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REDD+ safeguards in national policy discourse and pilot projects

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- Early adoption of national- and project-level social and environmental standards suggests that REDD+ policy makers, project personnel and investors value REDD+ safeguards.
- To gain national-level buy-in for REDD+ safeguards, national sovereignty must be recognised and competing safeguard policies should be harmonised.
- The REDD+ safeguards dialogue needs to move away from high-level international discussions and towards action. This includes introducing guidelines, low-cost strategies and capacity building to support the interpretation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of safeguards.

17.1   The key challenge

REDD+ safeguards are policies and measures that address both direct and indirect impacts of REDD+ on communities and ecosystems. They do this by identifying, analysing and managing risks and opportunities (Murphy 2011). The Cancun Agreement reached at the 16th Conference of the Parties

(COP16) of UNFCCC calls on Parties to promote, support and report on the implementation of seven social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ (see Box 17.1). These include transparent governance; respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local populations, as well as their full participation in REDD+ activities; and actions that reduce the risk of biodiversity loss, reversals (permanence) and displacement of emissions (leakage) (UNFCCC 2011a).

Establishing internationally recognised social and environmental standards to guide national REDD+ policy and project design is critical to achieving effective, efficient and equitable social and environmental outcomes. REDD+ policy makers face a major challenge in establishing a set of safeguard policies that can be implemented, monitored and enforced at relatively low cost, and that are salient to carbon investors. In many REDD+ countries, discussions on safeguards are in their infancy and represent only a minor component of the overall REDD+ policy dialogue. REDD+ readiness initiatives focus

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Box 17.1 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) safeguards articulated in the Cancun Agreement

1. Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements

2. Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty

3. Respect for knowledge and rights of indigenous people and local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

4. Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous people and local communities, in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision

5. Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivise the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social benefits

6. Actions to address the risk of reversals

7. Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions.

Source: UNFCCC (2011a)

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primarily on carbon monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), paying little attention to other core issues relating to safeguards.

This chapter assesses the current state of international, national and project-level social and environmental safeguards for forest-based climate mitigation. Drawing on the '4 Is' framework outlined in Chapter 2, it describes the analysis of REDD+ safeguards at different scales. Secions 17.3, 17.4 and 17.5 present analyses of the current international dialogue concerning REDD+ safeguards, national and project-level perspectives, and experiences with REDD+ safeguards. The final section identifies key challenges and opportunities for moving forward.

17.2   Safeguards as seen through a political economy lens

The 4Is framework (Chapter 2) links institutions, interests, ideas and information to form a basis for the analysis of REDD+ safeguards. The framework uses a political economy lens, which can help explain how safeguard policies are designed, why safeguards are adopted, and their importance to achieving the overall objectives of REDD+. REDD+ safeguards are norms or institutions (North 1990) that focus on achieving minimum social and environmental standards, take account of incentives to supply and demand carbon credits produced in compliance with internationally recognised standards, and include discussions on the role of information and ideas in putting REDD+ safeguard policies in place.

REDD+ safeguards as they are currently formulated are a set of norms or *institutions* that guide expectations surrounding social and environmental outcomes associated with the reduction of carbon emissions in developing countries. Unlike rules, which have sanctions associated with failure to comply, REDD+ safeguards provide a set of guiding principles describing the supply of, and demand for, emissions reductions. Whether REDD+ safeguards will include language that elevates them to the level of rules remains to be seen. Even if they remain non-binding or voluntary, investors have the ability to informally sanction producers of carbon by demonstrating preferences for carbon supplied in adherence with safeguards.

Implementing, monitoring and reporting on REDD+ safeguards involves significant transaction costs. Adhering to safeguard policies should therefore have tangible benefits that outweigh these costs. Due to uncertainty regarding the final articulation of REDD+ safeguards and the nature and volume of the carbon market, national governments and project proponents have an *interest* to position themselves such that the carbon they supply will at least meet the minimum safeguard of doing no harm. Many REDD+ initiatives also strive to provide co-benefits to local resource users. Beyond market incentives, proponent organisations, donors and national governments may be motivated

by pre-existing social and environmental mandates to adhere to social and environmental safeguards or by the expectation that REDD+ can be effective only when social objectives and norms are observed.

