDD+ planning and implementation.

4.2.3 Use of REDD+ SES must be integrated with other safeguard mechanisms that the country may be using or has a commitment to use, such as the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) process of the FCPF, the UN-REDD Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) and/or Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA), safeguards requirements and processes of other multilateral and bilateral donors, or requirements and processes of the national legal and policy framework. An integrated process shall be developed, for example through a working meeting (or workshop) with key people from the other agencies and relevant stakeholder groups.

4.2.4 The means of communication and dissemination of information, including which language(s) will be used for consultations and documents shall be defined, ensuring that stakeholder groups are included with special attention to women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

4.2.5 Once the Standards Committee has been created, it provides input into and approves the plan and timeline for the use of the REDD+ SES in the country.

4.2.6 The plan and process for using the standards shall be made publicly available, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website or, if such a site is not available, on another relevant site. The information shall also be posted on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org) with links to the relevant documents.

4.3 Good Practice Guidance

4.3.1 It will be helpful to identify whether the country has ratified any international treaties, conventions and other agreements that establish monitoring and reporting systems relevant to REDD+ SES, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights (ICHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. While reporting on the REDD+ SES will not be identical to the international instruments identified above, there are many valuable links that can be of use in establishing and reporting on country-level indicators of the REDD+ SES. Furthermore, utilizing already-existing instruments can help avoid overlap with existing reporting obligations.

5. Develop Draft Country-Specific Indicators

Who: technical working group composed of the facilitation team and relevant stakeholders/experts (e.g. 3-7 people), potentially several groups in a workshop setting

Outputs: draft of indicators that are relevant to the country context

5.1 Objectives

- To make the international REDD+SES relevant to the country context, referencing country-specific terms, stakeholders, governance processes, institutions and legislation.

5.2 Guidelines on the process of indicator development

5.2.1 The facilitation team organizes the development of draft country-specific indicators..

5.2.2 A technical working group (e.g 3 to 7 people) is created to develop draft indicators that includes the facilitation team and other relevant stakeholders/experts with special attention to expertise on issues of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

5.2.3 The draft indicators and the proposed consultation process shall be approved by the Standards Committee where this has been created before initiating consultations but this may not be possible if there are delays in creating the committee.

5.2.4 The indicator development process must be transparent at all stages: e.g. using open calls for participation, posting terms of reference for creating the technical working group and a timeline for indicator development on websites, advance notice of public consultation periods, posting drafts on web sites, translating documents into relevant languages, engaging proactively with stakeholder groups to ensure a good level of understanding of the process, with special attention to women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

5.3 Guidelines on the content of indicators

5.3.1 Principles and Criteria: No changes are allowed to REDD+ SES Principles and Criteria as these must be consistent across all countries.

Note: Any suggested modifications to existing principles and criteria or proposals for new criteria should be raised with the International Secretariat and may be addressed in the next version of the standards.

Indicators: The existing 'framework for indicators' provides a starting point for developing country-specific indicators. Each indicator comprises two parts: the "essence" – the core idea – and "qualifiers" - key elements of quality describing important aspects of process or outcome, important elements that should be addressed in the scope of the indicator, and other specific points that must be taken into account.[8] The qualifiers are important elements of the indicators and are not optional.

5.3.2 The indicators (i.e essence and qualifiers) may be maintained as they are, adapted, deleted or added, as follows:

- **Maintained**: carrying forward both the essence and qualifiers from the existing international "framework for indicators" without change other than translation.
- **Adapted**: adjusting the essence and/or one or more qualifiers to reflect the country context. E.g. using appropriate technical terms, referencing specific government agencies, using local language. I.e. making the indicator specific to the country but not changing the meaning or intention. This may include merging two indicators.

[8] Note that the word 'includes' at the beginning of a qualifier means 'the scope of this indicator includes……'. The word 'including' at the beginning of a qualifier is used when the qualifier should be read as a specific part of the indicator sentence. 'Applies to' at the beginning of a qualifier means 'this indicator applies to……'.

