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Acronyms/Abbreviations

BZCF	Buffer Zone Community Forests
CAS	Country Approach to Safeguards
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFUG	Community Forest User Groups
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
COP	Conference of the Parties
DFO	Division Forest Office
ERPA	Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement
ERPD	Emission Reduction Program Document
ERPIN	Emission Reduction Project Idea Note
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FGRM	Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FUGs	Forest User Groups
ILO	International Labour Organization
Ips	Indigenous Peoples
ITK	Indigenous Technical Knowledge
LAMP	Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP
LCs	Local Communities
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NFIS	National Forest Information System
NRL	National Reference Level
NTFPs	Non Timber Forest Products
OP	Operational Plan
PAM	Policy and Measures
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PLRs	Policies, Laws and Regulations
R-PIN	REDD plus Project Idea Note
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forests Degradation
REDD IC	REDD Implementation Center
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SIS	Safeguards Information Systems
SOI	Summary of Information
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive Summary

Nepal is one of the first REDD+ countries participating under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) for last one decade. After completion of its readiness phase and approval of emission reduction program document from the World Bank, Nepal is now ready for implementing emission reduction program in 13 districts of Tarai region: one of the most crucial area of Nepal in terms of forest conservation and biodiversity conservation. Since, implementation of REDD+ activities may result negative implications to the environment and society, the REDD+ countries need to be prepared to minimize such risks through safeguards provision. As per the broader guidance of UNFCCC, REDD+ countries must prepare their safeguard information system (SIS) adhering to the Cancun safeguard principles. The primary aim of SIS is to regularly monitor the social and environmental impacts of REDD+ program and document and communicate information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. Being a country participating in result-based REDD+ program, Nepal is required to prepare a country approach to safeguards with an interactive safeguard information system and communicate this national SIS to UNFCCC. Hence, the key purpose of this report is to present a national approach to SIS, including a web-based online system that could be operationalized as a national SIS, build capacity of the key stakeholders to operationalize the SIS and provide a complete draft of summary of information (SOI) required to be communicated to the UNFCCC.

Utilizing the information gathered from various sources, this report has followed a framework structure of SOI. Key methods include the review of relevant documents, consultation with the stakeholders i.e., Civil Society Organizations, Indigenous People's Organizations, experts working in the REDD+ and forestry sector and regular feedbacks from REDD implementation center. SIS documents and web-based SIS system of various countries were also the key references for us to complete this assignment.

The report first presents the context of REDD+ safeguards and UNFCCC provisions and requirements to operationalize Cancun safeguards. Providing an overall context for country approach to safeguards and SOI, we have dealt what these safeguards mean to Nepal and how we contextualise the terms "addressed" and "respected". Since, national REDD+ strategy is the key document in REDD+ process, the report has provided an overview of the strategy highlighting its focus towards ensuring REDD+ social and environmental safeguards. Likewise, a glance of the key drivers and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation is presented so that to communicate the country context of forest management issues. Moreover, the proposed emission reduction programme and the framework of environmental and social management to ensure safeguarding the social and environmental issues/risks are also dealt. Continuing with the context, an assessment of existing feedback and grievance redress mechanism and capacity development scenario is described.

As a key aspect of the assignment, country approach to safeguards is explained in section five of the report. First, the rationale and context of country approach is presented followed by the assessment of PLRs and development of country specific principles, criteria, and indicators. The extensive list of the national PLRs and the international conventions and treaties relevant to safeguards is presented followed by the narrative description and core elements of the Cancun safeguards and how these safeguards are addressed by various PLRs. We found that there are number of policy provisions at national level and regulations, directives as well as the guidelines to be implemented at project level in Nepal that are consistent with the REDD+ safeguards principles. In the next sub section, the report presents country specific criteria and indicators to gather information and assess the implementation of REDD+

safeguards. To make the report more reader friendly, we have defined the meaning of principles, criteria, indicators and the verifiers. Based on the feedbacks of the stakeholders and experts, we have proposed two additional principles in Nepalese context beyond the seven Cancun safeguard principles. Since this report is still a draft presented to the REDD IC, these principles and criteria may still be merged or eliminated during its finalization. Moreover, we have made an extra effort to present the project level criteria and indicators that can be piloted in emission reduction programme area and the information received can be fed into the interactive web-based SIS set up at REDDIC. Finally, the report consist of a short description of SIS to provide an overview of the objectives of web-based SIS, process of information/data collection, aggregating these information and analysis and dissemination of the information in SIS portal.

1. Introduction

Nepal is one of the countries participating in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forests Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) program under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). It has prepared national REDD+ strategy to implement REDD+ readiness programs and projects to reduce emissions from carbon focused management of Nepal's forests. One of the concrete steps toward implementing REDD+ readiness activities in Nepal was the preparation of the Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD), which was endorsed by the Carbon Fund portfolio of the FCPF in 2018. The ERPD provided an opportunity for Nepal to be eligible for results-based REDD+ payments. Nepal has selected 13 districts of Terai Arc Landscape to implement emission reduction (ER) program - REDD+ program - from 2018 to 2028 as part of the result-based REDD+ payments.

Implementation of REDD+ program is expected to generate various environmental and social benefits. However, different valid and legitimate concerns were raised that the REDD+ program involve environmental and social risks. To address environmental and social risks, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has prepared seven principles or areas of intervention to ensure environmental and social safeguards, which are often understood as Cancun safeguards. Recognizing the fact that environmental and social risks are primarily specific to the national and/or local contexts, including policy, social, and environmental contexts, in which the REDD+ program is implemented, the UNFCCC has prepared a broad and generic guidance for the REDD+ countries to prepare a nationally suitable safeguard system. It implies that each REDD+ country requires to prepare its own safeguard information system (SIS) under its country approach adhering to the Cancun safeguard principles. As a party to UNFCCC and REDD+, Nepal need to prepare country's safeguard status report periodically as Summary of Information (SOI), and communicate to the UNFCCC secretariat.

While implementing a REDD+ project, it is crucial for Nepal to identify the potential environmental and social risks and design and implement actions to mitigate or avoid such risks. The safeguards primarily intend to ensure that the Nepal's REDD+ program does not harm local environments and people and verify that new policies and institutions created to implement the REDD+ program complement country's environmental and developmental policies and institutions. In this regard, Nepal needs to adhere to, respect, and address the Cancun Safeguards and the World Bank's social and environmental safeguards, while implementing the REDD+ program. Carefully designed environmental and social risk mitigation plans and frameworks including Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

(SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) are the basis of SIS of any countries. Development of an effective SIS and its proper operationalization help reduce or avoid adverse impacts of the REDD+ program and generate additional benefits from the REDD+ programs. The primary aim of SIS is to regularly monitor the social and environmental impacts of REDD+ program and document and communicate information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. Being a part of result-based REDD+ program country, Nepal is required to prepare a country approach to safeguards with an interactive safeguard information system and communicate this national SIS to UNFCCC, which is linked to delivering results-based payments from REDD+ policies and measures (PaMs), as indicated in this assignment's terms of reference (TOR) issued by the REDD Implementation Center (REDD IC) (Appendix 1), by preparing a Summary of Information (SOI) periodically.

This report constitutes the information about Nepal specific safeguards approach that deals with the frameworks and the provisions addressing and respecting social and environmental safeguards. The SIS framework is informed by the Cancun safeguards; the national policy, legislation, and regulations (PLRs), the national forest information system, and the consultations with key national stakeholders. Hence, the key purpose of this report is to present a national approach to SIS, including a web-based online system that could be operationalized as a national SIS, and build capacity of the key stakeholders to operationalize the SIS. Additionally, this report is prepared and structured in such a way that it provides valuable information for the Nepal's first SOI required to be communicated to the UNFCCC. This is a framework document to collect safeguard information. Periodic updating of SIS including the web-based system platform based on the implementation of REDD+ activities provide information if safeguards are respected or fulfilled.

This report utilized the information collected from different sources (i) review of safeguard principles (e.g., Cancun safeguards, FCPF/World Bank), national SIS prepared by different countries (e.g., Viet Nam, Suriname, Papua New Guinea, Ghana), national PLRs, National REDD+ related documents (e.g., REDD+ strategy, Grievance mechanisms, ESMF, ERPD), (ii) stakeholder consultations, and (iii) the SIS development and establishment on the online web platform. The study began in March 2021 and completed in June 2021. This report is divided in five parts including this introduction section. Section 2 elaborates the methodology used to complete the study followed by the broader context and introduction of SOI in section 3. Overview of the national REDD+ context is presented in section 4 followed by the existing provisions of PLRs and developed criteria and indicators for the Nepal's country approach to safeguards, as the most important output of this assignment. Finally, the developed national safeguards information system is presented.

2. Summary of Information on Safeguard Information System

2.1 REDD+ safeguards and SOI as requirements of UNFCCC

Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed on a specific set of safeguards (i.e., Cancun Safeguards as shown in the table 1 below) to avoid, mitigate, or reduce potential adverse environmental and social effects while implementing any activities under REDD+ programs. Cancun safeguards are referred in Appendix I to Decision 1/CP.16 of the Conference of the Parties (COP) report on its sixteenth session, held in Cancun from November 29, 2010 to December 10, 2010. This agreement requests all the countries that implement REDD+ programs to address and respect the Cancun safeguards primarily related to environmental and social risks and benefits, effective REDD+ governance and the risks associated with reduction of

emissions. Following Cancun COP agreement, the Durban Outcome of 2011 (decision 12/CP. 17), provisioned a need of Safeguard Information System (SIS) to offer information on how the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected by all the REDD+ implementing countries. Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (Decision 9/CP.19) further reiterated the importance of safeguards and decided on some of the submission requirements to be eligible for the result-based payments, including a summary of information (SOI), that need to communicate how the safeguards have been addressed and respected in the REDD+ implementing country.

SN	Cancun Safeguard
1	That 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 the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
4	The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples 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 incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits
6	Actions to address the risks of reversals
7	Actions to reduce displacement of emissions

Table 1: List of seven Cancun Safeguards

SOI is a dynamic and living document that needs to be submitted by the developing countries to UNFCCC to receive results-based REDD+ payments. Upon submission of the first SOI, the subsequent updated version should be submitted consistently with the provisions for submissions of national communications. Since, there is no any specific reporting format suggested the UNFCCC, country may submit SOI directly to the REDD+ web platform of UNFCCC using their own format. However, UNFCCC Decision 17/COP21 has provided indicative contents for SOI as follows.

1. National context and circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the REDD+ safeguards.
2. A description of each safeguard in accordance with the country context.
3. A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting safeguards, including the information systems referred to in decision 12/CP.17.

2.2 Understanding of "Address and Respect"

There is not any specific official definition of "address" in context of REDD+ safeguards. However, the broader understanding of address is more of the existing PLRs and governing structure that are relevant and responding to provisions related to implementation of the

Cancun safeguards. "Addressed" in the context of REDD+ safeguards, therefore, means that all the policies, strategies, plans, and legal instruments such as Acts and Regulations (Related to the forest governance and REDD+) should have Cancun safeguards related provisions and appropriate institutional arrangements for their implementation. Again, this needs to be understood as per the country context. Hence, for Nepal, the term 'address' comprehends what Nepal/REDD+ project has, and plan to have, in place to guarantee the implementation of the REDD+ safeguards. The information about 'address' will demonstrate the provisions made in existing governance arrangements (PLRs, institutions and information systems) that deal with potential benefits and risk associated with REDD+ actions.

"Respected" in the context of REDD+ safeguards means that all the safeguards related provisions mentioned in PLRs, strategies, plans, are effectively implemented in the field during the design and implementation of the REDD+ intervention programs. This means "respected" literally deals with how the REDD+ arrangements are working in practice. In Nepal's context, we understand "respect" as how effective the REDD+ program/project is, or how effective Nepal's forestry/environmental/development governance arrangements have been in safeguarding the implementation of REDD+ actions. In other words Cancun Safeguards are respected if above mentioned PLRs, through the associated institutional arrangements, are implemented and enforced in practice (field) for positive outcome. This information should demonstrate the extent to which each of the Cancun safeguards have been achieved when implementing REDD+ programs, including any actions taken, or planned, to improve implementation.

2.3 Purpose of the Summary of Information

The key purpose of this first Summary of Information (SOI) is to provide the UNFCCC with an overview of Nepal's national information on country approach to REDD+ safeguards. This is more of a baseline information carried out from the inception of REDD+ program, including national understanding and clarification of the Cancun safeguards, how these safeguards are addressed in national PLRs, how these provisions will be respected, and current information on the status of designing and operationalizing the national SIS. Additional objective of this SOI is to disseminate the updated information on REDD+ safeguards publicly so that to receive feedback and recommendations from key stakeholders and UNFCCC. This SOI includes the initiatives taken to develop safeguards provisions, including the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) prepared to implement emission reduction program in 13 districts of Nepal's Tarai region. Overall, this SOI explains: (a) how the safeguards have been considered during the REDD+ readiness phase, including how they have been interpreted/clarified in the national context; (b) what PLRs are currently in place to ensure that the safeguards will be addressed and respected during implementation of REDD+; and (c) what should be measured, documented, and reported to demonstrate the periodic status of Cancun safeguards in Nepal, i.e., development of national and project/FUG level criteria, indicators, and verifiers initial actions have been taken to ensure the safeguards are respected.

2.4 The process of SOI development and validation

This summary of information is drafted by the group of consultants hired by the REDD Implementation Center (REDD IC) of the Government of Nepal. This will be finalised and updated by the REDD IC before submitting to UNFCCC as a formal country document. This was one of the key deliverables of the consultant team while undertaking the assignment "designing and operationalizing safeguards information system for Nepal".