Norms also influence demand-side expectations. Donors or private sector carbon buyers may prefer carbon produced in adherence with safeguards (e.g. companies claiming corporate social responsibility or donors claiming environment and development objectives). In addition, investors' interest in safeguards seems to be driven by a desire to reduce the risk of damage to their reputations.

Ideas and ideology play a strong role in arguments for safeguards, based on a rights-based approach that emphasises the unique human rights of indigenous people to grant or withhold their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for activities affecting the land they have traditionally occupied and/or used (Indigenous People's Summit on Climate Change 2009). Some advocates are of the opinion that all affected communities (not just indigenous groups) should be required to grant their FPIC for REDD+.[1] Those making normative arguments also insist that REDD+ must explicitly benefit (rather than just avoid harm to) local populations.

The idea or principle of national sovereignty has become a major issue in debates surrounding the establishment of a set of international REDD+ safeguards. National governments want to retain their autonomy in social and environmental policy, which makes it challenging to implement internationally mandated safeguards.

Implementing effective REDD+ safeguard policies is a complex task. Stakeholders at different levels have a vested interest in ensuring social and environmental safeguards are observed, implying a mechanism for the flow of *information*. National governments therefore need to collect and report aggregate information on social and environmental indicators to show that safeguards have been met. Developing countries have expressed frustration because donors are imposing complex and costly requirements that vary from one agency to another, particularly at a time when funding flows for REDD+ are slow (Kovacevic 2011).

17.3 The international REDD+ safeguards discourse

The current UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards are best described as non-binding 'principles' rather than actual policies or rules. The agreement and guidance being

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1   See Lawlor and Huberman (2009) for a review of the UN Declarations and Covenants on Human Rights that are most relevant to articulating a rights-based approach to REDD+, based on these established international norms.

forged at the UNFCCC on safeguard information systems attempts to strike a balance between prescriptive rules, national sovereignty and transaction costs. On the one hand, it aims to provide REDD+ countries with detailed guidance, so they can identify negative impacts and allow stakeholders to judge how well safeguards are being implemented. On the other hand, it acknowledges that countries vary in their capacity to implement and report on safeguards, and that many safeguard systems are already in place, which should be built upon rather than duplicated (UNFCCC 2011c). Stakeholders are waiting for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to further clarify the definition and MRV requirements of REDD+ social and environmental safeguards. At the same time, other international bodies, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, are evaluating whether their social and environmental safeguard policies are harmonised with those of REDD+ (Hite 2010) (Box 17.2).

Beyond the UNFCCC, several international and nonprofit organisations have articulated safeguard standards for REDD+ policies at the national level. This 'do no harm' commitment is reflected in the social protection policies being applied by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) including the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) (FCPF 2011). FCPF works with countries to build their institutional capacity for the design and implementation of REDD+. For example, it engages in participatory consultations with stakeholders to identify and manage potential risks to indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities (Rapp 2011). The REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) initiative, led by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and CARE International, brings civil society together with the private sector and government agencies in developing countries to build country-specific indicators to track the compliance of government-led REDD+ programmes with the initiative's eight principles and 34 supporting criteria (CCBA and CARE 2010).[2] These principles include commitments to enhance the wellbeing of local communities and contribute to good governance (REDD+ SES 2010). The UN-REDD Programme is engaged in a parallel process to develop social and environmental principles and criteria that mirror the Cancun Agreement's safeguards and these will apply to countries receiving financial support for REDD+. The programme has also developed principles and criteria that enhance REDD+'s potential to deliver social benefits (UN-REDD Programme 2011c). However, the UN-REDD Programme principles and criteria do not make specific reference to such key issues as land tenure. Furthermore, unlike the World Bank, which has a formal inspection mechanism, UN-REDD Programme has no accountability mechanism.

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2   Version 2 of these standards is currently in draft form and is going through a public comment period for revision. Version 2 has 7 principles and a reduced number of criteria.

Box 17.2 Linking Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and REDD+ biodiversity safeguards: Experience from sub-Saharan Africa

Efforts to avoid deforestation and forest degradation should promote the conservation of biodiversity (Harvey *et al.* 2010a; CBD 2011), and increasing forest ecosystem resilience offers opportunities for forest carbon stability (Thompson *et al.* 2011). Nevertheless, the strong focus of REDD+ on maintaining carbon stocks has raised concerns that biodiversity could be at risk if not properly considered (CBD 2010). Dialogue between the CBD and UNFCCC is needed to address this concern. The CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan, paid attention to the link between biodiversity targets and UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards, with several of the 20 biodiversity targets articulated (Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 7, 11 and 15) being directly relevant to REDD+.