- **Deleted**: deleting an entire indicator or one or more qualifiers if they are found to be redundant due to duplication (in which case they are merged), or where they are not relevant to a particular country/regional context.
- **Added**: New indicators may be added where needed. They must add value to demonstrating performance against the criterion.

Where adaptations, deletions, and additions to indicators are proposed, a justification must be provided.

5.3.3 A methodology to process the comments and the level of participation needed must be defined before starting the indicator development process.

5.3.4 The country-specific indicators shall be developed to be relevant for both the current phase of the countries' REDD+ program and for future phases, e.g. from readiness through to implementation.

5.4 Good Practice Guidance

5.4.1 The technical working group is likely to work best with at least three and not more than six to seven people. If there are several good facilitators then several groups could work at the same time on different principles and criteria in a workshop setting. This approach enables broader participation in the drafting process and the workshop can be organized so that each group reviews the work of other groups.

5.4.2 It may be helpful to include focal points from other relevant processes such as FCPF SESA or UN-REDD Joint National Programme in the technical working group.

5.4.3 A template for development of country-specific indicators is provided in Appendix 2 including the following information for each framework indicator:

- **Country-specific indicator** including essence and qualifier(s)
- **Type of interpretation** – maintained, adapted, deleted or added
- **Justification -** should be provided in all cases where an indicator's essence and/or qualifiers have been adapted, deleted or added
- **Guidance notes** - may be added to provide guidance to local, national and international stakeholders on the indicators. E.g. Explaining the intention behind each indicator, explaining the local context etc.

6. Organize Consultations on Indicators

Who: facilitation team organizes two public comment periods through publication of draft indicators , workshops and other solicitation of comments, revision of indicators and response to comments. Standards Committee approves revision and final version of indicators.

Outputs: comments collated, indicators revised and comments responded to

6.1 Objectives

- To ensure stakeholder input into the definition of indicators to assess social and environmental performance of REDD+ in their country.

6.2 Guidelines

6.2.1 The facilitation team organizes publication of the draft indicators and a public comment period. This shall include publication on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website if available and the opportunity to submit comments electronically, as well as direct circulation and invitation of comments to relevant stakeholder groups.

6.2.2 The most effective means of dissemination of information about the consultations are identified and used for each rights-holder and stakeholder group, with special attention to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people.

6.2.3 Two public consultation periods are held to facilitate stakeholder and public participation in the indicator development process - the first at least 60 days and the second at least 30 days.

6.2.4 Consultations shall be organized to ensure feedback from key stakeholder groups, including but not limited to government department, NGOs, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, for example through workshops, particularly for those that may not have access to internet and email such as Indigenous Peoples and local communities with special attention to the participation of women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people.

6.2.5 Consultations shall be gender sensitive, ensuring effective representation of women's interests and rights notably within Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society representation.

6.2.6 The draft indicators shall be published in appropriate languages in order to get feedback from all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples.

6.2.7 The facilitation team shall give advance information of public consultation periods and encourage stakeholder groups to hold workshops or discussions that can provide feedback, ensuring adequate time to enable rights holders and stakeholders to coordinate their input. This is particularly important for countries where there are sizeable and significant stakeholder groups for whom commenting on written documents is much less common and less productive than face to face discussion.

6.2.8 All comments received during workshops or through other forms of submission shall be collated and published by the facilitation team. The technical working group, that drafted the indicators, shall prepare a response to each comment, explaining how it was addressed through

modification of the essence and/or qualifiers of an indicator or why the comment was not relevant.

6.2.9 Any significant differences of opinion raised in the comments are presented to the country-level Standards Committee for resolution. The facilitation team updates the indicators and the response to comments based on the decisions of the Standards Committee.

6.2.10 The final version of the indicators is approved by the Standards Committee and then published along with the response to comments for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website or, if such a site is not available, on another relevant site. The information shall also be posted on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org) with links to the relevant documents.The facilitation team shall prepare a report of the process that has been used to follow these guidelines, explaining how the objectives of Steps 1 to 6 have been achieved. This report is approved by the Standards Committee prior to publication.