The SOI development process began in March 2021. The draft SOI was consulted with wider REDD+ stakeholders and rightsholders including government, non-government, and civil society organizations and academics of Nepal. The list of consulted stakeholders and their institutions is presented in the Appendix 2. Number of consultation meetings were held coordinated by REDD+ IC. Comments and feedback received were incorporated before its finalization. There would be additional consultations and validation process from REDDIC before submission of this SOI to UNFCCC

3. National REDD+ Context in Nepal

Nepal has been actively participating in REDD+ programs since 2008, soon after the UNFCCC adopted decisions on REDD+ at the 13th meeting of conference of the parties (COP) in Bali of Indonesia. The country implemented REDD+ readiness programs for nearly 10 years after approval of its first readiness plan idea notes (R-PIN) from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank. Most of the readiness activities were implemented through the financial support of FCPF after endorsement of readiness preparation proposal (R-PP) with the first readiness grant of USD 3.4 millions in 2011 and the additional readiness grant of USD 5.2 millions in 2017. Moreover, Nepal implemented REDD+ capacity building and readiness activities under United Nations Collaborative Program on REDD+ (UN-REDD) and other bilateral and multilateral REDD+ projects including pilot projects on REDD+ financing, grassroots capacity building project on REDD+ and capacity development projects for Indigenous Communities. These all initiatives supported to enhance the level of understanding of REDD+ and climate change among the stakeholders. Number of studies and assessments as the foundation for REDD+ programs were completed, shared among the stakeholders, and implemented. National REDD+ strategy 2018, Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Benefits Sharing Mechanism in REDD+, National Reference Level (NRL), Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system and Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) are some of the key documents prepared during the readiness phase that was agreed to be till 2019.

While implementing readiness activities, Nepal prepared and submitted emission reduction program document (ERPD) to the Carbon Fund to implement emission reduction program in 13 districts of the Tarai districts of Nepal. Recently, the document is approved by the Carbon Fund participants and included in the Carbon Fund Portfolio and has entered into emission reduction purchase/payment agreement (ERPA).

During all these processes, Nepal has critically assessed and considered social and environmental safeguards to REDD+, integrated such provisions in PLRs (described in the

forthcoming section) as well as implemented activities that builds capacity of stakeholders in understanding REDD+ safeguards.

3.1 REDD+ strategy of Nepal

3.1.1 Overview of national REDD+ strategy of Nepal

The vision of Nepal's national REDD+ strategy is to enhance carbon and non-carbon benefits of forest ecosystems and contribute to the prosperity of the people of Nepal. Likewise, strengthening resilience of forest ecosystems for emission reductions and increasing environmental, social, and economic benefits through improved policies, measures and institutions with enhanced stakeholders' capacity, capability and inclusiveness is its mission. The strategy has set five different objectives, nine principles and 12 diverse strategies that guide the overall REDD+ implementation in Nepal. All these objectives, principles and strategies respond to the social and environmental safeguards. The REDD+ strategies are guided by the principles of addressing and respecting social and environmental safeguards that focus on aligning with national development goals and strategies, building on the successful community-based approaches and promoting people centric, gender and socially inclusive practices and equitable benefit sharing and promoting social justice. Safeguarding environmental sustainability and social equity are the core of the strategy. The objectives include;

1. To reduce carbon emission, enhance carbon stocks and ecosystem resilience through mitigation and adaptation approaches by minimizing the causes and effects of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and promoting sustainable forest management across ecological regions.

2. To improve resource tenure and ensure fair and equitable sharing of carbon and non-carbon benefits of forests among right holders, women, Indigenous Peoples, Madhesis, Dalits and forest dependent local communities with effective implementation of safeguard measures.

3. To increase livelihood assets and diversify employment opportunities of women, Indigenous Peoples, Madhesis, Dalits, local communities and forest deponent poor.

4. To improve and harmonize policy and legal frameworks, in line with national and international requirements and standards, to harness carbon and non-carbon benefits; increase institutional capability and coordination; and strengthen governance, gender equality and social inclusion of the forestry sector.

5. To improve national forest monitoring system with robust measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification mechanisms.

Among 12 different strategies mentioned in REDD+ strategy document, almost all of them has integrated the essence of environmental and social safeguards principles. Some of them include: reducing carbon emission, enhancing forest stocks and improving forest product supply, improving forest tenure, ensuring carbon rights and fair and equitable benefit sharing among right holder, Women, Indigenous Peoples, Madhesis, Dalits and Forest Dependent Local Communities. However, the strategy 11 of the document specifically mentioned that social and environmental safeguards including environment friendly development is ensured through integrating and ensuring social and environmental safeguards in all REDD+ programs and activities and adopting approaches to Free, Prior and Informed Consent of right holders, particularly local communities, indigenous peoples, women and dalit.

Moreover, the strategy document has indicated how the social and environment safeguards system will be designed, various assessments and frameworks ensuring REDD+ safeguards are harmonized and how the feedbacks and grievance redress mechanisms will be designed and operationalized. The REDD+ strategy document has also presented the mechanisms and

framework for robust implementation of REDD+ activities in Nepal. Specifically, a clear institutional mechanism is set up as presented below.
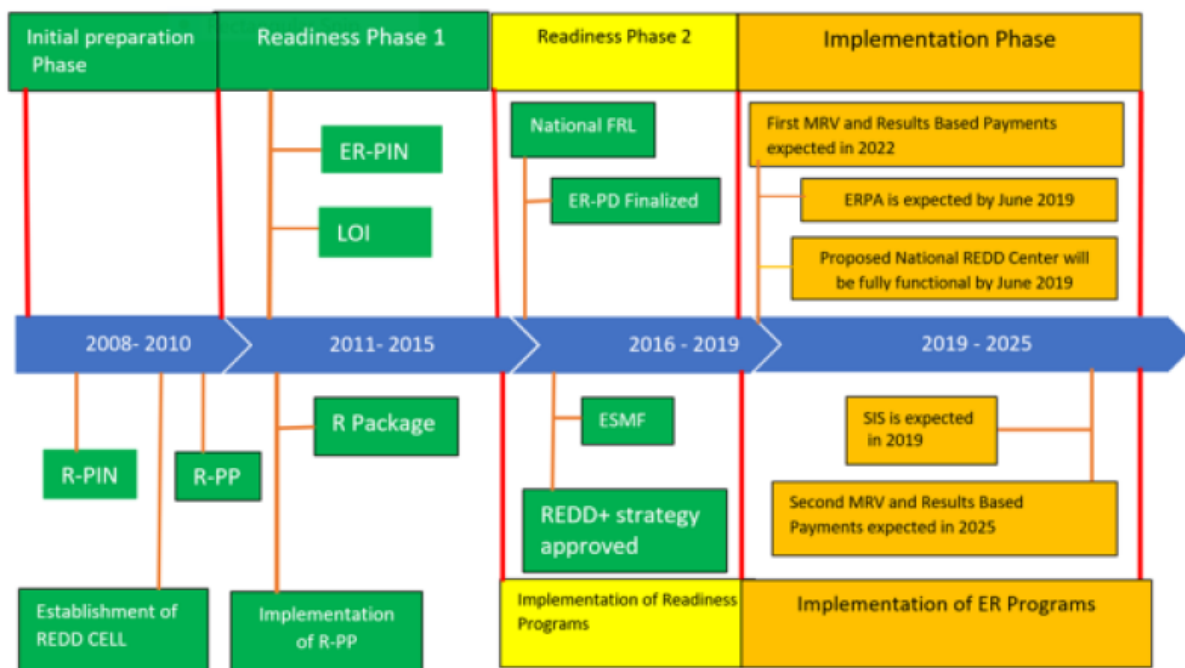

Figure 1: Implementation mechanism of REDD+ (Source: REDD IC, 2019)

3.2 Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Nepal

Identification and design of the action plans to check deforestation and forest degradation is very crucial aspect of environmental safeguards while implementing REDD+ programs. Assessment of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Nepal depicts that conversion of forests land to other land uses mainly the agriculture and settlement and associated fragmentation are the key drivers. Likewise, over harvesting, and illegal harvesting, overgrazing and forest fire are some of the other key drivers of forest degradation in Nepal. The national REDD+ Strategy (2018) has identified nine drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and 10 underlying causes whereas the latest emission reduction program document (ER-PD) of the ER program areas has identified six major drivers and 10 underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

The nine key drivers as identified by the national REDD+ strategy in prioritized sequence are;
- Unsustainable and illegal harvesting
- Forest fire
- Infrastructure development
- Over grazing/ uncontrolled grazing
- Weak forest management practices
- Urbanization and resettlement
- Encroachment
- Mining/ excavation (sand, boulders, stones)
- Expansion of invasive species

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Likewise, there are ten underlying causes of the drivers identified as;

- Disproportionate pattern of population distribution and migration
- Policy gaps and poor implementation, as well as policy contradiction among different sectors of jurisdictions.
- Poverty and limited livelihood opportunities
- High dependency on forest products and demand supply gaps
- Land use policy and insecure forest tenure
- Poor governance and weak political support
- Weak coordination and cooperation among stakeholders
- inadequate human resource development and management
- Low priority for research and development
- Poor coping strategy for natural disaster and climate change

Development of SIS has considered these drivers and underlying causes, so that the REDD+ interventions could be assessed against designed criteria and indicators of the safeguard principles.

3.3 Emission Reduction Programme implementation

Design of country approach to safeguards is primarily considered the REDD+ program interventions planned under ERPD in 13 districts of Nepal's Tarai. Since, this is the first kind of REDD+ implementation, Nepal will experience and learn the risks and benefits to the environment and society from the planned REDD+ program and activities. Hence, this SOI provides a glance of the program area, planned interventions and risk mitigation/safeguard measures during its interventions.

The program area has one of the most productive forests of Nepal in the southern plains, richest in biodiversity and harbors the most significant protected areas in the country. But at the same time, is a region of highest population growth, skyrocketing urbanization and enormous economic development opportunity. Likewise, the area is situated on the lap of Chure hills, one of the most fragile ecosystems, elongated east west with higher number of people depending on the forest resources. Since livelihoods of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities is closely linked to forests, non-timber forest products and watershed resources of the area, safeguard measures are very critical in ER program.

The key activities planned for implementation in ERP area include expansion of community-based forest management regimes, expansion of pro-poor leasehold forestry program, promotion of sustainable forest management principles, enhancement of benefits to the local forest user groups and creating opportunities for private sectors in forest related businesses. Moreover, ER program supports the initiatives that reduce demand of forest products with an expansion of improved cooking stove and biogas programs. REDD+ executing agency in Nepal has expected this ER Program a model of performance-based activities to address drivers of deforestation and degradation in Nepal.

3.4 Environmental and Social Management Framework for Emission Reduction Program

Government of Nepal has prepared ESMF specially focusing the emission reduction program as elaborated above. Considering the potential risks, primary objective of ESMF is to provide a detailed framework that addresses the environmental and social issues and impacts likely to emerge while implementing the proposed ER program interventions in the TAL districts. This ESMF has the following specific objectives:

- Screen potential environmental and social risks and impacts of the proposed seven; strategic interventions and specific activities to be implemented in the ER Program area;
- Mainstreaming of environmental and social aspects upfront in the planning and design of sub-projects;
- Identify policy-related, measures-related, and governance-related gaps in mitigating identified potential social and environmental impacts;
- Link identified impacts with the environmental and social safeguard policies of the World Bank and the UNFCCC safeguards for REDD+;
- Propose an appropriate framework for the mitigation and management of identified potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed ER Program; and
- Provide a basic guideline and set of procedures for the effective management of the social and environmental aspects of the ER Program interventions.

In overall, ESMF provides the detailed framework for Environment and Social management that suggests mitigation measures for identified environmental and social risks. Specifically, the document has developed various frameworks directly addressing the diverse social groups including indigenous and vulnerable community development framework, gender mainstreaming plan, descent work planning framework, resettlement policy framework and finally, the process framework that elaborates how these frameworks are implemented and ensure safeguarding the socio-environmental risks and adverse impacts associated with REDD+ program implementation.

4.5 Grievance Redress Mechanism while implementing REDD+ safeguards

Grievances can be concerned to technical forest management, and social and economic issues of stakeholders. The technical issues include selection of plantation sites, choice of species and type of plantation (tree species or NTFPs), management objectives, expected forest benefits etc. Likewise, the concerns related to the social and economic issues include level of participation and the role in decision making, sharing of forest benefits, associated employment opportunities and income. Most common type of conflicts expected are product use rights, land rights, grazing rights, through way rights etc. In additions, the conflict or complains can be related to elite capture, unequal distribution of benefits, non-compliance of FPIC, improper use of FPIC etc. Similarly, grievance could be regarding operation on national/government managed forests or community forests or leasehold forests or private forests.

Nepal's REDD process and initiatives on policy and actions are quite attentive to ensure the concerns and feedbacks of the stakeholders. In this regard, REDD IC of Nepal Government conducted an assessment on Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) and has suggested/ recommended REDD IC to share and allocate the responsibilities to appropriate institutions that has capacity to deal with the concerns of the stakeholders. Moreover, the study has also suggested to provision a case officer in each province forest director's office to respond and address the grievance raised by the concerned stakeholders/right holders. Since,

REDD IC itself does not have the decisive roles in case of legal issues, such officers will deal those and closely works with REDD IC. As per the existing system, stakeholders can provide their feedback and grievances to concerned Divisional Forest Office or Case Officer/REDD IC.

But, the mechanism of complaints registration must be simple and free of cost including mechanism of toll free SMS. REDD IC will manage the grievances by 28 days where 10 days' time is allocated for investigation and 10 days for implementation of grievances. The process has 6 steps mechanism, which are uptake or registration of grievances, research or investigation on the grievance, initiate process for the grievances redress or forward to appropriate institutions for actions, then response to the stakeholders followed by implementation of grievances and finally monitoring of grievances. The grievances will be either solved by REDD IC or it will instruct DFO for appropriate solution of grievances. FGRM also include monitoring of resolved grievances and appeal if the grievances are not resolved. If needed independent assessment or investigation on grievances are recommended by the study.