Following such global dialogue, a number of consultation and capacity building activities have taken place at the regional level. In 2011, a joint CBD–UNFCCC workshop addressed the links between biodiversity targets and REDD+ in sub-Saharan Africa. Held in Cape Town, South Africa, the workshop brought key members of CBD and UNFCCC together with other partners, including representatives of indigenous and local communities. Existing safeguard frameworks from UN-REDD Programme, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) helped guide the discussions. The participants discussed the application of REDD+ safeguard policies on biodiversity, identified indicators for assessing REDD+ within the objectives of the CBD, and highlighted the challenges facing effective implementation of biodiversity safeguards in the region. Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)[a] provided information on their experiences with REDD+ formulation and implementation at the national and project level.

The key conclusions and recommendations were:
1. Biodiversity safeguards should be addressed as early as possible in the REDD+ process.
2. Deficiencies in land zoning processes should be addressed.
3. There is no specific safeguard to address the risk of afforestation in an area of high biodiversity.
4. Insufficient attention has been paid to the potential for moving deforestation and degradation pressure to areas of low carbon value and high biodiversity.
5. Little attention has been given to potential losses of traditional ecological knowledge.

The workshop outputs were used to inform the Parties in advance of the CBD COP 11 and to facilitate further streamlining of biodiversity safeguard policies between the CBD and UNFCCC. In sub-Saharan Africa, capacity building remains a major challenge and more research is needed to shed light on the links between REDD+ and biodiversity outcomes. At the regional and national levels, data on carbon pools and flows and correlations with indicators of biodiversity need to be made available. The collection and processing of this type of data requires in-country capacity to link carbon and biodiversity outcomes, and to analyse the underlying causes of carbon–biodiversity tradeoffs and synergies.

a The CPF is an informal voluntary arrangement of 14 international organisations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests.

There are several voluntary certification standards for assessing social and environmental impacts at the project level. The most prominent of these is the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standard, which has been adopted by an estimated 64% of all forest carbon projects (EcoSecurities 2010).[3] Nearly 60% of forest carbon credits sold on the voluntary market in 2010 came from CCB-certified projects (Diaz *et al.* 2011). Projects' widespread and voluntary uptake of the CCB Standard is an example of what Cashore (2002) refers to as "non-state market-driven governance", reflecting the ideas and interests of actors on both the demand side (investors, consumers) and supply side (project proponents) of REDD+.

REDD+ safeguards are evolving in many policy arenas and markets. They are being applied at different scales of governance, including project or subnational levels, national level and in the international policy arena. In addition to the need to harmonise across different scales there are important questions regarding how REDD+ safeguards can be streamlined with existing international environmental agreements (e.g. CBD) and their social and environmental safeguard policies.

17.4 National REDD+ safeguards policy discourse

This section draws on data taken from CIFOR's Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS, see Appendix) and explores national REDD+ media dialogues and national capacities focused on REDD+ safeguards. A comparative case study approach is used to analyse national media communication in four REDD+ countries in an attempt to understand the extent of policy dialogue on REDD+ safeguards. Data from country profiles helps shed light on how REDD+ activities, institutional structures and policy decisions might lead to effective, efficient and equitable outcomes. The country profiles also provide indicators that can be used to measure national capacity to implement, monitor and report on safeguards.

17.4.1 Analysis of media discourse

GCS undertook a rigorous media discourse analysis in a number of countries, including Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia and Vietnam,[4] to assess newspaper coverage of REDD+ policy formulation and implementation.[5] The investigators conducted analysis of the national print media and

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3   Plan Vivo is another established certification standard that requires projects to produce climate and livelihood benefits (Plan Vivo 2008).

4   The print media in Vietnam is controlled by the central government.

5   While Peru and Tanzania are included in CIFOR's Global Comparative Study on REDD+, media analyses are not yet available for these countries.

interviewed journalists.[6] Media are seen as a window on informal and formal policy discussions (Boykoff 2008). The analysis conducted here identified specific references to core elements of REDD+ safeguard policies, including governance and safeguards, social welfare, biodiversity and MRV.