6.3 Good Practice Guidance

6.3.1 It is important to allow adequate time for consultations, providing stakeholders with sufficient time to absorb information, consult among themselves and provide considered feedback. The ISEAL* Code of Good Practice for setting social and environmental standards suggests two public consultation periods should be held to facilitate stakeholder and public participation in the indicator development process - the first at least 60 days and the second at least 30 days. The period of the public consultations should enable effective stakeholder participation, reflecting the circumstances of the particular country (for example, considering seasonal impacts on communication). The first consultation period may be reduced to no less than 30 days if proactive methods (e.g. facilitated stakeholder meetings) are used to gather feedback from the key stakeholder groups. Such proactive methods are also likely to result in richer feedback.

6.3.2 It may be helpful to organize the comments by Principle or Criterion when compiling and responding to comments.

6.3.3 Consultations should be coordinated with those being held on similar topics for related initiatives in the same country, for example for the FCPF SESA process or any relevant processes undertaken with the UN-REDD programme. The facilitation team should coordinate with the country focal points for these and other relevant initiatives.

*International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance www.isealalliance.org

Assessment

The process for assessing performance of the REDD+ program against the country-specific indicators involves:

- **Monitoring** – A monitoring plan defines what specific information will be collected, where it is found, how it will be gathered and analyzed and who will be responsible.
- **Reviewing -** Consultations are organized to facilitate stakeholder review of the draft assessment report to enhance quality and credibility.
- **Reporting** – After approval by the country-level Standards Committee, the full report of performance against the indicators of the REDD+ SES is made publicly available.

The assessment process should promote participation and ownership by stakeholders to ensure transparency and accountability and to enhance the quality and credibility of the assessment. The resulting report should provide a fair and accurate assessment of the performance of the REDD+ program against the principles and criteria of the REDD+ SES that can be used to communicate to national and international stakeholders and to encourage improved performance.

7. Prepare Monitoring and Assessment Plans

Who: facilitation team, and possibly a consultant or expert with monitoring and evaluation expertise

Outputs: a monitoring plan defining what specific information is required, methods and responsibilities for information collection, and an assessment plan defining the process for preparation, review, approval and dissemination of the assessment report.

7.1 Objectives

- To define, for the current assessment period, what information will be collected, where this information is found, how the information will be gathered and analyzed, and who will be responsible.
- To define a timeline of activities and responsibilities for the preparation, review, approval and publication of the assessment report.

7.2 Guidelines

7.2.1 The scope of application of REDD+ SES for the current assessment period must be agreed with the Standards Committee - for example defining which component(s) and phases the REDD+ program will be assessed - and then the facilitation team organizes the development of the monitoring and assessment plans.

7.2.2 Focusing on the current assessment period, a monitoring plan shall be developed defining, for each indicator (the essence and any associated qualifiers):

- **Specific Monitoring Information** defining *what* information will be used to assess performance against the indicators *within the current assessment period.*

- **Source** defining *where* the information will be found, for example in the results of an existing survey or report (a secondary source) or through direct collection of information through surveys, focus groups etc. (a primary source).

- **Methods** defining *how* the information will be gathered and analyzed, such as:
    - Secondary source – define process for reviewing existing information
    - Primary source – define an information gathering tool e.g. survey, focus groups
    - Sampling strategy, as appropriate
    - Methods for data analysis

- **Responsibilities** defining *who* will do what:
    - Who organizes the information gathering process
    - Who actually gathers or contributes the information
    - Who analyses the information

7.2.3 An assessment plan shall be developed that specifies the methods, timing and responsibilities to complete all the steps in the assessment process, including development of a draft report, review by stakeholders, approval by the Standards Committee, publication and dissemination.

7.2.4 The means of communication and dissemination of information, including which language(s) will be used for consultations and documents, shall be defined, ensuring that stakeholder groups are included, with special attention to women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

7.2.5 The Standards Committee reviews and approves the assessment plan.

7.2.6 The monitoring and assessment plans shall be made publicly available, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website or, if such a site is not available, on another relevant site. The information shall also posted on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org) with links to the relevant documents.

