

Key Considerations

The development of a Safeguard Information System (SIS) is one of the three safeguard-related requirements[[1]](#footnote-1) outlined by the UNFCCC and is linked to the delivery of results-based payments[[2]](#footnote-2) from REDD+ Actions.

Although there are no official guidelines on how countries are supposed to set up a system for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected, Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed on some broad guidance on the characteristics of a SIS. Namely, it should[[3]](#footnote-3):

* Be consistent with the guidance identified in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, paragraph 1;
* Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis;
* Be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;
* Provide information on how all the safeguards referred to in Appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are being addressed and respected (hereinafter referred to as ‘Cancun safeguards’);
* Be country-driven and implemented at the national level; and
* Build upon existing systems, as appropriate.

In the absence of more specific guidelines regarding the SIS, the system can be broadly understood as the domestic institutional arrangements - and associated processes - in place for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected in a country throughout the implementation of its proposed REDD+ actions.[[4]](#footnote-4) Therefore, the main element that may need to be put in place is an institutional arrangement for collecting, compiling, aggregating and analysing relevant information as well as preparing and disseminating it to meet the different reporting needs of the relevant national and international stakeholders. The development of the SIS, therefore, involves a process of examination, assessment and tailoring of existing information systems and sources to meet the various safeguard reporting needs of the country.

Notably, equivalent systems are expected for sub-national jurisdictions, which are required to have a sub-national ‘reporting system’ in place that allows them to report to both the national government and domestic stakeholders on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected at the sub-national level.

This tool is therefore intended to help J-REDD+ programs better understand:

1. The quality of their SIS (or equivalent) in correlation with the UNFCCC’s guidance and international best practices,
2. An annual sustainability report is an essential document that outlines a company's efforts to promote environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability.

How to use this tool?

|  |
| --- |
| This tool is divided into two sections:   * **Section A:** presents a questionnaire, which guides users through the technical qualitative assessment of the SIS (or equivalent). * **Section B**: presents a report template, that is to be completed based on the results from Section ‘A’, and will inform the development of the J-REDD+ roadmap (Tool 8). |

Section A - Questionnaire

The questionnaire is structured in different characteristics, which correlate with UNFCCC guidance and international best practices.

To complete this questionnaire users should consider the scope of each column as follows:

1. Questions: presents guiding questions for the users. Note that use of the term ‘equivalent’ refers to a sub-national ‘reporting system’.
2. Scoring: the following scoring guide should be applied by users:
   1. **Yes:** The SIS (or equivalent) incorporates this aspect in conformance with relevant guidance and/or best practices.
   2. **Partially:** The SIS (or equivalent) partially incorporates this aspect in conformance with relevant guidance and/or best practices. There are some gaps that need to be addressed.
   3.  **No**: The SIS (or equivalent) does not incorporate this aspect in conformance with relevant guidance and/or best practices, and there are notable gaps that need to be addressed to ensure full conformance.
3. Findings: an opportunity for users to offer information and/or clarifications in relation to their scoring.
4. Means of verification: users should identify any documentation used to support their scoring, including hyperlinks with additional information.