The analysis revealed that core issues relating to governance and safeguards are not covered well by the national media. Of primary concern is the presence of corruption in national forestry institutions and the impact that increased funding flows from REDD+ may have on existing institutions, specifically providing new opportunities for rent seeking by public officials. Concerns were raised in the Indonesian media about contradictions between general REDD+ policy and policies in other sectors, but no specific reference to safeguard policies was made. There was significant coverage of issues related to indigenous rights and human rights in Brazil and Indonesia, but not in Cameroon and Vietnam. Property rights for land, tenure and carbon also received attention and included discussion on the loss of access to forests, as well as concerns about the distribution of benefits under REDD+. Overall, limited coverage of indigenous, human and property rights suggested little attention was paid to safeguards in the national policy dialogue.

Biodiversity was consistently linked to conservation, with conservation identified as the best option for retaining native forest in Brazil and Cameroon. The Vietnamese media presented biodiversity conservation as a potential co-benefit of REDD+. Where countries had relatively well-developed MRV systems, the media discussed leakage and permanence as important issues for achieving REDD+, but they were not covered in countries with low MRV capacity. Lack of explicit reference to 'safeguards' was expected; prior to the Cancun COP in 2010 the term was not widely used in the media in many countries. However, the Brazilian media discussed safeguards explicitly in its reporting on the outcomes of ongoing international negotiations on REDD+.

The media in Brazil and Indonesia appear to be most aware of safeguards. Although they did not cover all the aspects, there was explicit discussion of core issues, including corrupt forest institutions, sovereignty, indigenous rights, property rights, leakage and permanence. The fact that Brazil has demonstrated strong leadership in establishing a national REDD+ safeguards policy (see Box 17.3) and Indonesia has an advanced policy process helps explain these findings.

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6   Data are primarily from 2005–2009 but updated data to 2011 for Brazil and Indonesia are used to make a preliminary analysis and identify trends. Data are drawn from REDD+ politics in the media case studies (Cronin and Santoso 2010; Kengoum 2011; May *et al.* 2011a; Pham 2011).

Box 17.3 National REDD+ safeguard policy in Brazil

Brazil is the world leader in developing national policy for social and environmental safeguards. The process started in 2009, when several civil society organisations began to develop social and environmental principles and criteria for REDD+ programmes and projects. The initiative aimed to: i) strengthen forest governance and the management of natural resources by indigenous people and local communities; ii) encourage public participation in policy making; iii) coordinate action among stakeholders; iv) increase information transparency; and v) generate respect for, and awareness and recognition of, the rights of indigenous people and local communities for their territories, lands, natural resources and traditional livelihoods and cultures (Gomes *et al.* 2010).

The Institute for Agriculture and Forest Management Certification (IMAFLORA) led the consultation process, which was open to all key stakeholders. Four regional workshops ensured the inclusion of indigenous people, local communities and small-scale landholders.[a] These stakeholders benefited from capacity building prior to the workshops to ensure they fully understood the safeguards documents and their implications. The team also invited private sector groups to contribute their opinions. By May 2010, the final document describing Brazil's principles and criteria for REDD+ was ready and this was recommended to national and state-level policy makers.[b] The principles and criteria presented in the document provide the basis for Brazil's national safeguards and REDD+ strategy as requested by the Cancun Agreements.

In 2011, the Ministry of Environment organised two meetings to inform the development of Brazil's REDD+ national strategy (MMA 2011). The participants were drawn from different sectors of civil society and government. They worked together to evaluate whether the proposed safeguard framework would cover the main risks to biodiversity and indigenous people/local communities, and to identify the main challenges in applying it.

In the second meeting, the participants reviewed different approaches and definitions of safeguards. Following these discussions, the Ministry of Environment presented a list of safeguards for consideration in developing Brazil's REDD+ national strategy:

1. Legal regulation
2. Guarantee of rights
3. Economic sustainability and poverty reduction
4. Biodiversity conservation and recovery
5. Governance

Box 17.3 continued

6. Benefit sharing

7. Monitoring and transparency

8. Permanence and leakage

9. Participation.

The meetings were successful in promoting an open process towards the development of a national safeguard strategy. They also highlighted the main requirements for successful implementation: i) good governance and participation, which includes securing political will, dialogue and coordination; ii) information and capacity building; iii) stakeholder participation, monitoring and conflict resolution; iv) benefit sharing; and v) coordination of sectoral policies, e.g. the forest code (MMA 2011). A major obstacle to the effective implementation of Brazil's national safeguard policy is the lack of clear data and criteria that can be used for monitoring purposes.