7.3 Good Practice Guidance

7.3.1 Where appropriate and relevant information is already collected and reported (e.g. by government and/or civil society) this should be used wherever possible.

7.3.2 The preparation of the monitoring plan is a technical process and requires significant work. This step can start during the consultations on the indicators and the plan can then be adjusted based on any modifications to the final indicators.

7.3.3 The development of the monitoring plan will probably benefit from the assistance of a consultant with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expertise and advice from people with knowledge of availability of relevant secondary information and/or with expertise in the design of collection of primary information.

7.3.4 In principle, all indicators should be assessed, but since REDD+ program development is in the early stages in most countries, it may not be possible to monitor and report on all indicators in the first assessment cycle in 2012/3. The first monitoring plan should focus on indicators that can be monitored at the current stage of the REDD+ program, thereby reducing the number of indicators that will be used at this stage. The Specific Monitoring Information for each indicator defined in the monitoring plan should be those that are applicable during this first assessment, i.e. it is not necessary at this stage to develop a monitoring plan for information that will only become available after this phase. In general, it will not be possible to report at this stage on 'outcome indicators', e.g. social and environmental impacts which take time to become measurable.

7.3.5 Rights holder and stakeholder groups including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and women within these groups, should be encouraged and supported to participate in collection of information to feed into the assessment report.

7.3.6 Where there is interest in ongoing use of REDD+ SES to provide information on the social and environmental performance of the REDD+ program there may be opportunities to integrate data collection into existing or new processes related to REDD+ such as land use planning processes, environmental and social impact assessments or reporting requirements for REDD+ projects.

7.3.7 Proposed template for a monitoring plan:

Country-specific Indicator (Essence and qualifiers)	Specific Monitoring Information[1] *(what)*	Source of Monitoring Information *(where)*	Methods *(how)*	Responsibility *(who)*

8. Collect and Assess Monitoring Information

Who: facilitation team organizes data collection and analysis and compiles draft report, with stakeholders or independent third party as appropriate

Outputs: draft assessment report that includes performance summaries for each criterion, details for each indicator and annexes as appropriate

8.1 Objectives

- To identify, collect and analyze 'specific monitoring information' as defined in the monitoring plan.
- To prepare a draft report of the performance of the REDD+ program for each of the indicators in the REDD+ SES.

8.2 Guidelines

8.2.1 The facilitation team organizes the collection of information and production of the draft report.

8.2.2 The report shall include:

- A summary of performance at principle level.
- A summary of the performance with respect to each criterion, i.e. summarizing the information obtained for all the indicators under each criterion ;
- A more detailed explanation of the performance with respect to each indicator explaining what information or evidence this is based on and providing a reference or link to the source of the information where relevant;
- Annexes containing supporting information for some indicators, including potential gaps in information, as appropriate
- A description of the process adopted for using REDD+ SES following these guidelines, explaining how the objectives of each step have been achieved, in particular detailing how participation and inclusiveness have been ensured, with special attention to women and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

8.3 Good Practice Guidance

8.3.1 The credibility of monitoring can be affected by:

- **The quantity of information collected**. If the indicator relates to outcomes across the REDD+ program the monitoring will be less credible if information is collected from just one site and will be most credible if a process is put in place to monitor all sites. A more practical solution, which can still be credible, may be to collect information from a sample of sites of different types and geographic locations.

- **The quality of information collected**. Existing information is easier and cheaper to use but can undermine credibility if it is unreliable or contentious/contested. In this case it is better to try to collect primary data provided this can be done properly and effectively. Where reliable sources already exist, these should be used in the interests of cost effectiveness. To check reliability, "spot checks" may be used.