The SIS development process has seriously considered FGRM and has made an effort to integrate in SIS. SIS has built on the existing provisions of GRM but has attempted to make it simple and easy to handle from the web system.
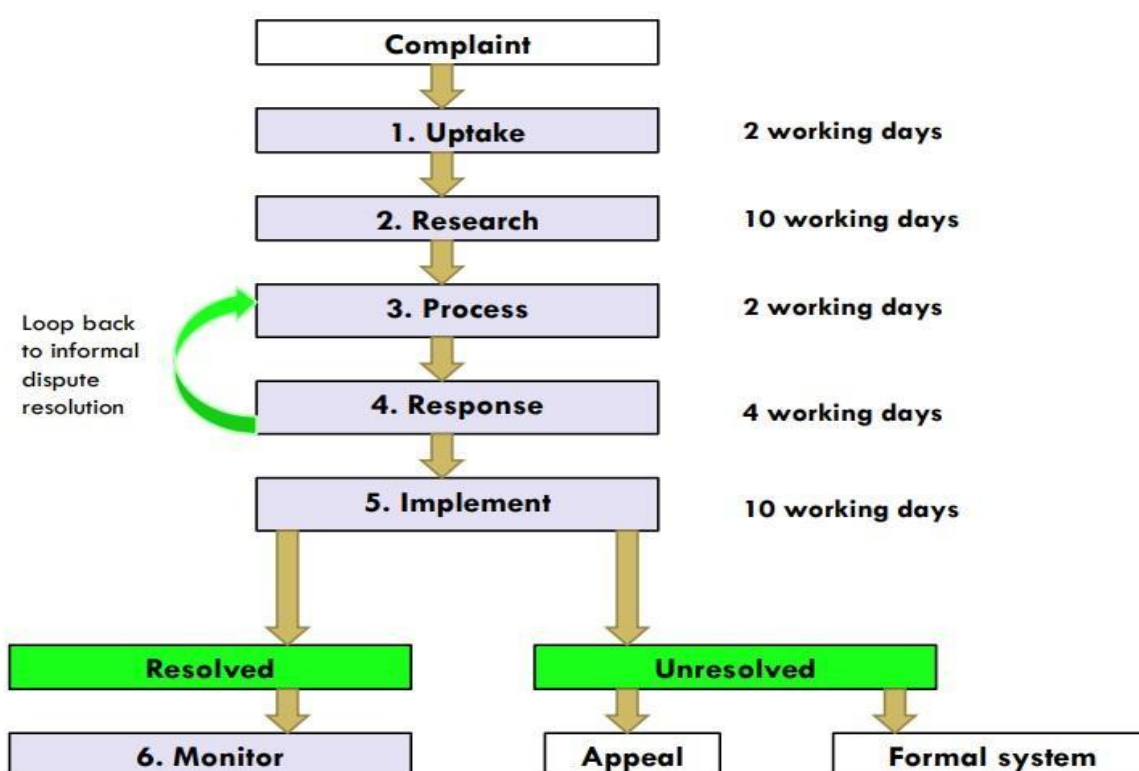

Figure 2: Grievance Redress Mechanism (Source: REDD IC, 2015)

3.6 Capacity and strength of REDD+ stakeholders and institutions to implement REDD+ safeguards

Nepal's National REDD+ Strategy (2018-2022), has realized the need of building capacity of REDD+ stakeholders and has proposed the capacity development and awareness raising activities. Particularly, it has clearly stated that addressing issues related to social and environmental safeguards is not possible until and unless the stakeholders and rightsholders are fully aware of the national and international provisions set to avoid negative implications of REDD+ programs. Implementation of various capacity development activities including raising awareness on national and international provisions/guidance on social and environmental safeguards proves that the government of Nepal has provided special attention to build capacity of the stakeholders since inception of REDD+ readiness phase.

Despite current efforts of capacity building activities, capacity of forestry institutions to implement REDD+ is also questioned in this context of poor forest governance, particularly in the Tarai (Paudel et al. 2013; Ojha 2008). Therefore, a detailed capacity assessment was carried out during preparation of environmental and social management framework (ESMF) of ER program in 13 districts of Tarai region. Especially, existing capacity gaps related to policy, institutions, governance and capacity of stakeholders and their institutions were assessed. The section 3.4 of ESMF document further analyses the gaps between national frameworks and the policy requirements of the World Bank safeguards. The key gaps identified in relation to the capacity of REDD+ include institutions, technology, governance, and other regulatory mechanisms. Primarily, lack of capable experts to respond social and environmental issues at different level (central, province and local) and lack of capacity of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, Dalit, women, and other REDD+ stakeholders in understanding social and environmental issues in REDD+ implementation was considered a huge challenge.

To address these gaps, ESMF states that, capacities of the institutions and stakeholders must be built in two aspects for effective management of environmental and social safeguard issues. First, the overall institutional development of REDD+ implementing agencies/ entity to make them able to ensure addressing environmental and social safeguards related issues/ grievances raised during the REDD+ process. Second, capacity of district level implementing agencies and the stakeholders need to be strengthen so that the essence of social and environmental safeguards in REDD+ implementation is understood, practiced, and coordinated to achieve broader social and environmental goal of REDD+. The most important aspect is that the challenges of capacity gaps are realized by ESMF and action plans are set to address them. For example, number of strategies and capacity development interventions are planned to ensure participation of local communities and indigenous people and the process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) was emphasized. The ESMF has highlighted that the planned training programs should focus on improving knowledge and ability to deal with the social and environmental risks and the effective options to manage those risks through clear understanding and compliance of REDD+ safeguards.

ESMF has suggested/recommended following major training/capacity building activities who will be engaged in implementation of ER programs.

- Role of forests in emission reduction and the science of climate change;
- REDD+ related international and national legal frameworks;
- Participation and consultation plans developed for REDD+ implementation;
- National safeguard instruments particularly ESIA regulations, relevant sectoral ESIA guidelines, how to review and monitor ESIA reports;
- Social and environmental implication (risks and opportunities) of REDD+/ER programs

- Grievance redress mechanism and benefit-sharing mechanism of REDD+;
- Stakeholder engagement in the implementation of ESMF and REDD+ activities;
- Scale of REDD+ implementation at different levels (national, state, jurisdiction and projects) and nested approaches;
- Elements and perspectives on free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in the context of REDD+;
- REDD+ social and environmental safeguards;

4 Nepal REDD+ Safeguard Approach

As Nepal is participating in REDD+ programs, it needs to prepare its country specific approach on how it will respond to national and international commitments regarding safeguarding possible social and environmental risks during REDD+ program implementation. Country approach to safeguards (CAS) builds upon the country's existing legal and institutional governance system to operationalize REDD+ safeguards and provide information on how those safeguards are addressed and respected (Rey and Swan 2014). The benefits of CAS are:

a) Country will have the opportunity to effectively respond to the UNFCCC requirements on REDD+ safeguards as per their own circumstances,

b) CAS offers a coordinated process to respond multiple safeguards meeting requirements of multiple donors, and

c) CAS can contribute to national priorities more than that of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions including community development, poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

Considering the objective and the functions that are expected to be fulfilled by the CAS in Nepal, two key elements - (a) Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) and (b) Safeguard Information System (SIS) – need to be included in the CAS (Peskett and Todd 2013). Since Nepal has its own PLRs that regulate different development initiatives and address the national, regional, and local social and environmental concerns raised due to any development activities, these PLRs constitute a major pillar to develop a SIS for the REDD+ programs. Therefore, one of the major parts of the REDD+ SIS development is the review of PLRs in such a way that whether, how, and to what extend the Cancun safeguards principles are addressed in the national PLRs. PLRs review formed the basis for the development of Nepal's CAS. Specifically, PLRs informed the provisions, strategies, and/or processes that help comply the Cancun safeguards while REDD+ programs implement. The second part of the CAS consist of the SIS, which offers a systematic approach to gather, measure, examine, and share the information on how and to what extent the REDD+ safeguard principles are addressed and respected throughout implementation of REDD+ programs. The SIS include criteria, indicators, verifiers, and methodologies for the collection and sharing of safeguard related information and the system framework itself. The summary of information (SOI) prepared on the basis of these components is a dynamic, living document that need to be communicated to the UNFCCC in a periodic manner.

The first section below presents the approaches taken by the Government of Nepal to ensure that REDD+ programme development and implementation is consistent with Cancun Safeguards. UNFCCC guidance according to the decision of COP 21 in Paris, strongly encourages to include description of each safeguard in accordance with the national

circumstances[1]. The main aim of this guidance is to ensure transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness while informing how safeguards are addressed and respected. Following this guidance, we have assessed the national as well as international PLRs relevant to each of the Cancun REDD+ safeguards.

After the PLRs section, we have presented Nepal specific criteria, indicators, and verifiers to gather and share safeguard related information as an integral part of the REDD+ SIS. The criteria, indicators, and verifiers are developed for national level as well as project level (primarily the forest user group level) to make it more relevant to onsite implementation of REDD+ activities, including safeguards. Additionally, an interactive web-based safeguards information system is developed reflecting PLRs, principles, criteria, indicators, and verifiers for the REDD+ program/project. Moreover, the section presents how the safeguards system is designed to accommodate grievance redress mechanism if such safeguards are not addressed and/or respected during the implementation of REDD+ programs.

4.1 Assessment of Nepal's policies, laws, and regulations relevant to the REDD+ safeguards

Parties to the UNFCCC agreed on seven safeguard principles in Cancun that the UNFCCC expects to be applied by the REDD+ countries in accordance with their national context while designing and implementing REDD+ activities. As guided by the UNFCCC, Cancun safeguard principles can be described and interpreted as per the specific country context. The spirit and meaning of all Cancun safeguards are retained intact while preparing national interpretation of the Cancun safeguard principles and developing criteria, indicators, and verifiers proposed to use to assess safeguard status at the national and project levels considering the Nepalese circumstances. We present below, the list of PLRs and international conventions/treaties relevant to REDD+ safeguards (Table 2), narrative description of each Cancun safeguard principle, including breakdown of core elements, a summary of how national PLRs addressed specific Cancun safeguard, and the key (not comprehensive) safeguard related provisions available in key PLRs.

Table 2. Nepal's national PLRs and international conventions related to Cancun safeguards.

National PLRs	International conventions
- Constitution of Nepal 2015 - Forestry Sector Strategy 2016-2025 - REDD+ Strategy 2018 - National Forest Policy 2019 (2075) - Forest Act 2019 (2076) - National Environment Policy 2019 (2076) - Environment Protection Act 2019 (2076) - National Climate Change Policy 2019 (2076) - National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 - Nepal CITES Act, 2017 - National Wetland Policy 2003 - National Foundation for Upliftment of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2002	- Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 - Convention to Combat Desertification 1992 - United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992 - Ramsar Convention 1971 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

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● National Dalit Commission Act, 2017 ● Tharu Commission Act, 2017 ● The Prevention of Corruption Act, 2002 ● Right to Information Act, 2007 ● Good Governance Act 2008 ● National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)- 2014-2020 ● Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Strategy 2007 ● Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014 (Third Amendment BS 2071)	(CITES), 1973, amended 1979 ● International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 ● ILO Convention Article, 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989) ● UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE A

The REDD+ programs/projects complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programs and relevant international conventions and agreements.

Narrative description
The REDD+ programs/projects, strategy, complement and/or are consistent with objectives of national programs on forests, biodiversity, environmental conservation, development, and governance and are consistent with objectives of international conventions for which Nepal is a member country.

Core elements of the description
a. Nepal's REDD+ Strategy and associated programs and projects are consistent with the objectives of national programs on forests and biodiversity
b. Nepal's REDD+ strategy and associated programs and projects are consistent with relevant and applicable international conventions and agreements.

How the safeguard is addressed

Environmental management has been given high priority in the Constitution of Nepal by explicitly writing clean and healthy environment as one of the rights of citizens, indicating that the nation is ready for providing necessary legal, programmatic, and other supports. Nepal's forest and forest-related programs are mentioned in several PLRs and other program documents such as sectoral development strategies, five-year periodic development plan, annual development action plans, and operational guidelines. For instance, forest policy has emphasized the sustainable management of forest, including biodiversity conservation, and income and employment generations so as to contribute to increase prosperity of the country and its people. Environmental policy calls for mainstreaming environmental issues in all sectors of development. Depending on type and severity of crimes, particularly breaching rules to protect and manage floral and faunal diversity and resources, CITES Act, National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, and Forest Act have specified amount of penalty, which include both fine and imprisonment. Forest management, biodiversity and wildlife conservation, climate change, governance related PLRs call for local communities' effective and meaningful participation to conserve forests and wildlife resources and follow environmentally friendly development. Specifically, Good Governance Act, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy, National Foundation for Upliftment of Indigenous

Nationalities Act and the Right to Information Act call for active engagement of local communities, indigenous peoples, women, poor, and vulnerable peoples.

National PLRs and their provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard

Constitution of Nepal 2015
- Prioritize its citizens' right to live in clean and healthy environment (Section 30).

Forest Policy 2019
- Support establishes managed forest areas and balanced ecosystems, thereby contribute economic, social, and cultural prosperity (Vision).
- Develop national standards for certification of sustainable forest management from social, economic, and ecological perspectives (Strategy 8.2.6).
- Develop capacity, reform legal structure, and build institution to implement international conventions related to forest and environment where Nepal is member country (Strategy 8.8.5).
- Increase the production and use of timber to reduce carbon emission (Policy 8.3.6).
- Promote *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of rare, endangered, and threatened species (Policy 8.4.1).
- Abolish gender discrimination from all forest offices (Policy 8.8.3)

National Climate Change Policy 2019
- Contribute to socio-economic prosperity by building climate resilient society (Goal ##).

National Environment Policy 2019
- Mainstream environmental concerns in all sectors of physical development (Objective 7.4).
- Mobilize people's participation in environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management (Objective 7.6)
- Use natural and human made resources for equitable distribution of resources between present and future generations (Objectives 7.7)
- Mainstream environmental perspectives in all sectors of development (Policy 8.2.2).