Despite focusing attention on the safeguards issue, Brazil has assumed a 'blocking' position in the international arena following COP17 in Durban in 2011. During the SBSTA meeting, Brazil opposed international reporting on how safeguards for REDD+ will be addressed and respected. Some regard this position as selfish, since it blocks progress on REDD+ negotiations and could undermine the credibility of REDD+ with international investors. Any action that impedes funding will be particularly harmful to countries that lack a coherent safeguard strategy.

a These workshops generated 379 comments on the 8 principles and 27 criteria. In total, the consultation process resulted in 559 considerations, comments and suggestions, all of which are available online.

b For the full document see: http://www.observatoriodoredd.org.br/site/pdf/ DevelopingREDD.pdf

17.4.2 National capacity for REDD+ safeguard implementation

If governments are to engage in safeguard policies, they must be able to assess social and environmental outcomes at the national level.[7] Furthermore, when making national-level commitments to international safeguards, countries need to provide comparable indicators of change in the core areas, as articulated by UNFCCC. At present, most REDD+ countries are struggling with the minimum requirement: to demonstrate reduced deforestation and degradation. Only when they grow their capacity for MRV, encompassing

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7   Sources for this section include Dkamela (2011), May *et al.* (2011b), DAR and CIFOR (2012), Indrarto *et al.* (2012), REPOA and CIFOR (2012).

leakage and permanence, can these two safeguards be monitored properly. However, the challenge of performing national-level assessment of social impacts and biodiversity co-benefits has received limited attention in most REDD+ countries. Data collected by GCS provides profiles for five REDD+ countries (Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Tanzania and Vietnam), which include an assessment of their level of capacity for implementing, monitoring and reporting on the core thematic areas of REDD+ safeguards (social welfare, biodiversity, permanence and leakage).

The countries studied appear to have little capacity to monitor social and biodiversity impacts. With the exception of Tanzania, benefit sharing agreements have yet to be articulated, therefore it is difficult to evaluate welfare outcomes related to REDD+. In addition, most countries are struggling to interpret FPIC. In Indonesia, FPIC is a precondition for community involvement in REDD+; however, assessing whether or not FPIC has been obtained first requires a definition of it. On a more positive note, there is evidence of strong participation in the REDD+ policy process at the national level. Brazil, Indonesia and Tanzania have achieved meaningful stakeholder engagement in policy discussions regarding social and biodiversity co-benefits, although discussions surrounding the monitoring of REDD+ biodiversity impacts is still at the planning stage. For example, Indonesia's National REDD+ Strategy calls for the development of a non-carbon MRV system that includes biodiversity.

Brazil, Indonesia and Tanzania have developed the capacity to monitor land use change, and they are at different stages with respect to setting reference levels and putting into place national systems to identify leakage. These countries are among the most advanced with respect to carbon MRV and are well placed to monitor and report on leakage and permanence. However, they still have hurdles to overcome, which include deciding how often to monitor, getting real-time information on land use change, and using site-specific data to triangulate and confirm leakage and permanence. Other countries (e.g. Cameroon and Peru) lag behind and are not yet able to monitor leakage and permanence. Furthermore, all country reports noted some ambiguity relating to ownership. When property rights to land, trees and carbon are unclear, it is unlikely that permanent reductions in deforestation will be achieved (see Chapters 6, 8 and 9).

Building capacity to implement, monitor and enforce REDD+ safeguards is a critical issue, and the countries with the most evolved REDD+ infrastructure can address leakage and permanence. However, most are not yet able to monitor social leakages nor to evaluate the extent and integrity of consent and participatory processes (see Chapter 6).

17.5 Learning from project experiences

Although in the early stages, many REDD+ projects are already implementing the seven UNFCCC safeguards. This section reviews project motivations and experiences with safeguarding the welfare of local communities and biodiversity. The GCS team interviewed project personnel with the aim of reviewing the extent to which their projects fulfil the following targets: i) respect the rights of indigenous people and local communities (UNFCCC safeguard 3); ii) facilitate the full and effective participation of local stakeholders (UNFCCC safeguard 4); and iii) ensure consistency with conservation and biodiversity goals (UNFCCC safeguard 5). Data were collected from 19 projects in Brazil (4), Cameroon (2), Indonesia (6), Tanzania (6) and Vietnam (1). All but four reported that they have already obtained or plan to obtain CCB certification.