- **Who collects the information**. Where the performance of an agency is being assessed, there will be more confidence in the monitoring if other stakeholders have had the chance to contribute to information collection and if the information is collected by an independent third party. Independent monitoring increases credibility, and may not necessarily be costly. If conducted in collaboration with the agency responsible for design and implementation of the REDD+ programme, involving other stakeholders, it can also be an important way to encourage adaptive management by the agency responsible for designing and implementing a REDD+ programme. A summary of performance against the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards can also be included in the assessment report, compiled from the performance with respect to the relevant principles and criteria in REDD+ SES.

8.3.2 The process for collecting information should enable and encourage rights holder and stakeholder groups including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and women within these groups, to contribute information relevant to the performance of the REDD+ program with respect to the country specific indicators.

9. Organize Stakeholder Review of Draft Assessment Report

Who: facilitation team organizes consultations on the draft assessment report, revision of the report and response to comments. Standards Committee approves revision and final version.

Outputs: comments collated, report revised and comments responded to

9.1 Objectives

- To facilitate stakeholder input to the report prior to finalization to improve the quality and credibility of the report.

9.2 Guidelines

9.2.1 Review of the draft assessment report is undertaken through stakeholder consultation.

9.2.2 The review shall be organized through at least one 60-day public comment period to ensure feedback from key stakeholder groups, including but not limited to government department, NGOs, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples and local communities with special attention to the participation of women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people.

9.2.3 The review process shall be gender sensitive, ensuring effective representation of women's interests and rights notably within Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society representation.

9.2.4 At least a summary of the draft report at principle level shall be available in languages and formats which make it relatively accessible to all stakeholder groups.

9.2.5 The facilitation team shall give advance information of public consultation periods and encourage stakeholder groups to hold workshops or discussions that can provide feedback, ensuring adequate time to enable rights holders and stakeholders to coordinate their input. This is particularly important for countries where there are sizeable and significant stakeholder groups for whom commenting on written documents is much less common and less productive than face to face discussion.

9.2.6 As a second stage in the review process, the Standards Committee reviews the draft report and how stakeholder comments on the report have been addressed, prior to giving its formal approval of the final report and the response to comments, prior to their publication.

9.2.7 Any significant differences of opinion about the content of the report are presented to the country-level Standards Committee for resolution.

9.3 Good Practice Guidance

9.3.1 Consultations should be coordinated with those being held on similar topics for related initiatives in the same country, for example for the FCPF SESA process or any relevant processes undertaken with the UN-REDD programme. The facilitation team should coordinate with the country focal points for these and other relevant initiatives.

9.3.2 The process of compiling and reviewing the draft assessment report (Steps 8 and 9) should feed back to help adapt and improve the social and environmental performance of the REDD+ program. The agencies responsible for the design and implementation of REDD+ program, in collaboration with the facilitation team and Standards Committee, may want to include information about how the REDD+ program will be adapted to improve performance with the response to comments and the assessment report.

10. Publish the Assessment Report

Who: facilitation team organizes publication and dissemination of the assessment report

Outputs: full report of performance against criteria and indicators of the REDD+ SES publicly available

10.1 Objectives

To make a full report of performance of the REDD+ program against the principles, criteria and indicators of the REDD+ SES publicly available.