CITES Act 2017
- CITES Act 2017 is enacted for (i) conservation and regulation of trade of endangered plants and (ii) prohibition of trade of selected/endangered animals/plants or their parts unless the permission is given (Preamble: Section 3).

Forest Act 2019
- Manage national forest as government managed forests, protected forest, community forest, leasehold forest and religious forest to support national prosperity through forest production and conservation of wildlife, environment, watershed, and biodiversity (Preamble: Aim)

Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014
- Guidelines has acknowledged the global concept of payment for environmental services (PES) and has encouraged promotion of carbon sequestration, biodiversity,

and conservation of watershed resources to enhance income opportunities (Section 4.7).

<u>Environment Protection Act 2019</u>
- Protect citizens' right of living in a clean environment and protect nature, environment, and biodiversity from negative environmental impacts (Preamble).

<u>National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973</u>
- Manage national parks, protect wildlife and their habitat, regulate hunting, and protect, manage, develop, and use landscape with beauty and special significance (Preamble).
- If rhino, tiger, elephant, musk deer, clouded leopard, snow leopard, blue bull is illegally killed or harmed, bought, or sold, if ownership is handed over or if rhino horn, musk, skin of snow leopard is kept or bought or sold or transported, there will be punishment with imprisonment of 5 to 15 years and penalizing five hundred thousand to one million rupees (Section 26).

<u>National Wetland Policy 2003</u>
- Conserve and manage wetlands with local people's participation for their benefits, while maintaining environmental integrity according to the provisions and spirit of the Ramsar Treaty (Policy 5.1).

<u>National Foundation for Upliftment of Aadibasi/Janjati Act 2002</u>
- Uplift Aadibasi/Janjati (indigenous peoples) for their social, economic, and cultural development (Preamble).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE B

Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, considering national legislation and sovereignty.

Narrative description
Institutions involved in the implementation of national REDD+ strategy and forestry programs and projects are transparent and governance structures are effective.

Core elements of the description
That includes ensuring the following core elements while implementing REDD+ strategies/projects and actions.
   a. Effective role of all stakeholders,
   b. Fair and equitable benefit sharing,
   c. Gender equity and equality,
   d. Absence of corruption, and
   e. Equal access to justice

How the safeguard is addressed
Several PLRs have made provisions and provided opportunities to develop programs to make the forest governance transparent, accountable, effective, and participatory. For instance, forest policy has emphasized improved forest governance, particularly to increase women's participation, ensure accountability, promote transparency, maintain impartiality, and distribute benefits equitably. Forest act made provisions for preparing and implementing locally suitable District Strategic Plan to manage all forests available in the district and share

benefits received from the management of forests across stakeholders. Climate change policy provides opportunities to build or increase adaptation capacity of communities, groups, families, and individuals to reduce their risks and vulnerabilities. In addition, climate policy calls for the conservation and development of important natural, cultural, and social heritages by making tourism sector climate friendly. National environmental policy trigger to ensure environmental justice to the pollution affected people and inter-generational equity in resource sharing. Nepal Foundation for Upliftment of Indigenous Nationalities Act call for provisions to assist build an equitable society by making social, economic, religious, and cultural development and upliftment of Aadibasi/Janjati.

National PLRs and their vision, goal, objectives, strategies, and/or provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard

Forest Policy 2019
- Conduct value addition of forest products and services with equitable distribution (Goal)
- Improve forest governance and equitable distribution of benefits (Objective 10).
- Formulate law, guidelines, and manuals to manage forests for long term (Strategy 8.1.1)
- Ensure fifty percent participation of women while formulating strategies, laws, budget, programs, and practices (Strategy 8.8.4)
- Abolish gender discrimination from all forest offices (Policy 8.8.3)
- Maintain transparency, accountability, and impartiality in all forest institutions (Policy 8.8.4).

Climate Change Policy
- Enhance climate change adaptation capacities of persons, families, groups, and communities vulnerable to, and at risk of, climate change (Objectives 7.1).
- Mainstream gender equality and social inclusion into climate change mitigation and adaptation programs (Objectives 7.7).
- Conserve and develop important natural, cultural, and social heritages by making tourism sector climate friendly (Strategy 8.6).
- Support livelihoods by mainstreaming good governance and gender equality and social inclusion into formulation of policies, institutional framework and implementation of programs related to climate change (Strategy 8.9).

National Environment Policy 2019
- Ensure environmental justice to pollution affected lives (Objective 7.5).
- Use natural and human made resources for equitable distribution of resources between present and future generations (Objectives 7.7)

Forest Act 2019
- Prepare and implement District Strategic Plan from Divisional Forest Officer (Section 11).
- Manage national forests as government managed forest except protected forests, religious forests, community forests, collaborative forests, and leasehold forests (Section 14).
- Share benefits from the protection forests according to laws of National Natural Resource and Finance Commission (Section 16).

Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014
- Participation of all social groups including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), women, Dalits and poor (section 2.1) need to be ensured during preparation of constitution and operational plan.
- Every household should be informed while delineating forest area and identifying user households/members (section 2.2).
- Representation of at least 50% women and proportionate representation of Ips, Dalits and poor in CF user committee (section 3.7)
- Provision of compensation in case of wildlife damage and fire (3.10)

Environment Protection Act
- Conduct public hearing while preparing Environment Impact Assessment Report (Section 3).

National Foundation for Upliftment of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2002
- Provide assistance in building an equitable society by making social, economic, religious, and cultural development and upliftment of Aadibasi/Janjati (Objectives e).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE C

Respect knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and member of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations and national circumstances and law, and noting that United Nations General Assembly has adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Narrative description
REDD+ strategies and actions respect and honour the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, including protecting the land traditionally occupied by them as well as their skills, culture, norms, and practices and their traditional way of life upon their wish in line with the provisions of national PLRs (e.g., National Foundation for Upliftment of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2002 and National Dalit Commission Act, 2017) and international obligations resulting from Nepal's ratification of UNDRIP, ILO 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989).

Core elements of the description
a. The rights of forest users and local communities, indigenous communities and customary landowners and the vulnerable groups are promoted and protected in the context of the application of Nepal's REDD+ Strategy and in consistency with relevant and applicable international conventions and treaties.
b. Indigenous and traditional skills and knowledge is recognized and protected in the context of the application of the National REDD+ Strategy.

How the safeguard is addressed
Several PLRs have made provisions that respect knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and member of local communities. Forest policy clarifies that ownership of a [forest] resource lies with concerned people (i.e., indigenous peoples, local communities, or traditional users of a particular resource). The degree and types of ownership depend on the modality of forest management. With clarification on ownership, the forest policy equally emphasized the need for an equitable distribution of benefits. In addition, forest policy places

a great value on indigenous peoples'/local communities' biodiversity conservation related knowledge, skills, and practice and therefore emphasize document such knowledge, skill, and practices. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act has provision that the land ownership of the indigenous people and local community in the buffer zone areas will not be affected and the life and property damage caused by wildlife will be compensated by the government. National environment policy ensures the rights of the citizens to live in clean and healthy environment by controlling pollution, managing wastes, and promoting greenery.

National PLRs and their vision, goal, objectives, strategies, and/or provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard
Forest Policy 2019
- Ownership of forest products lies with concerned people as their rights, depending upon modality of forest management (Policy 8.1.2).
- Document, register and secure indigenous peoples'/local communities' knowledge, skills, and practice of IPs/LC related biodiversity conservation (Policy 8.2.2).
- Secure rights of IPs/women/laborers, community managers, Dalits while managing forest resources with their access to equitable benefit sharing (Strategy 8.8.1)

National Environment Policy 2019
- Ensure rights of the citizens to live in clean and healthy environment by controlling pollution, managing wastes, and promoting greenery (Goal 1)

Forest Act 2019
- Implement mitigation activities through affected communities (Section 10).

Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014
- Participation of all social groups including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), women, Dalits and poor (section 2.1) need to be ensured during preparation of constitution and operational plan.
- Representation of at least 50% women and proportionate representation of IPs, Dalits and poor in CF user committee (section 3.7)
- Provision of compensation in case of wildlife damage and fire (3.10)

National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act
- While managing and protecting buffer zones, rights of local people on land ownership will not be affected (Section 3 kha).
- Provide compensation by the government when lives and properties are damaged from attack of wildlife outside the national park and reserves (Section 3 gha).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE D
Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities.

Narrative description
The REDD+ strategies and actions ensure full and effective participation of relevant rights holders and stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and forest and land dependent local communities.

Core elements of the description

a. Providing relevant information about all REDD+ program/project activities in simple language,
b. Making relevant stakeholders and rights holders know the provisions and the issues,
c. Consulting with relevant stakeholders and rights holders to get their opinion on the program/project goal and the issues,
d. Consulting with relevant stakeholders and rights holders in an appropriate way, such as culture-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and inclusive way,
e. Consulting with relevant stakeholders and rights holders' representative organizations, including traditional authorities and community organizations in an appropriate platform, including persons at high level in an indigenous peoples' organizations, and
f. Fully respecting free, prior informed consent (FPIC) principles.

How the safeguard is addressed

Several PLRs have made provisions to ensure the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities. Forest policy emphasizes following a participatory approach and process while preparing and implementing the management plan of national parks, reserves, conservation areas, and buffer zones. Particularly, the policy clearly mentioned the need to take free, prior, informed consent from affected communities while implementing forestry project. Wetland policy recognizes the value of indigenous peoples' and local communities' knowledge, skills, and practices in the innovations and traditional research for the sustainable management and use of wetland resources. National Environmental Policy intend to promote people's participation in environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management. National Foundation for Upliftment of Aadibasi/Janjati Act 2002 aims to uplift Aadibasi/Janjati through their meaningful and effective participation in mainstream national development.

National PLRs and their provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard

National Forest Policy 2019
- Prepare management plan of national parks, reserves, conservation area and buffer zone and implement in participatory way (Strategy 8.4.1)
- Take free, prior, informed consent from affected communities while implementing forestry project (Strategy 8.8.3).
- Recognize forests protected by local people as community conservation area (Policy 8.4.2).

Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014
- Participation of all social groups including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), women, Dalits and poor (section 2.1) need to be ensured during preparation of constitution and operational plan.
- Every household should be informed while delineating forest area and identifying user households/members (section 2.2).
- Representation of at least 50% women and proportionate representation of Ips, Dalits and poor in CF user committee (section 3.7)
- The guideline has provisioned allocating some CF land for poor and landless people
- Special priority for poor, Dalits, women and disadvantaged segment of the society while supporting/promoting forest based industries (section 5.5).

- Provision of group monitoring to ensure the benefits to the poor and disadvantaged (section 5.9)

<u>National Environment Policy 2019</u>
- Mobilize people's participation in environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management (Objective 7.6)

<u>Wetland Policy 2003</u>
- Identify local people's knowledge, skill, and practice regarding wetlands and promote their innovations and traditional research for the sustainable use of wetlands resources (Objective 4.2).

<u>National Foundation for Upliftment of Aadibasi/Janjati Act 2002</u>
- Uplift Aadibasi/Janjati (indigenous peoples) through their equal participation in mainstreaming of national development (Preamble).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE E

The actions are consistent with conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits.

Narrative description

REDD+ actions under the National REDD+ Strategy will promote the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, the enhancement of social and environmental benefits, and will not result in the conversion of natural forests, in accordance with the relevant PLRs in the country.

Core elements of the description

The REDD+ programs/projects conducted are;
a. consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity,
b. ensuring that REDD+ actions are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of nature as a whole, and especially natural forests and their ecosystem services, and
c. geared towards enhancing other social and environmental benefits.

How the safeguard is addressed

Several PLRs have made provisions to ensure that the REDD+ programs/projects are consistent with conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, ensuring that the natural forests are not converted to other types. Such PLRs are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services so as to enhance social and environmental benefits from the management of natural forests. Forest Act provide the Government of Nepal an authority to declare any part of forest area, which are important from environmental, ecosystems, scientific, and cultural perspectives at national or international levels and area important for preserving plants and wildlife, as protected forest in consultation with Province Government. In addition, the Government can make arrangements for the protection of national parks, wildlife reserves, conservation areas, and buffer zones. To promote *ex-situ* conservation, the government can also establish zoos and botanical gardens. Climate Policy intend to build resilient ecosystems, particularly those at risk of adverse impacts of climate change and ensure sustainable environmental services.

National PLRs and their provisions relevant to the Cancun safeguard

Forest Policy 2019
- Conserve, re-establish and use forests, plants, wildlife, and biodiversity (Objective 4).
- Establish zoo and botanical garden for *ex situ* conservation of species at federal, province and local level (Strategy 8.4.2).

Climate Change Policy
- Build resilience of the ecosystems which are at the risk of adverse impacts of climate change (Objectives 7.2).
- Ensure sustainable environmental services by developing climate resilient ecosystems (Strategy 8.2).

Forest Act 2019
- Declare any part of forest area, which are important from environmental, ecosystems, scientific, and cultural perspectives at national or international levels and area important for preserving plants and wildlife, as protected forest in consultation with Province Government (Section 15).
- Make arrangements for the protection of national parks, wildlife reserves, conservation areas and buffer zones by the government [Section 3 {kha (1)}].

Guidelines for Community Forestry Development Program, 2014

- Provisioned sustainable forest management activities including protection (Protection from grazing, fire, illegal cutting and encroachment), conservation and promotion of forests including enrichment plantation with diverse species.
- Special attention should be provided in conserving and promoting biodiversity giving special consideration to the endemic species.

CITES Act 2017
- Depending upon level of crime, one involved in illegal movement of any part of endangered animal can be punished with imprisonment of 5 to 15 years and penalizing five hundred thousand to one million rupees or both (Provision: Section 21).
- Depending upon level of crime, one involved in illegal movement of any part of endangered plants can be punished with imprisonment of 1 to 5 years and penalizing hundred thousand to five hundred thousand rupees or both (Provision: Section 21).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE F

Actions address the risk of reversal/stop releasing carbon at later stage.