17.5.1 Obtaining free, prior and informed consent

While FPIC does not appear in the UNFCCC safeguards, it is implicitly referred to in safeguard number 3: a call for parties to respect indigenous people's rights, as framed by UN DRIP. Under this decision, member states must obtain FPIC for activities affecting the lands customarily owned, occupied and/or used by indigenous people. The CCB standard requires projects to obtain FPIC from all local communities (indigenous or otherwise). When asked about obtaining FPIC, most project teams have obtained or plan to obtain FPIC (50 out of 59 villages in the GCS sample). Nine projects provided information about the type of consent obtained (or planned for), with most securing consent through oral agreement and only two by written permission. Five of the nine consulted with sub-groups as part of the FPIC process.

The scale of the project appears to affect the attention paid to FPIC, in particular the definition of the person or group giving consent and the distribution of information about the project. Teams from the larger projects, some of which involved entire provinces or multiple administrative districts or municipalities, sought to obtain agreement from state- and district-level administration, as well as government agencies, communities and industry sectors. The smaller-scale projects (subdistrict or municipality) primarily sought agreement from village-level institutions or from the community itself via village meetings. One project hired lawyers for the community and encouraged them to seek independent advice before committing. The larger projects tended to inform communities through stakeholder workshops, while the smaller ones used the local media (primarily radio), as well as distributing posters and leaflets and holding question and answer sessions.

Motivation for conducting FPIC falls into three categories: i) upholding human rights; ii) complying with formal rules or institutions such as voluntary standards (e.g. CCB) or national law (e.g. Tanzania Land Act);

and iii) achieving reductions in deforestation and degradation. As Figure 17.1 shows, achieving forest carbon goals (success) and upholding human rights are the primary motivations. In line with the emphasis on rights (ideas, informal institutions) and effectiveness (interests), some project representatives stated that obtaining FPIC could never be complete, since FPIC is "a process and not an event" and "by definition it never ends".

The information disclosure requirements and transaction costs associated with FPIC can cause problems. Project staff had difficulty in getting a sufficient proportion of people to attend information meetings. They also found it a challenge to secure sufficient financial and time resources for the participation process, especially in ensuring that project information reached individual households in a timely manner. One project representative noted that, despite having signed agreements and building a good level of trust, "FPIC is an impossible dream" and "actually very difficult to deliver". The incipient nature of REDD+ poses a further major challenge, since FPIC asks people to consent to something that is still evolving and has a number of open questions regarding compensation for changing land use.

17.5.2 Community involvement in project design

Most projects (16 out of 18) involved local communities in project design and implementation, for example, in identifying the drivers of deforestation and degradation, developing baseline scenarios, and deciding on appropriate
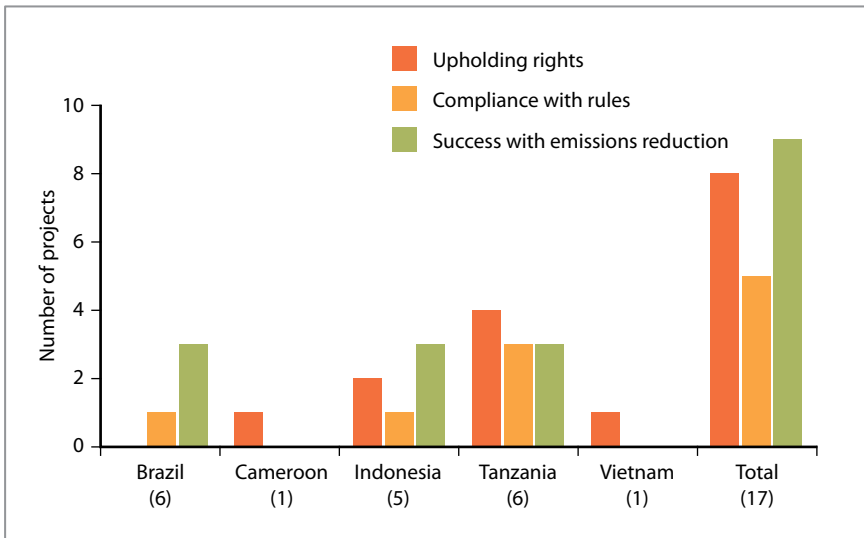