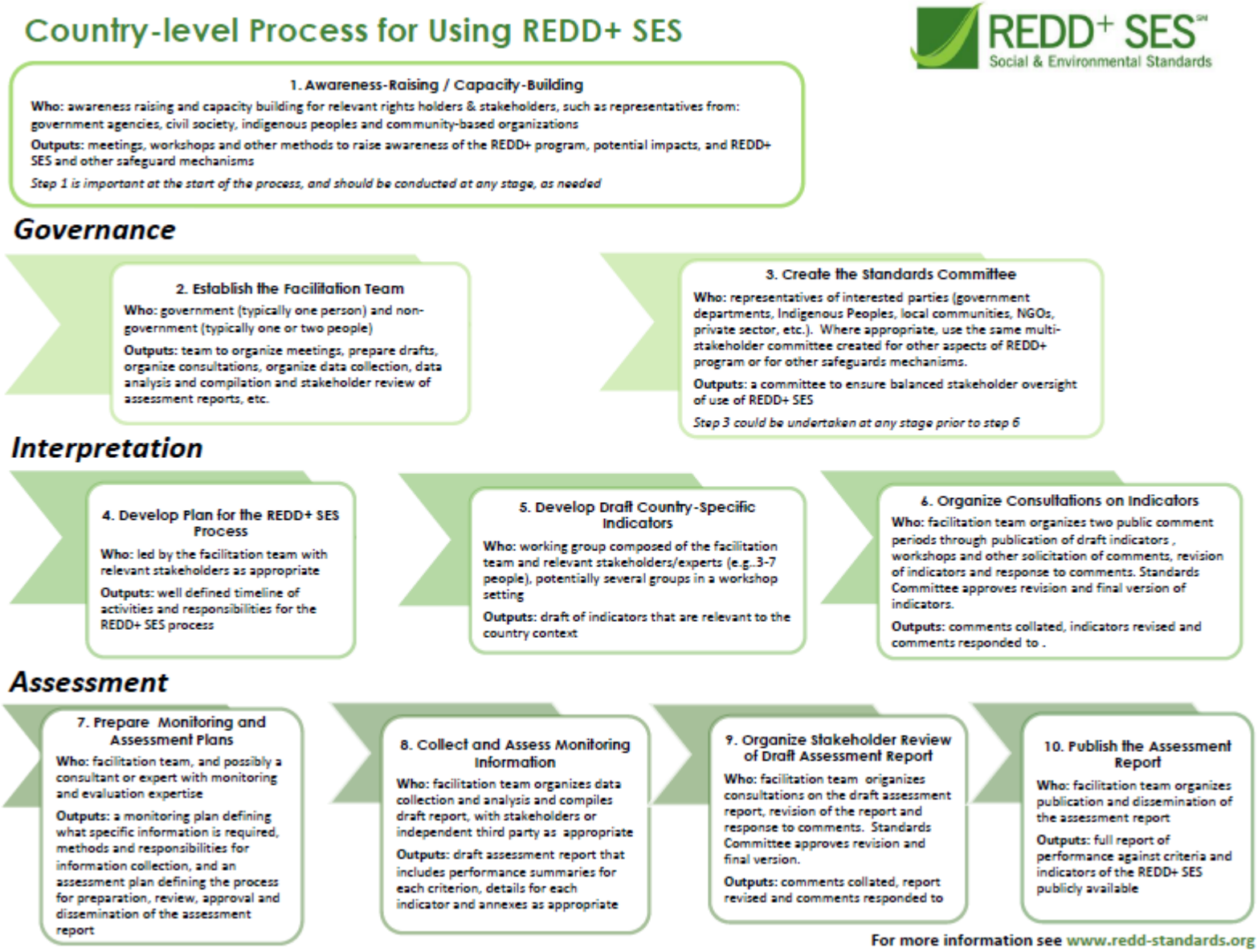
10.2 Guidelines

10.2.1 The final report shall be made publicly available in the official national language, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website. A link will also be provided on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org).

10.2.2 At least the summary of the report at principle level shall be available in languages and formats which make it relatively accessible to all stakeholder groups.

10.2.3 The report is disseminated as defined in the approved assessment plan.

Appendix 1. Flow chart of the ten steps to use REDD+ SES at country level



Appendix 2. Template for development of country-specific indicators

Principle 1: Rights to lands, territories and resources are recognized and respected by the REDD+ program						
Criterion 1.1 The REDD+ program effectively identifies the different rights holders (statutory and customary) and their rights to lands, territories and resources relevant to the program.						
Framework for indicators		**Country-specific indicators**		**Type of interpretation**[9]	**Justification**	**Guidance notes**
Essence	**Qualifiers**	**Essence**	**Qualifiers**			
1.1.1 A process is established to inventory and map rights to lands, territories and resources relevant to the REDD+ program.	i. The process is participatory. ii. Includes statutory and customary rights. iii. Includes tenure/use/access/management rights. iv. Includes rights of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups. v. Includes overlapping or conflicting rights.					
1.1.2 Land-use plans used by the REDD+ program identify the rights of all relevant rights holders.	i. Includes forest management plans. ii. Includes overlapping or conflicting rights. iii. Includes statutory and customary rights. iv. Spatial boundaries of rights are mapped. v. Applies to rights holders relevant to the REDD+ program identified in accordance with criterion 6.1.					