Narrative description
REDD+ strategy and programs ensure conducting several actions to address the risks of reversals or to stop emitting forest carbon at later stage.

Core elements of the description

    a) Forest monitoring at national, provincial, regional, and local levels by mobilizing experts, forest bureaucracy, and local communities,

    b) Effective law enforcement,

    c) Income diversification,

    d) Equitable benefit sharing with local people so that they will always be active for conservation, and

    e) Sustainable management of forest.

How the safeguard is addressed

Several PLRs have made provisions to ensure that the REDD+ programs/projects address the risk of reversal/stop releasing carbon at later stage. Forest Policy has a provision to compensate the forest area to make sure that the forest area in the country is not reduced if existing forest area is used for other purposes or converted to other land use type. In addition, Forest Policy strategizes developing national standards for certification of sustainable forest management from social, economic, and ecological perspectives, including promoting conservation, farming, processing, and certification of herbs and non-timber forest products. Two other key parts of the Forest Policy is to monitor policy implementation periodically and conduct value addition of forest products and services. To complement Forest Policy provisions, Forest Act 2019 prioritized protecting forest and forestland from individuals' encroachment, establishing armed forest guard for forest protection, identifying forest offenses, and penalizing offenders. Identifying offenses and penalizing offenders are also provisioned in the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 CITES Act 2017, particularly related to destroying wildlife habitats, illegal killing of wildlife, and illegal trade of wildlife and their body parts. Climate Change Policy provisioned the monitoring of climate mitigation program at Province level, indicating the need of continuous updates in mitigation program to address the risk of reversal.

National PLRs and their vision, goal, objectives, strategies, and/or provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard

There are no such documents which has directly mentioned to reduce release of carbon at the later stage but monitoring, law enforcement, equitable benefit sharing, and income diversification are key points so that local people will be committed for long term forest management. These provisions are mentioned in several documents as below:

Forest Policy 2019

- Conduct value addition of forest products and services with equitable distribution (Goal).
- Compensate the forest area to make sure that the forest area in the country is not reduced if existing forest area is used for other purposes or converted to other land use type (Objective 7).
- Improve forest governance and ensure equitable benefit sharing (Objective 10).
- Develop national standards for certification of sustainable forest management from social, economic, and ecological perspectives (Strategy 8.2.6).
- Promote conservation, farming, processing, and certification of herbs and non-timber forest products (Policy 8.3.5).
- Monitor policy implementation periodically (Section 13).
- Protect forest and forestland from individuals' encroachment (Section 7).

Forest Act 2019

- Protect forest and forestland from individuals' encroachment (Section 7).
- Share benefits gained from the protection of forests according to laws of National Natural Resource and Finance Commission (Section 16).
- Establish armed forest guard for forest protection (Section 46).
- Forest protection is considered as major work of Division Forest Office (Section 49).
- The act has identified different forest offense and penalizing offenders (Section 50).

<u>National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973</u>
- Manage national parks, protect wildlife and their habitat, regulate hunting, and protect, manage, develop, and use landscape with beauty and special significance for the benefits of, and development of morality of, citizens (Preamble).
- If rhino, tiger, elephant, musk deer, clouded leopard, snow leopard, blue bull is illegally killed or harmed, bought, or sold, if ownership is handed over or if rhino horn, musk, skin of snow leopard is kept or bought or sold or transported, there will be punishment with imprisonment of 5 to 15 years and penalizing five hundred thousand to one million rupees (Section 26).

<u>CITES Act 2017</u>
- Depending upon level of crime, one involved in illegal movement of any part of endangered animal can be punished with imprisonment of 5 to 15 years and penalizing five hundred thousand to one million rupees or both (Section 21).
- Depending upon level of crime, one involved in illegal movement of any part of endangered plants can be punished with imprisonment of 1 to 5 years and penalizing hundred thousand to five hundred thousand rupees or both (Section 21).

<u>National Wetland Policy 2003</u>
- Conserve and manage wetlands with local people's participation for their benefits, while maintaining environmental integrity according to the provisions and spirit of the Ramsar Treaty (Policy 5.1).

<u>Climate change policy</u>
- Support livelihoods by mainstreaming good governance, gender equality, and social inclusion into formulation of policies, institutional framework, and implementation of programs related to climate change (Strategy 8.9).
- Monitor mitigation program at Province level (Section 10).

<u>National Environment Policy</u>
- Ensure environmental justice to pollution affected lives (Objective 7.5).
- Use natural and human made resources for equitable distribution of resources between present and future generations (Objectives 7.7).

SAFEGUARD PRINCIPLE G

Actions to reduce risk of displacement/leakage.

Narrative description

REDD+ strategy and actions ensure range of project activities at national, provincial, regional, and local levels are carried out to reduce displacement or leakage from REDD+ project area or forests to other areas or forests.

Core elements of the description

a) Forest monitoring at national, provincial, regional, and local levels by mobilizing experts, forest bureaucracy, and local communities,
b) Effective law enforcement,
c) Income diversification,
d) Equitable benefit sharing with local people so that they will always be active for conservation, and
e) Sustainable management of forest.

How the safeguard is addressed

Several PLRs have made provisions that contribute the REDD+ programs/projects to reduce the risk of displacement or leakage. Forest Policy has a provision to compensate the forest area to make sure that the forest area in the country is not reduced if existing forest area is used for other purposes or converted to other land use type. In addition, Forest Policy strategizes developing national standards for certification of sustainable forest management from social, economic, and ecological perspectives, including promoting conservation, farming, processing, and certification of herbs and non-timber forest products. Two other key parts of the Forest Policy is to monitor policy implementation periodically and conduct value addition of forest products and services. To complement Forest Policy provisions, Forest Act 2019 prioritized protecting forest and forestland from individuals' encroachment, establishing armed forest guard for forest protection, identifying forest offenses, and penalizing offenders. Climate Change Policy provisioned the monitoring of climate mitigation program at Province level, indicating the need of continuous updates in mitigation program to address the risk of reversal.

National PLRs and their vision, goal, objectives, strategies, and/or provisions relevant to this Cancun safeguard

Forest Policy
- Conduct value addition of forest products and services with equitable distribution (Goal 1).
- Compensate the forest area to make sure forest area is not reduced if existing forest area is used for other purposes or converted to other land use type (Objective 7).
- Improve forest governance and equitable benefit sharing (Objective 10).
- Promote conservation, farming, processing and certification of herbs and non-timber forest products (Policy 8.3.5).
- Monitor policy implementation periodically (Section 13).

Forest Act
- Protect forest and forestland from individuals' encroachment (Section 7).
- Share benefits gained from the protection of forests according to laws of National Natural Resource and Finance Commission (Section 16).
- Establish armed forest guard for forest protection (Section 46).
- Forest protection is considered as major work of Division Forest Office (…..).
- The act has identified different forest offense and penalizing offenders (Section 50).

National Environment Policy

- Ensure environmental justice to pollution affected lives (Objective 7.5).
- Use natural and human made resources for equitable distribution between present and future generations (Objectives 7.7)

Climate change policy
- Support livelihoods by mainstreaming good governance, gender equality, and social inclusion into formulation of policies, institutional framework, and implementation of programs related to climate change (Strategy 8.9).
- Monitor mitigation program at Province level (Section 10).

National Wetland Policy 2003
- Conserve and manage wetlands with local people's participation for their benefits, while maintaining environmental integrity according to the provisions and spirit of the Ramsar Treaty (Policy 5.1).

National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973
- Manage national parks, protect wildlife and their habitat, regulate hunting, and protect, manage, develop, and use landscape with beauty and special significance for the benefits of, and development of morality of, citizens (Preamble).

4.2 Country specific Criteria and Indicators to assess REDD+ safeguards

Since assessment of PLRs offer key information only on how the country's regulatory frameworks and international treaties and agreements adhere to the principle of REDD+ safeguards for the SIS, it is crucial for REDD IC to assess and gather information from the REDD+ project implementation sites to ensure how the safeguards are respected during the project implementation phase using the national SIS framework so as to complete the SOI. The SIS framework include the development of country specific principles, criteria, indicators, and verifiers that help assess whether and to what extent the Cancun safeguard principles are addressed and/or respected. Based on the review of international conventions and treaties, national policies, and literature and stakeholders consultations, Nepal specific safeguard principles, criteria, indicators, and verifiers are developed as presented below.

Principles: Principles are the broader statements of intent, particularly the aspirational statements that are aimed to achieve. Principles are generic statement that neither specify what national rule/policy or guidelines nor mention what convention or agreement or programmes.

Criteria: Criteria are the specific statements that elaborate the thematic content of the principles and are more action oriented.

Indicators: Indicators are the detailed, achievable qualitative, quantitative, or descriptive attributes that are assessable as well as can demonstrate the changes over time. Generally, indicators are expected to be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART).

Verifiers: Verifiers are the proof and evidence that to what extent the indicators are fulfilled or REDD+ project activities are implemented in such a way that the REDD+ safeguards are addressed and/or respected.

Two sets of criteria, indicators, and verifiers - for national level and for project level - are developed as part of a national framework of SIS. As SIS is a dynamic concept, which allow constant and periodic updates in the system itself, it is very important that it should be interactive and a living document/system. In addition, while developing criteria, indicators, and verifiers, appropriateness, necessity, and sufficiency of proposed criteria, indicators, and verifiers to assess specific safeguard principle were considered. Further, while identifying the key indicators a due consideration was given to the potential affirmative connection between REDD+ program and related forest, wildlife, climate change, natural resources, watershed, biodiversity, development, and poverty reduction related national policies and international treaties and conventions. Cancun safeguard wise country specific pronciples, criteria, indicators, and verifiers are presented below.

Cancun Safeguard Principle A
The actions complement or are in consistent with the objectives of National Forest Programme and relevant international conventions and agreements.

Country Specific Principle 1: The REDD+ program complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions and other instruments.
Core elements of the description include the National REDD+ strategy and program's connection with (i) the national forestry policies, (ii) the national environmental policies, (iii) national development policies, and (iv) relevant international conventions and treaties.

Criteria 1.1: REDD+ strategies and programs are in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the national forestry policies, including Forest Policy 2018, Forest Act 2019, National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1972.

Indicator 1.1.1: National forestry policies relevant to the REDD+ programs are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with national forestry policies.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) List of relevant national policies in REDD+ strategy/Policy and Measures (PAM) document
   b) Project scoping/feasibility study reports
   c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
   d) Other relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related to forestry and REDD+

Indicator 1.1.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ program with the national forest policies and relevant legal instruments.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Environmental and Social Management Framework
   b) Policy and guidelines/directives to implement REDD+ programmes
   c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies

Criteria 1.2: REDD+ strategies and programs are in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the <u>national environmental policies</u>, including National Environment Policy 2019, Environmental Protection Act 2019, National Climate Change Policy 2019, Nepal

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Act 2017, and National Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan 2014).

Indicator 1.2.1 National environmental policies relevant to the REDD+ programs are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with these policies.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifier:**

a) List of relevant national environmental policies in REDD+ strategy and Policy and Measures (PAM) document
b) Project scoping/feasibility study reports
c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
d) Other relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related to forestry and REDD+

Indicator 1.2.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ program with the national environmental policies and relevant legal instruments.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) REDD+ strategy/Policy and Measures (PAM) document
b) Project scoping/feasibility study reports
c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
d) Other relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related to environment and REDD+

Criteria 1.3: REDD+ strategies and programs are in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the national development policies, including Land Use Policy 2015 and Hydroelectricity Development Policy 2002, Gender and Social inclusion policies and strategies, Good Governance Act 2008 and Right to Information Act 2007.

Indicator 1.3.1 National development policies relevant to the REDD+ programs are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with them.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) List of relevant national development policies in REDD+ strategy/Policy and Measures (PAM) document
b) Project scoping/feasibility study reports
c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
d) Other relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related to development and REDD+ policies

Indicator 1.3.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ program with the national development policies and relevant legal instruments.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Environmental and Social Management Framework
b) Policy and guidelines/directives to implement REDD+ programmes
c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies

Criteria 1.4: REDD+ strategies and programs are in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the <u>international conventions and treaties</u> in which Nepal is the party such as Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, Ramsar Convention 1971, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 1973 (amended 1979), Convention to Combat Desertification 1994, International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006, ILO Convention Article (Article: 169) 1989, United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, and UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007.

Indicator 1.4.1: International conventions and treaties and policies relevant to the REDD+ program implementation are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with them.

- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) List of relevant international conventions and treaties in REDD+ strategy/Policy and Measures (PAM) document
  b) Project scoping/feasibility study reports
  c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
  d) Other relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related international conventions and national REDD+ policies

Indicator 1.4.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ program with the international conventions, treaties and relevant legal instruments.

- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Policy and Measures (PAM) of national REDD+ program that reflects international conventions and treaties
  b) Periodic compliance audit of the provisions and its report
  c) Project monitoring and progress reports of REDD+ implementing agencies and other line agencies
  d) Relevant academic research and study papers/ reviews related to development and REDD+ policies.

Criteria 1.5: Effective communication and coordination exist among policy and implementation agencies that carry out REDD+ projects, forestry projects, environmental projects, development projects, and poverty reduction activities.

Indicator 1.5.1: Establishment of multistakeholder mechanism and Number of REDD+ coordination meetings among line agencies, inter-agencies, and technical working groups at project and/or national level

- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda of national, provincial and district level committees
  b) Participation/attendance register of these meetings
  c) Assessment reports /news that document the coordination events/meetings

Indicator 1.5.2: Number of decisions made to carry out REDD+ activities of REDD Implementation Centre and other line agencies' program jointly at project and/or national level.

- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of meetings and decisions made for joint action
  b) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
  c) Participation/attendance register
  d) Studies/news

Criteria 1.6. REDD+ project managers are capable to collaborate with policy makers, technical experts, and development stakeholders across forestry, environmental and development sectors at local, national, and international level.

Indicator 1.6.1 Number of REDD+ project managers trained in forging cross-sector collaboration at different levels.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  - **a)** Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
  - **b)** Participation/attendance register
  - **c)** Training participation, training curricula.

Indicator 1.6.2: Number of REDD+ activities getting financial support from other sectors
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  - a) Number of collaborative agreements/ MOU
  - b) Project documents

Indicator 1.6.3 Number of other sectors that have aligned REDD+ in their activities such as improved cooking stoves, promotion of private forestry and alternative energy
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  - **a) Project documents/activity reports**
  - **b) Progress reports/ monitoring reports**

Cancun Safeguard Principle B: Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty

Country Specific Principle 2: The REDD+ program contributes to good governance, to broader sustainable development and to social justice.

Criteria 2.1: The governance structures of the REDD+ program are clearly defined, transparent, effective and accountable.

Indicator 2.1.1: Adequate information is provided to rights holders including forest user groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, Dalits and stakeholders including REDD+ implementing agencies i.e. REDD IC, Department of Forests and Soil Conservation and Divisional Forest Offices.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
- **a)** Correspondence documents including emails/letters/notices
- **b)** Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
- **c)** Participation/attendance register
- **d)** REDD+ stakeholders engagement plan

Indicator 2.1.2 Members of the different REDD+ governance structure are identified based on the agreed criteria by all stakeholders.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
- **a)** Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
- **b)** Participation/ representation of key stakeholders/right holders in REDD+ governance structures/attendance register
- **c)** REDD+ stakeholders engagement plan

Indicator 2.1.3 Information on roles, responsibilities and decision making of REDD+ governance structure is clearly defined and publicly available.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Report, documents explaining roles, responsibilities and decision-making process.
b) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
c) REDD+ stakeholder engagement framework/REDD+ institutional framework

Indicator 2.1.4 Information on stakeholder engagement processes, procedures of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and REDD+ related activities are available and accessible.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Availability of corresponding documents
  b) Report, documents explaining the procedure of FPIC.

Criteria 2.2: Forest managers share increased ownership in REDD+ programs ensuring gender inclusion and social equity while implementing REDD+ projects/activities.
Indicator 2.2.1: Required number of awareness training, meetings and capacity development activities conducted.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Reports of training and capacity development
  b) Activity completion / monitoring reports

Indicator 2.2.1: The capacity development activities ensure at least 50% participation from IPs, local communities, women and dalits.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Reports of training and capacity development
  b) Training registers/Attendance sheets

Criteria 2.3: Respective forest managers can access fair and equitable benefits from REDD+ program and activities implemented in their respective ownership
Indicator 2.3.1 Benefits sharing mechanism, plan and procedures are in place at all levels
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Benefit Sharing Plan
  b) Study reports/monitoring and evaluation reports

Criteria 2.4: Maintain financial governance i.e. financial transparency, accountability and avoid misuse of funds
Indicator 2.4.1: Finance related information are easily available to the public
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Availability of corresponding financial reports
  b) Transparent financial records
  c) Report of public hearing

Indicator 2.4.2: Financial information are audited
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Financial reports/ audit reports from registered auditors
  b) Clearance/settlement of unaudited accounts

Indicator 2.4.3: Community level financial information has gone through public auditing
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Public hearing /auditing report

Indicator 2.4.4: System/mechanism of grievance handling
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of grievances received and handled
  b) SIS (web system)
  c) Progress report/monitoring reports

Criteria 2.5: Capacity and awareness of the stakeholders increased (government staff, forest user groups, indigenous peoples, local communities and dalits).

Indicator 2.5.1: Capacity development and awareness raising activities conducted with participation of 50% from IPs, local communities, women and dalits.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Training/capacity development activity report

Indicator 2.5.2: Trained persons (staff, user groups) in place to work
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of trained persons in program implementation area
  b) Activity performance report

Cancun Safeguard Principle C: Respect knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and member of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations and national circumstances and law, and noting that United Nations General Assembly has adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Country Specific Principle 3: The REDD+ program recognizes and respects rights to lands, territories and resources

<u>**Criteria 3.1:**</u> The REDD+ program effectively identifies the different rights holders (statutory and customary) and their rights to lands, territories and resources relevant to the program.
Indicator 3.1.1: During the process of implementation of REDD+ in Nepal, indigenous technical knowledge (ITK), their rights and access to corresponding land/ territories are identified and mapped through an effective and transparent process.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    - Survey/study reports/documentation on indigenous technical knowledge
    - Map of the territories/land/resources. Number of user groups producing such maps

<u>**Criteria 3.2:**</u> The REDD+ program recognizes and respects both statutory and customary rights to lands, territories and resources which Indigenous Peoples or local communities have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
Indicator 3.2.1: Policies of the REDD+ program include recognition of and protection and respect for customary rights as per prevailing laws in gender sensitive, socially acceptable and participatory way.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    a) REDD+ strategy/Environmental and Social Management Framework
    b) Stakeholder engagement framework
    c) REDD+ program reports Forest user groups identifying or implementing such rights
Indicator 3.2.2 Land-use plan or forest management plans used by the REDD+ program recognize and respect rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    a) Forest Management Plans
    b) Land use plan document
    c) REDD+ program reports
Indicator 3.2.2 The REDD+ program promotes establishing and securing statutory rights to lands, territories and resources.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    a) REDD+ strategy/Environmental and Social Management Framework
    b) Land use plan document
    c) REDD+ program reports

Indicator 3.2.2 The REDD+ program gives priority to community-based forest management systems for the sustainable management of forest.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) REDD+ strategy/Environmental and Social Management Framework
b) Land use plan document
c) REDD+ program reports

Criteria 3.3:   The REDD+ program requires the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for any activities affecting their rights to lands, territories and resources.

Indicator 3.3.1: Policies of the REDD+ program promote and uphold the principle of free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for any activities affecting their rights to lands, territories and resources.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) REDD+ program/activities progress reports
  b) REDD+ strategy/Environmental and Social Management Framework
  c) Land use plan document
  d) Received number of FPIC from IPs

Indicator 3.3.2: The process of obtaining free, prior and informed consent is developed collectively by the rights holders and the REDD+ implementing agencies
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Stakeholder engagement framework that specifies the procedures of FPIC
  b) REDD+ strategy/Environmental and Social Management Framework
  c) REDD+ program reports
  d) Constitutions/plans of forest user groups (CF, CFM, BZCF)
  e) FPIC process defined and agreed by IPs/LC

Indicator 3.3.3: Free, prior, and informed consent is obtained from Indigenous Peoples.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) FPIC document prepared during the process of receiving FPIC
  b) REDD+ activities implementation/monitoring reports
  c) Number of FPIC received from Ips
  d) Constitutions/plans of forest user groups (CF, CFM, BZCF)

Indicator 3.3.4: Free, prior and informed consent is obtained from local communities.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Constitutions/plans of forest user groups (CF, CFM, BZCF)
  b) FPIC document/mutually agreed papers
  c) REDD+ activities implementation/monitoring reports
  d) Number of FPIC received from LC

Indicator 3.3.5: Where any relocation or displacement occurs, there is prior agreement on the provision of alternative lands and/or fair compensation.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) FPIC document
  b) Land use plan document and agreement
  c) REDD+ activities implementation/monitoring reports

Criteria 3.4: Private ownership of carbon rights are based on the statutory and customary rights to the lands, territories and resources that generated the greenhouse gas emissions reductions and removals.

Indicator 3.4.1: A process for defining carbon rights is developed and implemented for private ownership of carbon rights
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Carbon rights/benefit sharing mechanism/plan for private land
b) REDD+ strategy/ Environmental and Social Management Framework
c) REDD+ activities implementation/monitoring reports

Indicator 3.4.2: The allocation of rights is based on the statutory and customary rights to the lands, territories and resources that generated the greenhouse gas emissions reductions and removals.

- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Carbon rights/benefit sharing mechanism/plan
  b) REDD+ strategy / Environmental and Social Management Framework
  c) REDD+ activities implementation/monitoring reports

Criteria 3.5: Local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits involved in process of REDD implementation.

Indicator 3.5.1: IPs/LCs groups involved in policy formulations
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of Ips/LCs group involved in process of policy formulation level

Indicator 3.5.2: IPs/LCs persons involved in policy formulation.
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of Ips/LCs person involved in policy formulation level

Indicator 3.5.3: IPs/LCs groups involved in forest management and other field activities
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of Ips/LCs group involved in process of policy formulation level

Indicator 3.5.4: IPs/LCs persons involved in forest management and other field activities
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of Ips/LCs persons involved in forest management and other field activities.

Criteria 3.6: Grievance registered by Ips/LCs groups and persons and these addressed
Indicators
Indicator 3.6.1: Grievances of Ips/LCs group are registered
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of grievances registered from Ips/LCs group.

Indicator 3.6.2: Grievances of Ips/LCs group are addressed
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of addressed grievance of Ips/LCs group.

Indicator 3.6.3: Grievances of Ips/LCs persons are registered
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of grievances registered from Ips/LCs persons.

Indicator 3.6.4: Grievances of Ips/LCs persons are addressed
- **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Number of handled grievance of Ips/LCs persons addressed.

Safeguards D
The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities

Principle 4: All relevant rights holders and stakeholders participate fully and effectively in the REDD+ program.
REDD+ activities shall be based on proactive and transparent identification of relevant stakeholders, and their engagement in planning, implementation and monitoring processes at national and sub-national levels.

Criteria 4.1 The REDD+ program/ institution identifies all rights holder and stakeholder groups and characterizes their rights and interests and their relevance to the REDD+ program through coordination with appropriate agencies.

- **Indicator 4.1.1.** Relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups are identified and their rights, interests and relevance to the REDD+ program are depicted in plans and constitutions of forest user groups.
  - **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Updated list of identified rights holder and stakeholders. Their number in category like number of IPs/LC identified in UG/Div
  b) Meeting/discussion minutes of stakeholders/right holders mapping
  c) Photographs of activities on the involvement of the parties.
  d) Stakeholders and rights holders mapping report/document
  e) Other relevant REDD+ documents including REDD+ strategy and ESMF of ERP of TAL are where the list of stakeholders and the stakeholder engagement plan is presented

  Indicator 4.1.2 A transparent, impartial, safe and accessible procedure to enable any interested party to apply to be considered a relevant rights holder or stakeholder is established with special attention to women, poor and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.
  Application is developed then and person applying
  Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
  a) A process document followed to notice/inform, access and apply/show the interest as relevant right holders, stakeholders
  b) List of participants in stakeholders/rights holders mapping exercise
  c) Stakeholders and rights holders mapping report/document
  d) Other relevant REDD+ documents including REDD+ strategy and ESMF of ERP of TAL are where the list of stakeholders and the stakeholder engagement plan is presented

Criteria 4.2 All relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups that want to be involved in REDD+ program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are fully involved through culturally appropriate, gender sensitive and effective participation.

- **Indicator 4.2.1:** A process and institutional structure for full and effective participation of all relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups in REDD+ design, implementation and evaluation are established and functional.

  ◦ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Stakeholder engagement plan document
b) REDD+ working group/ stakeholder's forum meeting
c) Stakeholders consultation and meeting minutes
d) Project design and evaluation documents
e) A methodology of participation of stakeholders including user groups are designed and agreed.

Indicator 4.2.2: Consultations in REDD+ programs ensure socially and culturally appropriate and gender sensitive approach to result effective participation of relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups at their agreed locations.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Stakeholder engagement plan document
   b) REDD+ working group/ stakeholder's forum meeting
   c) Stakeholders' consultation and meeting minutes
   d) Project design and evaluation documents

Indicator 4.2.3: All relevant levels of government institutions are involved in the REDD+ program with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
   a) **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Documents/ minutes of REDD+ working committee and groups
   b) Documents/minutes of District level REDD+ working committee and groups
   c) REDD+ institutional framework
   d) Stakeholder engagement plan and framework

Indicator 4.2.4: Feedbacks/inputs of the rights holder and stakeholders are recognized to adapt REDD+ program design and implementation accordingly.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Revised/updated REDD+ related plans/strategies/policies
b) Compilation document of feedbacks/inputs
c) Grievance redress mechanism and actions
d) Summary of Information report

Indicator 4.2.5: Rights holder and stakeholder groups select their own representatives in transparent, impartial way with special attention to the participation of women, poor and vulnerable and/or marginalized people.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Defined rules of rights holders' association/organization for representation.
b) Representation of women, poor and vulnerable and/or marginalized. Number of representatives identified/ selected/ elected for representation.
c) Implementation guidelines/plans and constitution of forest user groups (including CFUG, CFMUG and BZUC)

Indicator 4.2.6: Rights holder and stakeholder group representatives fulfill their role and responsibilities through their effective involvement in the REDD+ processes and are accountable to the people and groups they represent.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Meeting minutes/ decisions reflecting agenda and voices of the representatives.
   b) Participation in decision making and implementation

Criteria 4.3: Ensure that IP/Dalit and the poor get equitable share of the benefits from forest management.

Indicator 4.3.1: If forest products are distributed IPs, Dalits and the poor get equitable benefits according to their need.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Discussion with IP, dalits and the poor.
b) Provision of equitable benefits depending upon need of IP and Dalits in rules of FUGs or forest management plan
Variable: How much timber and fuelwood IPs and dalits get in volume as compared to others in FUG.

Indicator 4.3.2: If employment is generated during the process of forest management IPs, Dalits and the poor get equitable benefits according to their need.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Provision of equitable employment depending upon need of IP and Dalits in rules of FUGs or management plan
Variable: How much employment they get in volume as compared to others in FUG.