Figure 17.1 Project motivation for obtaining FPIC: Rights, rules and success

Notes: Data missing for one project in Cameroon and one project in Indonesia. Number of projects in parentheses.

intervention and alternative livelihood activities. In one project, local communities helped shape the wording of contracts. Stakeholder meetings organised by the Acre project in Brazil led to a fundamental overhaul of the project design, replacing a site-specific project with a more comprehensive state-wide programme and shifting the emphasis from payments to incentives for environmental services. The main challenges were: identifying leaders who truly represent the community/sector; ensuring local communities have a meaningful voice in decision making; and obtaining the financial resources needed to enable full participation, especially when attempting to reach nomadic populations.

17.5.3 Biodiversity and conservation goals

Some of the survey data sheds light on how REDD+ projects are addressing issues of biodiversity and conservation. Ten projects – Brazil (1), Cameroon (2), Indonesia (2), Tanzania (4) and Vietnam (1) – reported that their locations were chosen to take biodiversity and nature conservation issues into account. However, only five – Indonesia (1), Tanzania (3) and Vietnam (1) – planned to pursue forest management objectives targeting the conservation or regeneration of specific species.

17.6 Challenges and choices for REDD+ safeguards

This analysis highlights several challenges and choices for the successful implementation of REDD+ safeguards. The global forest policy community is currently looking to the UNFCCC and other internationally recognised standards to finalise REDD+ safeguards and to provide guidance regarding monitoring and reporting on progress towards achieving them.

17.6.1 Challenges

Our analysis points to several challenges for REDD+ safeguards as they are formalised and integrated into national REDD+ policy:

Horizontal harmonisation: REDD+ safeguard policies need to be streamlined with other international safeguard policies (e.g. CBD). However, the process of harmonising safeguards across sectors and policy arenas adds transactions costs to their development and implementation.

Vertical harmonisation: There is overlap among international, national and project-level REDD+ safeguards and standards. This needs to be exploited in a productive way so as to minimise transaction costs and use existing data and indicators most effectively.

Sovereignty: Deciding to what degree nation states should have autonomy over social and environmental safeguard policies.

Capacity: There is considerable heterogeneity in capacity to monitor and report on safeguards at the national scale. While progress is being made towards building capacity to monitor and report on leakage and permanence, national-level monitoring systems showing how REDD+ is affecting governance, welfare and biodiversity safeguards lags behind.

Costs: The costs of implementing social and biodiversity safeguards, including FPIC, fostering participation and monitoring biodiversity, are high and, if too high, they may make REDD+ unfeasible.

Ignored issues: Some critical issues – chiefly land, tree and carbon rights (Chapter 8) – are not being addressed adequately. This lack of attention in international safeguards policies may have implications for both social and environmental outcomes. Clarity is particularly important with respect to what is being safeguarded (i.e. forests, trees, carbon, livelihoods or biodiversity) and for whom.

17.6.2 Choices

Despite these considerable challenges, there are opportunities for REDD+ safeguards to be implemented successfully. Using the 4Is framework, the following avenues are proposed for policy action.

Foster safeguards as universal norms: Even when monitoring and reporting on international and national safeguards is voluntary, most, if not all, countries will not deviate too far from the norm regardless of their national circumstances. If the voluntary carbon market takes off, these norms will be further upheld.

Balancing the interests of diverse actors: Project implementers and national governments want to produce carbon that does no harm or that has social and environmental benefits. Investors protecting their reputations, and those with welfare or conservation interests, favour safeguard policies. Both groups want to minimise costs, but also to maximise benefits. This apparent synergy should be monitored in the near future and facilitated to maintain incentives that favour social and environmental safeguards.

From normative ideas to policy practice: Safeguard issues and their implementation are receiving attention in a number of REDD+ countries, where discussion forums are helping to inform the policy process. National level discourse on safeguards should be encouraged and supported. Significant progress has been made in Brazil, but this experience has yet to influence the global arena.

Improving information: There is a lot to learn from project experiences, national-level dialogues and other natural resource- and climate-related initiatives. But information on how to develop, implement, monitor and report on safeguards needs to be shared. Voluntary REDD+ standards at the national and project scale are being adopted widely. They are also instilling an ethic for welfare and biodiversity co-benefits and the requirement to collect information on the status of safeguards throughout a project life cycle.