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REDD+ under the UNFCCC

Last updated: 8 March, 2016

Category [International Law \(UNFCCC\)](#) [10]

Type:

Carbon accounting and reporting

Safeguards

Scale:

National

Sub-national / jurisdictional

Scope:

Deforestation

Enhancement

Forest Degradation

Forest management

Conservation

Geographical Eligibility:

Developing country UNFCCC Parties

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The agenda item “Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” (REDD+) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) intends for Parties to “collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss in developing countries, in accordance with national circumstances, consistent with the ultimate objective of the Convention”.

Introduction

Deforestation was first introduced as a new and separate agenda item of the UNFCCC negotiations at COP-11 in 2005. Since then, the scope has expanded from reducing emissions from deforestation (RED) to include forest degradation (REDD), and three additional ‘plus’ elements: conservation of forest carbon stocks, the sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks—together known as “REDD+”. Subsequent UNFCCC decisions have reemphasized the importance of forests in the efforts to mitigate the dangerous impacts of climate change. A suite of decisions also provide guidance for REDD+ including the development of reference levels and their technical assessment, national forest monitoring systems, safeguard information systems, addressing the drivers of deforestation, and modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying forest-related emissions and removals.

How the “full implementation” (i.e. measured, reported, and verified results) of REDD+ will be financed remains an open issue, including the use of markets. However, recent decisions recognize that such finance may come from a variety of sources (public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources), including the Green Climate Fund. Decisions also encourage entities providing results-based finance to apply the methodological guidance consistent with UNFCCC decisions, and to continue to provide financial resources to alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches.

Design Features

[Scope](#) [11]

Reducing emissions from deforestation, reducing emissions from forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

[Scale](#) [12]

National level, although subnational is recognised as an interim measure towards national implementation.

[Reference Levels](#) [13]

Reference levels are expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year and defined as “benchmarks for assessing each country’s performance” in implementing REDD+ activities. Countries are currently given flexibility to develop their own methodologies for reference level construction, but must take into account historic data and maintain consistency with national GHG inventories. Adjustments for national circumstances are allowed, but information to substantiate such adjustments must be provided. Reference levels submitted to the UNFCCC are subject to a technical assessment (further information on this assessment covered under “Process”).

[Additionality](#) [14]

There is no reference to date on additionality in UNFCCC decisions related to REDD+.

[Leakage / displacements](#) [15]

Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16 states that when undertaking REDD+ activities, actions to reduce displacement of emissions should be promoted and supported. As this is not qualified, it can be interpreted that both subnational and national level implementation should address leakage.

[Permanence / reversals](#) [16]

Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16 states that when undertaking REDD+ activities, actions to address the risk of reversals should be promoted and supported.

[Social measures or requirements](#) [17]

According to decisions under the UNFCCC, developing countries, when undertaking REDD+ activities, are to respect the knowledge and rights of indigenous and local communities. They are also requested, when developing and implementing REDD+ national strategies and action plans, to address forest governance and land tenure issues, and gender considerations (Decision 1/CP.16). A summary of information on such safeguards should be provided periodically in a country's UNFCCC national communication (or future communication channels agreed by the UNFCCC). The summary could also be provided, on a voluntary basis, via the UNFCCC web platform.

[Environmental measures or requirements](#) [18]

When undertaking REDD+ activities, consistency with conservation of natural forests and biological diversity and enhancement of other social and environmental benefits should be promoted and supported (Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16). A summary of information on such safeguards should be provided periodically in a country's UNFCCC national communication (or future communication channels agreed by the UNFCCC). The summary could also be provided, on a voluntary basis, via the UNFCCC web platform.

[Procedural measures or requirements](#) [19]

When undertaking REDD+ activities, the full and effective participation of stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, and transparent forest governance should be promoted and supported. In addition, actions should be consistent with national forest programmes and agreements and relevant international conventions and agreements (Appendix I of Decision 1/CP.16). Countries are asked to submit a summary of information on how the Cancun Safeguards were addressed and respected in their National Communications to the UNFCCC. A summary of information on such safeguards should be provided periodically in a country's UNFCCC national communication (or future communication channels agreed by the UNFCCC). The summary could also be provided, on a voluntary basis, via the UNFCCC web platform.

[Monitoring and Reporting](#) [20]

Countries are requested to identify drivers of deforestation and forest degradation resulting in emissions and the means to address these; to identify activities that result in reduced emissions and increased removals and stabilization of carbon stocks; and to establish robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems (or subnational monitoring systems as an interim measure). Such monitoring systems should use both remote sensing and ground-based approaches for estimating

emissions and removals, forest carbon stocks and forest area changes; provide transparent, consistent, and accurate estimates; be transparent and their results available and suitable for measuring, reporting and verifying emissions and removals; build upon existing systems; enable the assessment of different types of forest, including natural forests (as defined by the country); be flexible and allow for improvement; reflect the phased-approach; and may provide relevant information for national safeguard information systems

In addition, developing countries should provide data and information used to estimate forest-related emissions and removals through a technical annex to biennial update reports to the UNFCCC. This is particularly true if a developing country is seeking to obtain and receive payments for results-based actions.

[Registry](#) [21]

There is no reference to date on registries in UNFCCC decisions related to REDD+.

[Process](#) [22]

Developing countries are invited, on a voluntary basis, to submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels (REL/RLs) to the UNFCCC; the secretariat will make such information available on the UNFCCC REDD web platform. Once a year, sessions will be organized for the technical assessment of submitted forest REL/RLs, the objective of which are to assess the degree to which information provided is in accordance with the guidelines and to offer a facilitative, non-intrusive, technical exchange of information on the construction of forest REL/RLs with a view to supporting the capacity of developing countries for the construction and future improvements of their forest REL/RLs. Additional verification rules may be developed if REDD+ is included in a market mechanism in the future.

All standards in

▼

[Clean Development Mechanism \(CDM\)](#) [23]

[Joint Implementation \(JI\) Kyoto Protocol](#) [24]

[Kyoto Protocol Land use, Land-use Change and Forestry](#) [25]

[REDD+ under the UNFCCC](#) [26]

Further reading

[Should REDD+ be Included in the CDM? Analysis of issues and options Prepared for the CDM Policy Dialogue](#) [27]

External Links

[Decision 4/CP.15: Methodological guidance for activities relating to REDD+](#) [28]

[Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I: Guidance and safeguards for REDD+](#) [29]

[Decision 2/CP.17: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention](#) [30]

[Decision 12/CP.17: Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected](#) [31]

[Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in D1/CP.16, para 70](#) [32]

[: Modalities for national forest monitoring systems](#) [33]

[Timing & frequency of presentations of summary of information on how safeguards in D1/CP.16 App.1 are addressed/respected](#) [34]

[Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest REL/RLs](#) [35]

[Modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying](#) [36]

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