Indicator 4.3.3: If water/water springs is produced in forest, IPs and dalits get equitable share of the water as per their need.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Provisions in management plan and other documents
b) Volume of water received by different social groups in the FUG
Variable: Volume of water received by IPs, dalit and other groups in the FUG

Indicator 4.3.4: Cultural and spiritual sites of IPs are identified in maps and protected

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Provisions made in management plan to protect the sites.
b) Discussion with concerned groups
c) Photographs of sites protected
d) Maps showing the locations
e) Number of sites protected

Indicator 4.3.5: Plant species needed for IPs during cultural and religious ceremony are protected and provided.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) List of cultural/religious plants identified in operational plans
b) Provisions in management plan and other FUG documents
Verifier: Discussion with concerned community
Variable 1: Number of plant species protected by the FUGs
Variable 2: Number or volume of plants protected and provided to IPs

Criteria 4.4: The REDD+ program builds on, respects, supports and protects rights holders' and stakeholders' traditional and other knowledge, skills, institutions and management systems especially those of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Indicator 4.4.1: The REDD+ program builds on, respects, supports and protects customary institution, structures and decision-making processes of indigenous peoples and local communities and well explained in forest operational plans.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Program/activities documents, which recognize customary institution

b) Forest operational plans
c) Studies/progress reports
d) Existing institutions/agencies/associations of LC and IPs in REDD+ program area (Observation report)
e) Meeting minutes/decisions on REDD+ activities

Indicator 4.4.2 The REDD+ program identifies, builds on, respects and supports relevant traditional and other knowledge, skills and management systems and applies them to design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the REDD+ activities.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Program/activities document
b) Studies/reports (including scoping/ feasibility/ monitoring reports)
c) Existing institutions/agencies/associations of LC and IPs in REDD+ program area (Observation report)
d) Meeting minutes/decisions on REDD+ activities

Criteria 4.5 The REDD+ program identifies and uses processes for effective resolution of grievances and disputes relating to the design, implementation and evaluation of the REDD+ program, including disputes over rights to lands, territories and resources (if any) relating to the program.

Indicator 4.5.1: Local and customary, regional, national and international processes are identified and used to resolve grievances and disputes related to the REDD+ program including participation, access and benefit sharing in transparent, safe, timely and accessible manner.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Grievance redress mechanism provisions/document/framework
b) Program/activities completion reports
c) Meeting minutes/decisions on REDD+ activities including consultation meetings
d) Availability of GRM provision documents/benefit sharing documents online and physically in concerned agencies
e) Interactive GRM provisions (responding individual concerns safely and in confidence)

Indicator 4.5.2: No activity is undertaken by the REDD+ program that could bias the outcome of an unresolved dispute in any specific area or activity related to the program.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Grievance redress mechanism provisions/document/framework
b) Program/activities completion reports
c) Meeting minutes/decisions on REDD+ activities including consultation meetings

Criteria 4.6: The REDD+ program ensures that rights holders and stakeholders have the information they need about the REDD+ program, provided in a culturally appropriate, gender sensitive and timely way, and have the capacity to participate fully and effectively in program design, implementation and evaluation.

Indicator 4.6.1: Rights holders and stakeholders have access to relevant information about design, implementation, evaluation and overall governance structures and processes of the REDD+ program.

   Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
   a) Online web system of REDD+ Implementation Center
   b) Provision of physical reports distribution in REDD IC and concerned focal agencies at district level
   c) Stakeholder engagement and information sharing framework
   d) Number of FUG persons who feel that they have access to information.

Indicator 4.6.2: The most effective means of dissemination of information about the REDD+ program is identified and used for each rights-holder and stakeholder group including the use of national and local language wherever possible.

   Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
   a) Online web system of REDD+ Implementation Center
   b) Published information, education and communication materials in REDD+
   c) Provision of physical reports distribution in REDD IC and concerned focal agencies at district level.
   d) Stakeholder engagement and information sharing framework

Indicator 4.6.3: Capacity building activities are effectively used to address the constraints of effective participation with special attention to indigenous peoples, local communities and vulnerable groups including women, Dalit and poor.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a. Reports of capacity building activities including training and workshops
   b. Training manual/ workshop facilitation guidelines
   c. Participation/ attendance records of capacity building events and number/percentage of women/Dalit and poor

Indicator 4.6.4: Rights holders and stakeholders can access relevant legal advice on implications and legal processes of the REDD+ program and their rights.

   Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Provisions of grievance redress mechanism including feedbacks and complaints management system

Criteria 4.7: Rights holder and stakeholder representatives collect and disseminate all relevant information about the REDD+ program from and to the people they represent in an appropriate and timely way, respecting the time needed for inclusive decision making.

Indicator 4.7.1: Rights holder and stakeholder representatives collect and disseminate all relevant information from and to the people they represent with special attention to women, Dalit, poor and marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

   Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
   a) Agenda voiced by the representatives in the meetings they represent including REDD+ working group, stakeholder meeting etc.
   b) Meeting/workshop minutes

c) Annual reports of REDD+ program as well as the progress reports and press release of representative's organization

Safeguards E

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

Principle 5: The REDD+ program promotes natural forest conservation and; maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services or social and environmental benefits.

Criteria 5.1: If important animal species and plant species existed in forests are identified.
Indicator 5.1.1: Number of hot spots or existing sites where important animals and plants are found, for example birds living in tall trees, animals living around water holes etc.
Verifier 1**:** Number of meeting or discussion conducted to identify number of habitats where important animals, birds and plants are found.
Variable: Number of meeting conducted by forest users/managers
Verifier 2: Number of important sites.
Variable: Number of community-based forests and number of hot spots.

Criteria 5.2 The REDD+ program identifies, prioritises and maps natural forests, biological diversity and ecosystem services that are potentially affected by the REDD+ activities.

Indicator 5.2.1 Biodiversity and ecosystem services potentially affected by the REDD+ program are identified, prioritized and mapped.
Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Program design/scoping/ feasibility reports. Management plans with such provisions
b) Biodiversity and environment impact assessment reports/studies
c) Environmental and social management framework (ESMF)

Criteria 5.3: The REDD+ program maintains and enhances the identified biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities.
Indicator 5.3.1: The objectives and policies of the REDD+ program makes significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services.
Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) REDD+ strategy and action plans. Government documents of biodiversity conservation.
b) REDD+ program monitoring and activity completion reports
c) Environmental/biodiversity management plans/ impact assessment reports

d) Periodic reports on biodiversity management

Indicator 5.3.2: The REDD+ program maintains and enhances the identified biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities.
Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) REDD+ strategy and action plans
b) REDD+ program monitoring and activity completion reports
c) Environmental/biodiversity management plans/ impact assessment reports
d) Periodic reports on biodiversity management

Indicator 5.3.3: The REDD+ program generates additional financial, human and other required resources to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities and facilitate integration of conservation of ecosystem and adaptation activities.
Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Environmental/biodiversity management plans
b) REDD+ program monitoring and activity completion reports
c) Periodic reports on biodiversity management

Criteria 5.4: The REDD+ program does not lead to the conversion or degradation of natural forests or other areas that are important for maintaining and enhancing the identified biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities.
Indicator 5.4.1: No conversion or degradation demonstrated during monitoring of the impacts of the REDD+ program on natural forests and other important areas.
Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Program monitoring/evaluation reports
b) Reports/studies on forest resource assessment
c) Maps on changes in forest cover
d) National reports on biodiversity

Criteria 5.5 Predicted and actual, and positive and negative environmental impacts of the REDD+ program on biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities are transparently assessed.
Indicator 5.5.1: The predicted and actual direct and indirect environmental impacts of the REDD+ program are assessed using strategic environmental assessment, environmental impact assessment or other appropriate methods.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Environmental impact assessment reports
b) Program scoping/feasibility study reports
c) Environmental and social management framework for emission reduction program in TAL
d) Number of reports with biodiversity conservation provisions

Criteria 5.6 The REDD+ program is adapted based on assessment of predicted and actual impacts, in order to mitigate negative, and enhance positive, environmental impacts.

◊ **Indicator 5.6.1:** The REDD+ program is adapted in order to mitigate negative impacts, and to enhance and sustain positive, environmental impacts with special attention to areas important for maintaining and enhancing the identified biodiversity and ecosystem service priorities.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
    a) Environmental and social management framework
    b) Program monitoring/completion reports

Safeguard F
Actions to address the risks of reversals
Principle 6: REDD+ program reduces risks of reversals through means appropriate to the scale and context, emphasizing sub-national action and national level policy initiatives.
Criteria 6.1: Risks from internal and external threats to forest maintenance and carbon stock are defined and a mitigation plan is developed.

    Indicator 6.1.1: REDD+ program areas/sites have risks assessment plan which include the risks of fire, illegal logging, encroachment and other external impacts if any. Or it is mentioned in forest management plan
    Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
    a) Risk assessment reports and plans
    b) Monitoring reports on forest management activities.

    Indicator 6.1.2: A risk mitigation plan to address major reversal threats are available and implemented
    Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
    a) Mitigation plan is developed or it is mentioned in forest management plan of the user groups.
    b) Monitoring reports on forest management activities including fire, illegal logging and encroachment.

Safeguard G
Actions to reduce displacement of emissions

Principle 7. REDD+ program include strategies to reduce emissions displacement (leakage) and support monitoring at sub-national (forest management unit, district and province) and national level.

Criteria 7.1: REDD+ activities include a strategy to reduce emissions displacement within the national boundary as appropriate to scale and the context.

Indicator 7.1.1: Documentation and studies analysing the types of emission displacement that are likely to occur outside REDD+ activities within the national boundary are available. A simple plan exist to avoid emission displacement or it is mentioned in any other document like forest management Plan.
    Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
    a) Baseline study reports and risk assessment reports identifying the potential areas of emissions displacement within and beyond the limit of REDD+ activities.
    b) Forest changes studies and forest assessment reports in land use and causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

Criteria 7.2: Periodic monitoring of forest-related emissions and changes in carbon-stock conducted including monitoring of emission displacement reduction efforts and results.

Indicator 7.2.1: Annual monitoring report on forest-related emissions and carbon stock changes in REDD+ program area is available.

Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:
a) Monitoring reports/documents on national and sub-national REDD+ program activities
b) Measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of GHG documents/reports
c) Periodic Monitoring is done to avoid emission displacement in and around forests under considerations.

4.3 Project or FUG level safeguard principle, criteria and indicators

Project Level Safeguard Principle A: The REDD+ project complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions, and other instruments.
Country Specific Principle 1: The REDD+ program complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions, and other instruments. Core elements of the description include the National REDD+ strategy and REDD+ program's connection with (i) the local and national forestry policies, (ii) the local and national environmental policies, (iii) the local and national development policies, and (iv) relevant international conventions and treaties.

Criteria 1.1: REDD+ project is in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the local and national forestry policies, including Forest Policy 2018, Forest Act 2019, National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1972 and Herbs and NTFP Development Policy 2005.
Indicator 1.1.1: Relevant local and national forestry policies are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with such policies.
  ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    e) List of related local and national policies included in the REDD+ project document
    f) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
    g) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports
Indicator 1.1.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ project with the local and national forest policies and relevant legal instruments.
  ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    d) REDD+ project document
    e) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
    f) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Criteria 1.2: REDD+ project is in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the local and/or national environmental policies, including National Environment Policy 2019, Environmental Protection Act 2019, National Climate Change Policy 2019, Nepal CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Act 2017, and National Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan 2014).
Indicator 1.2.1 Relevant local and national environmental policies are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with these policies.
  ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifier:**
    a) REDD+ project document
    b) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
    c) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Indicator 1.2.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ project with the local and national environmental policies and relevant legal instruments.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) REDD+ project document
   b) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
   c) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Criteria 1.3: REDD+ project is in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the local and <u>national development policies</u>, including Land Use Policy 2015 and Hydroelectricity Development Policy 2002, Gender and Social inclusion policies and strategies, Good Governance Act 2008 and Right to Information Act 2007.

Indicator 1.3.1 National development policies relevant to the REDD+ programs are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with them.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) List of related local and national policies included in the REDD+ project document
   b) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
   c) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Indicator 1.1.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ project with the local and national forest policies and relevant legal instruments.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) REDD+ project document
   b) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
   c) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Indicator 1.3.2: Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ project with the national development policies and relevant legal instruments.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) REDD+ project document
   b) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
   c) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Criteria 1.4: REDD+ project is in line with, or contribute to achieve, the objectives of the <u>international conventions and treaties</u> in which Nepal is the party such as Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, Ramsar Convention 1971, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 1973 (amended 1979), Convention to Combat Desertification 1994, International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006, ILO Convention Article (Article: 169) 1989, United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, and UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007.

Indicator 1.4.1 International conventions and treaties and policies relevant to the REDD+ project are identified and reviewed to ensure REDD+ projects are consistent with them.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   e) List of relevant international conventions and treaties included in the REDD+ project document
   f) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
   g) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports

Indicator 1.4.2 Appropriate measures are taken to ensure compliance of the REDD+ project with the international conventions, treaties and relevant legal instruments.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   e) List of relevant international conventions and treaties included in the REDD+ project document

f) REDD+ project scoping/feasibility study report
g) REDD+ project's periodic monitoring and progress reports
h)

Criteria 1.5: Effective communication and coordination exist between REDD+ project implementation agencies and other relevant line agencies, such as forestry projects, environmental projects, development projects, and poverty reduction activities.

Indicator 1.5.1: Number of REDD+ coordination meetings among line agencies, inter-agencies, and technical working groups at project level

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   d) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
   e) Participation/attendance register
   f) Studies/news

Indicator 1.5.2: Number of decisions made to carry out REDD+ activities of REDD Implementation Centre and other line agencies' program jointly at project and/or national level.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   e) Decisions made for joint action
   f) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda.
   g) Participation/attendance register
   h) Studies/news

Criteria 1.6. REDD+ project managers are capable to collaborate with policy makers, technical experts, and development stakeholders across forestry, environmental and development sectors at local and national levels.