[9] Maintained, adapted, deleted or added

Appendix 3 – Appendix 3 – Correspondence between UNFCCC guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected (decision 12/CP.17) REDD+ SES Guidelines

UNFCCC Guidance on Safeguards Information Systems	REDD+ SES Guidelines
Agrees that systems for providing information on how the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are addressed and respected should, taking into account national circumstances and respective capabilities, and recognizing national sovereignty and legislation, and relevant international obligations and agreements, and respecting gender considerations: (a) Be consistent with the guidance identified in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, paragraph 1[10];	REDD+ SES is used through a country-driven process implemented at country level. REDD+ SES supports the design and implementation of REDD+ programs that generate significant social and environmental benefits and is coherent with relevant sustainable development plans and strategies (including environmental and poverty reduction plans and policies). Capacity building is provided to relevant REDD+ stakeholders to enable them to participate fully and effectively in the process. Country-specific interpretation (Step 4 to 6) adapts the REDD+ SES content and process to the country context, making the international REDD+SES relevant and effective for the country, and includes creation of country-specific indicators (the principles and criteria remain the same across all countries) and design of the country-specific assessment process.
(b) Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;	REDD+ SES provide a framework of principles, criteria and indicators as well as a clear process for using the standards that puts an emphasis on providing transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders. Consistency is promoted through development of a comprehensive set of country-specific indicators that show progress achieving the principles and criteria that remain the same for all countries using REDD+ SES. Transparency is promoted by requiring stakeholder participation in the development of country-specific indicators and in the review of draft assessment reports, as well as through the approval by a multi-stakeholder Standards Committee and then publication of indicators, responses to comments, and the full assessment report of performance of the REDD+ program against the indicators. REDD+ SES are designed to be used on an ongoing, periodic basis using the same set of country-specific indicators so that the information is updated on a regular basis. The following elements of the REDD+ SES Guidelines are particularly relevant: • 1.2.1: Relevant rights holders and stakeholders for the social and environmental aspects of REDD+ must be included in the awareness raising and capacity building meetings, including representatives of relevant

[10] 1. The activities referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision should: (a) Contribute to the achievement of the objective set out in Article 2 of the Convention; (b) Contribute to the fulfilment of the commitments set out in Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention; (c) Be country-driven and be considered options available to Parties; (d) Be consistent with the objective of environmental integrity and take into account the multiple functions of forests and other ecosystems; (e) Be undertaken in accordance with national development priorities, objectives and circumstances and capabilities and should respect sovereignty; (f) Be consistent with Parties' national sustainable development needs and goals; (g) Be implemented in the context of sustainable development and reducing poverty, while responding to climate change; (h) Be consistent with the adaptation needs of the country; (i) Be supported by adequate and predictable financial and technology support, including support for capacity-building; (j) Be results-based; (k) Promote sustainable management of forests;