Questionnaire

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Country driven:the SIS is consistent with national sovereignty, national legislation and national circumstances, including building upon relevant systems and institutional arrangements[[5]](#footnote-5) [[6]](#footnote-6) | | | |
| Questions | Scoring  (Yes/No/Partially) | Findings | Means of verification |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) determine its objectives and how they are aligned with domestic priorities/commitments? |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) determine the functions of the SIS, as well as how such functions will be carried out? |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) determine function(s) and/or processes to ensure the quality assurance, accuracy and comprehensiveness of information collected and provided by the SIS? |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) determine ‘who’ [i.e. single government institution and/or combination of governmental and non-governmental actors] will be involved in the operation of the SIS? |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) determine ‘who’ will perform the different functions of the SIS? |  |  |  |
| Transparency**:** the SIS will provide transparent information on a regular basis [[7]](#footnote-7) | | | |
| Questions | Scoring  (Yes/No/Partially) | Findings | Means of verification |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) have a clear process for disseminating information? |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) have processes in place to ensure the timely/regular dissemination of information?[[8]](#footnote-8) |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) have a web-based platform (website/webpage) to share/disseminate information? |  |  |  |
| Accessibility**:** the SIS will provide information that is accessible by all stakeholders.[[9]](#footnote-9) | | | |
| Questions | Scoring  (Yes/No/Partially) | Findings | Means of verification |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) provide information in a culturally appropriate manner? [[10]](#footnote-10) |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) web-based platform offer all relevant information and is guided by the principle of maximum disclosure? [[11]](#footnote-11) |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) include accessibility features (e.g. a contact form, feedback mechanism, etc.)? |  |  |  |
| Flexibility: the SIS is designed to allow for improvements over time in recognition of the stepwise approach to producing safeguards information[[12]](#footnote-12) | | | |
| Questions | Scoring  (Yes/No/Partially) | Findings | Means of verification |
| 1. Is the SIS (or equivalent) designed to provide information appropriate to the relevant stages (design and implementation) of its REDD+ actions?[[13]](#footnote-13) |  |  |  |
| 1. Is the SIS (or equivalent) designed to have a function/process for assessing its performance and identifying improvements for the next reporting period?[[14]](#footnote-14) |  |  |  |
| Completeness: the SIS will provide information on how all the safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16 are being addressed and respected, and in correlation to the nature, scope and stage of design and implementation of the REDD+ actions. [[15]](#footnote-15) | | | |
| Questions | Scoring  (Yes/No/Partially) | Findings | Means of verification |
| 1. Does the SIS (or equivalent) have indicators covering each of the seven Cancun safeguards? |  |  |  |
| 1. Have the SIS’s indicators (or equivalent) been framed in correlation to distinct scope and nature of the REDD+ actions under implementation? |  |  |  |
| 1. Do the SIS’s indicators (or equivalent) distinguish between the provision of information for demonstrating the Cancun safeguards have been ‘addressed’ and ‘respected’? |  |  |  |
| 1. As relevant- Do these indicators cover all ‘structure, process outcome’ indicators of TREES?[[16]](#footnote-16) |  |  |  |

Section B: Template Report for the Qualitative Assessment

To complete this template report, users (with the support of selected expert international organization) should consider the answers provided in ‘Section A’ above. In completing this template, users will need to consider the scope of each column as follows:

* Column 2 (Shortcomings or Gaps Identified): for users to identify and summarize the key shortcomings or gaps (issues of non-conformance) identified in correlation to each of the SIS’s characteristics, that is, when the scoring identified was ‘Partially’ or ‘No’ in ‘Section A’. There is also an opportunity to identify general gaps or shortcomings.
* Column 3 (Recommendations): for users to identify actions/recommendations to be taken to address these key shortcomings or gaps.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SIS Characteristics | Shortcomings/Gaps Identified | Recommendations for SIS or equivalent |
| Country driven |  |  |
| Transparency |  |  |
| Accessibility |  |  |
| Flexibility |  |  |
| Completeness |  |  |
| General |  |  |

1. The other two being: 1) ensuring consistency of the REDD+ PAMs with the Cancun safeguards throughout the implementation of REDD+, and 2) the provision of a summary of information demonstrating how the safeguards have been addressed and respected to the UNFCCC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Decision 2/CP. 17, paragraph 64 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17 paragraph 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UN REDD Programme (2016) REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations. Technical Resource Series. Safeguards Edition 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, preamble and paragraph 2 (letter ‘e’ and ‘f’) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. UN REDD Programme (2016) REDD+ Safeguard Information Systems: Practical Design Considerations. Technical Resource Series. Safeguards Edition 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 2 (letter ‘b’) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Note: timely/regular is understood to be of annual frequency in connection to the frequency of reporting to relevant standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 2 (letter ‘b’) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The information is expected to be disclosed in relevant local languages and in a manner that is accessible and culturally appropriate, taking into account any specific needs of groups that may be differentially or disproportionately affected by the REDD+ program, or groups of the population with specific information needs (such as, disability, literacy, gender, mobility, differences in language or accessibility). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Maximum disclosure is interpreted as meaning that “all information held by public bodies is accessible, subject to a clear and narrow regime of exceptions set out in law that are legitimate and strictly necessary in a democratic society based on the standards and jurisprudence of the Inter-American system.”, Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information Article 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 1 and 2 (letter ‘c’). Note that such a stepwise approach with periodic dissemination of information will create a narrative that provides the “positive direction of travel” in safeguards implementation. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Note: some REDD+ actions are not currently under design/implementation, but their design/implementation is planned for next years, hence the next reporting periods. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Note: functions of the SIS may consider a multi-stakeholder process that allows for an assessment of the information and the overall SIS’s process. SIS’s reports may also consider a section dedicated to noting improvements for the next reporting periods. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. UNFCCC, Decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 1 and 2 (letter ‘d’) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Note: a comparison of how the SIS indicators are conformant with TREES indicators can be used to demonstrate this. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)