	government agencies, civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples organizations, community-based organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders. • 3.2.1 The Standards Committee membership must include a balance of interested parties including those affected by the REDD+ program and the standards, and those with expert knowledge related to the standards. • 3.2.4 The creation of the committee and all documentation about it must be transparent and accessible to interested people. • 4.2.6 The plan and process for using the standards shall be made publicly available, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website or, if such a site is not available, on another relevant site. The information is also posted on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org) with links to the relevant documents. • 5.2.4 The indicator development process must be transparent at all stages. • 6.2.6 The facilitation team shall give advance information of public consultation periods and encourage stakeholder groups to hold workshops or discussions that can provide feedback. • 6.2.7 All comments received during workshops or through other forms of submission shall be collated and published by the facilitation team. • 6.2.8 The Standards Committee reviews and approves the response to comments, which is also published. • 8.2.3 The process and timeline for collecting and assessing information shall be approved by the Standards Committee and made publicly available. • 9.2.1 The process and timeline for stakeholder review of the draft assessment report shall be approved by the Standards Committee and made publicly available. • 9.2.2 Review of the draft assessment report is undertaken through stakeholder consultation. • 9.2.5 As a second stage in the review process the Standards Committee reviews the draft report and how stakeholder comments on the report have been addressed, prior to giving its formal approval of the final report and the response to comments, prior to their publication • 10.2.1 A dissemination plan shall be approved by the Standards Committee. • 10.2.2 The final report shall be made publicly available in the official national language, for example on an existing government-led or approved REDD+ website. A link will also be provided on the REDD+ SES website (www.redd-standards.org). • At least the summary of the report at principle level shall be available in languages and formats which make it relatively accessible to all stakeholder groups.
(c) Be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;	REDD+ SES are used through a process of country-specific interpretation that adapts the REDD+ SES content and process to the country context, making the international REDD+SES relevant and effective for the country, including creation of country-specific indicators (the principles and criteria remain the same across all countries), and design of the country-specific assessment process. A monitoring plan defines, for the current assessment period, what information will be collected, where this information is found, how the information will be gathered and analyzed, and who will be responsible. The monitoring plan and plans for reporting and dissemination are updated as needed for each assessment period, enabling flexibility in the use of REDD+ SES. The process for using

	REDD+ SES ensures a high level of transparency as explained in (b) above.
(d) Provide information on how all of the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are being addressed and respected;	REDD+ SES covers all the safeguards in the Cancun agreement, breaking them down into constituent elements and adding detail and clarity, while also including additional issues identified through extensive consultations conducted during the development of REDD+ SES. See REDD+ SES Version 2 (10th September 2012), Appendix 1 - Correspondence between REDD+SES Version 2 principles and criteria and the safeguards listed in the Cancun Agreement (UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16 appendix 1).
(e) Be country-driven and implemented at the national level;	REDD+ SES is used through a country-driven process implemented at country level. A facilitation team composed of government and non-governmental technical experts facilitates the process of interpreting and applying the standards in each country. The facilitation team acts as a secretariat, playing a support role to the decision-making multi-stakeholder Standards Committee. Country-specific interpretation (Step 4 to 6) adapts the REDD+ SES content and process to the country context, making the international REDD+SES relevant and effective for the country, and includes creation of country-specific indicators (the principles and criteria remain the same across all countries) and design of the country-specific assessment process.
(f) Build upon existing systems, as appropriate;	The REDD+ SES process builds on existing institutions and processes. This is emphasized in the following elements of the guidelines: • 3.3.2 Where appropriate, it is important to build from and integrate with existing structures created for REDD+ planning and implementation or for another safeguards mechanism such as FCPF SESA or the UN-REDD Joint National Programme. Where an appropriately balanced multi-stakeholder body exists, unnecessary duplication of structures should be avoided. In other cases, it will be necessary to establish the country-level standards committee as a separate entity to ensure an adequate stakeholder balance. It may be appropriate to include a representative or focal point from another safeguards process in the Standards Committee. • 3.3.3 It is important to liaise with committees or working groups created for other related initiatives such as land-use planning or forest governance. • 6.3.3 Consultations should be coordinated with those being held on similar topics for related initiatives in the same country, for example for the FCPF SESA process or any relevant processes undertaken with the UN-REDD programme. The facilitation team should coordinate with the country focal points for these and other relevant initiatives. • 7.3.1 Where appropriate and relevant information is already collected and reported (e.g. by government and/or civil society) this should be used wherever possible. • 7.3.6 Where there is interest in ongoing use of REDD+ SES to provide information on the social and environmental performance of the REDD+ program there may be opportunities to integrate data collection into existing or new processes related to REDD+ such as land use planning processes, environmental and social impact assessments or reporting requirements for REDD+ projects.