Indicator 1.6.1 Number of REDD+ project managers trained in forging cross-sector collaboration at different levels.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   d) Meeting notes/minutes/meeting agenda
   e) Participation/attendance register
   f) Training participation, training curricula

Criteria 1.7: As per women's right conventions and other relevant national policies, if wage is given, it should be equal to men and women.

Indicator1.7.1: Provision of equal pay mentioned in the REDD+ project's operational guideline or REDD+ project participant's, including forest user groups, operational plan or decisions.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Operational plan, guidelines, and/or decision (variable: number of forest user groups giving equal wage rate to men and women)

Project Level Safeguard Principle B: Transparent and effective local forest governance structures, taking into account local and national legislation and sovereignty.

Criteria 2.1: The governance structures of the REDD+ project are clearly defined, transparent, effective, and accountable.

Indicator 2.1.1 Adequate and required information about REDD+ project is provided to rightsholders, including forest user groups, indigenous peoples, local communities, women, and Dalits.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Interactions including meeting, workshops, or training where information is provided to the representatives from FUGs (variable: number of interactions in the REDD+ project area)

Indicator 2.1.2 Members of the REDD+ project governance structures are identified in consensus and be based on the agreed criteria by all stakeholders.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Representatives selected from local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in the REDD+ project governance structures (variable: number of representatives selected from)

Criteria 2.2: Forest managers feel ownership of the REDD+ project and ensure gender inclusion and social equity while implementing REDD+ project activities.
Indicator 2.2.1: Adequate awareness training, meetings, and capacity development activities conducted with at least 50% participation from local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Representatives from local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits selected for capacity development (variable: number of members representing local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits)

Criteria 2.3: Information about the planned or upcoming and completed project activities are made transparent and available for public comment.
Indicators 2.3.1 Planned or upcoming and completed project activities are published in locally suitable public places such as school and local government office to disseminate information.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Observation of notices at public places such as school and local government office (variable: number of FUGs who put information in public places like school and local government office)

Criteria 2.4: Maintain good financial governance, including financial transparency, accountability and avoid misuse of funds.
Indicator 2.4.1 Finance related information are transparent and available to the project stakeholders and public to view and comment.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Availability of financial reports to view and comment by the REDD+ project stakeholders and public at the project sites (variable: number of FUGs maintain their finance transparently)
Indicator 2.4.2: Financial information are audited.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Audit reports (variable: number of FUGs which audited financial transactions)
Indicator 2.4.3: Community level financial information has gone through public hearing/auditing.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  a) Public hearing/audit reports, notes, and/or photograph (variable: number of FUGs which carried out public auditing/auditing)

Criteria 2.5: Capacity and awareness of the REDD+ project stakeholders, including government forestry staff, FUGs, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits, increased.

Indicator 2.5.1 Capacity development and awareness raising activities conducted with participation of 50% from FUGs, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.
◊   **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a)   Number of persons selected for capacity development. Their categories as IPs, Dalits, local community and Men vs women (variable: number training/awareness program participants, including number of members from government forestry offices, FUGs, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits)

Project Level Safeguard Principle C: The REDD+ project recognizes and respects rights over forest resources, lands, and territories.

Criteria 3.1: The REDD+ program effectively identifies the different rights holders (statutory and customary) and their rights over forest resources, lands, and territories relevant to the project.
Indicator 3.1.1 During the process of REDD+ project implementation, Indigenous Peoples, their indigenous technical knowledge (ITK), and their rights and access to forest resources, lands, and territories are identified and mapped following a transparent process.
◊   **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a)   Map of the forests, lands, and territories (variable: number FUGs producing such maps)

Criteria 3.2: The REDD+ program recognizes and respects both statutory and customary rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits over forest resources, lands, and territories, which have traditionally been owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.
Indicator 3.2.1 Policies of the REDD+ program include recognition of and protection and respect for customary rights as per prevailing laws in gender sensitive, socially acceptable and participatory way.
◊   **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a)   Identification of statutory and customary rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits over forest resources, lands, and territories (variable: list of resources and statutory and customary rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits over forest resources, lands, and territories; number of FUGs identifying resources and such rights)
Indicator 3.2.2 The REDD+ project's land-use plans and/or forest management plans recognize and respect the rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.
◊   **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a)   Land use plans and/or forest management plans which recognize forest, land and territorial rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits (variable: number of land use plans and/or forest management plans or other documents which has recognized the rights of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits)
Indicator 3.2.3 The REDD+ project gives priority to community-based forest management systems, including community forestry for the sustainable management of forest.
◊   **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a)   Forest management/operational plan prepared for the management of community-based forest, including community forestry (variable: Number of community-based forest groups, including community forest user groups having forest management plans prepared for the sustainable management of forest)

Criteria 3.3: The REDD+ project requires the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits for any activities affecting their rights to forest resources, lands, and territories.

Indicator 3.3.1 Collective rights holders, including local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits define a process of obtaining their FPIC.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits have an agreed and defined FPIC process (variable: Number of FUGs who have agreed and defined FPIC process)

Indicator 3.3.2 FPIC is obtained from separately from local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) FPIC agreed separately by local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits (variable: number of FPIC agreed separately by local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits)

Criteria 3.4: The REDD+ project involves the local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in the project planning.

Indicator 3.4.1 Local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits involved in the planning and implementation of the project activities.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Project activity planning guidelines, meeting notes, and plans that include information about the participation of local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits (variable: provisions for the meeting participation; number of local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits involved in the planning meeting; number of planning meeting)

Indicator 3.4.2 Local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits involved in the implementation of the project activities and forest management activities in the field.

a) Project meeting notes that include information about the participation of local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in the implementation of the project activities and forest management activities in the field (variable: number of Local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits involved in the implementation of the project activities and forest management activities in the field)

Criteria 3.5: Effective grievance handling process exist.

Indicators 3.5.1: Simple, easily accessible, and transparent grievance registration process is in place.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Locally suitable grievance handling process is devised in consultation with the local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits (variable: existence of locally suitable grievance handling process)

Indicator 3.5.2 Grievance registered by the local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits are addressed timely and appropriately.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**

a) Grievances registered by the local communities, FUGs, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits are addressed properly or to their satisfaction (variable: number of grievances addressed satisfactorily)

Project Level Safeguard Principle D. The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.

Criteria 4.1: There is equitable representation of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in forest management decision-making bodies, including FUGs.
Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits present in a FUG reflects in the decision-making body such as executive committee of a FUG.
   ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Demographics of the Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in a FUG and the FUG's decision-making body (variable: number and ratios of Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits in a FUG and the FUG's decision-making body)

Criteria 4.2: The REDD+ project identifies all stakeholder groups and characterizes their rights, interests, and relevance to the REDD+ project by coordinating with appropriate line agencies.
Indicator 4.2.1: Relevant stakeholder groups, and their rights, responsibilities, interests, and relevance to the REDD+ project are identified and listed.
   ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Updated list of identified stakeholders (variable: number of identified stakeholders)
   b) List of rights, responsibilities, interests, and relevance for the project for each group of stakeholders

Criteria 4.3: All relevant stakeholder groups fully involve and effectively participate in REDD+ program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation following a culturally appropriate and gender sensitive approach.
Indicator 4.3.1 Stakeholder groups select their representatives in a transparent and impartial way with special attention to the participation of women, poor, vulnerable, and/or marginalized people.
   ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) Stakeholder groups have a defined set of rules for the selection of representatives to participate in the REDD+ project (variable: provisions regarding the selection of representatives for the REDD+ project)
   b) Stakeholders identified, selected, or elected their representatives for the REDD+ project (variable: number of representatives selected following the predefined rules)

Criteria 4.4: The REDD+ project builds on, respects, supports, and protects stakeholders' traditional and other knowledge, skills, institutions, and management systems, especially those of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.
Indicator 4.4.1 The REDD+ project builds on, respects, supports, and protects local communities', indigenous peoples', women' and Dalits' customary institution, structures, and decision-making processes.
   ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
   a) REDD+ project document, including strategies, plans, guidelines, and forest management plan recognize customary institutions (variables: list and number of REDD+ and forest management related documents and activities that recognize rights of customary institutions; list of recognized customary rights)
Project Level Safeguard Principle E: The REDD+ program promotes natural forest conservation and; maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services or social and environmental benefits.

Criteria 5.1: Plant and animal species available in the REDD+ project area, particularly in the forests are identified.

Indicator: 5.1.1 Plant and animal species in forests are identified and documented using appropriate and feasible forest inventory methods.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    - a) Animal and plant diversity are assessed following an appropriate method.
    - a) List of endangered and commonly found animal and plant species in the forests (variable: list and number of endangered and commonly found animal and plant species)

Indicator: 5.1.2 Important plant and animal species in forests are identified through the opinion of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and experts.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    - a) Meeting and/or discussion conducted about plant and animal diversity assessment (variable: number of animal and plant diversity assessment related meeting carried out by each group of stakeholders: local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and experts)

Indicator 5.1.3 Measure for plant and animal conservation are taken such as protection of water holes, protection of nesting trees, conservation of food plants for the existing biodiversity.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  - a) Project activity planning, activity completion report, field observation report, and photographs (variable: number and types of biodiversity conservation measures taken in the forest)

Indicator 5.1.4 Biodiversity and ecosystem services potentially affected by the REDD+ project are identified, prioritized, and mapped.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    - a) Project documents, strategies, action plan, and forest management/operational plan identify biodiversity and/or ecosystem conservation provisions (variables: list and number of project documents and forest management plan which contain biodiversity and/or ecosystem conservation provisions; number of biodiversity and/or ecosystem conservation program and activity carried out)

Project Level Safeguard Principle F: REDD+ program reduces risks of reversals through means appropriate to the scale and context, emphasizing local and sub-national action and national level policy initiatives.

Criteria 6.1: Risks from internal and external threats to forest and carbon stock maintenance are defined and a mitigation plan is developed.

Indicator 6.1.1 The REDD+ project areas/sites have risk assessment plans available, including the assessment of fire risks, illegal logging risks, encroachment risks, and other external risks, if any.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
    - a) Risk assessment and management plan (variables: number, types, and degree of potential risks)

Indicator 6.1.2 A risk mitigation plan is available and implemented to address major reversal threats, including fire, illegal logging, and encroachment threats.
  - ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
  - a) Risk mitigation plan or forest management plan of the user groups which address major reversal threats (variables: number of mitigation plans which address carbon reversal threats.

Project Level Safeguard Principle G. REDD+ project reduces emissions displacement (i.e., leakage) and support monitoring at sub-national (forest management unit, district and province) and national levels.

Criteria 7.1: REDD+ project activities include a strategy to reduce emissions displacement within the project, local, sub-national, or national level boundary as appropriate to the scale and the context.

Indicator 7.1.1 Documentations and studies analysing the types of emission displacement that are likely to occur outside REDD+ activities within the national boundary are available.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) A separate plan or forest management plan, which analysed the types of emission displacement (variable: number and types of project activity that help analyse the types of emission displacement; textual analysis of displacement potentials).

Criteria 7.2: Periodic monitoring of forest-related emissions and changes in carbon-stock conducted including monitoring of emission displacement reduction efforts and results.

Indicator 7.2.1 Annual or periodic monitoring report on forest-related emissions and carbon stock changes in REDD+ project area is available.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Existence of number of emission and carbon stock monitoring reports (variables: trend and pattern of annual or periodic changes in emission from and carbon stock in the REDD+ project area.

4.4 Addition safeguard principles

In context to fragile Himalayan ecosystem with steep slope and heavy rainfall in Nepal, a safeguard on soil, water, and ecosystem conservation would help strengthen Nepal's SIS and forest, land, and water resource management. In addition, as most of the problem in forest management is due to lack of good forest institution for forest management. Therefore, two country specific safeguard are proposed. These safeguards are numbered 8 and 9 and elaborated as below.

Project Level Safeguard Principle H: REDD+ project assures ecological conservation and physical safety of forest workers/users.

Criteria 8.1: REDD+ project assures conservation of ecological components and services.

Indicators 8.1.1 Periodic local environmental assessment, including after harvest, against negative impact on soil, water, and biodiversity, particularly rare, endangered, threatened, and protected species, are carried out.

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Interviews with key project officials and/or FUG members, site observation, and reports containing information on harvesting practices (variable: number of interviews; photographs; explanation about environmental effects)

Indicator 8.1.2 REDD+ project delineates buffer area of 25 meter along the stream channels and water ways (to comply Water Induced Disaster Policy BS 2071)

◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Provisions in forest management/operational plan (variables: number of FUGs practicing such measures; length in meters of such buffer zones along the stream).

Criteria 8.2: REDD+ project carries out monitoring of negative impact of forest management, including soil compaction and surface erosion.

Indicator 8.2.1 Damage assessment system exist in REDD+ project document or forest management/operational plan.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Field observation; site observation; interview with key project officials or FUG members (variables: whether the REDD+ project document or forest management/operational plan contain assessment provisions; meeting decisions; photographs; explanation about damages to soils).

Indicator 8.2.2 REDD+ project mitigates any negative impact on soil adopting appropriate soil and water conservation practices.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Damage mitigation plan exist in REDD+ project document or forest management/operational plan (variables: number of FUGs practicing mitigation measures; area in hector in which mitigation measures applied; photographs)

Criteria 8.3: Physical safety knowledge and gears is provided for persons who work in the forest, where the REDD+ project is implemented.

Indicator 8.3.1 Members of the user groups and/or wage laborers, who work in the forest have physical safety gears such as helmet, boots, and gloves and knowledge about physical safety.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Physical safety gears such as helmet, boots, and gloves (variables: number of such gears)
b) Physical safety knowledge (variable: number of FUG members and/or forest workers, who have knowledge about physical safety.

Project Level Safeguard Principle I: REDD+ helps make the local forest management institutions well-governed, effective, and efficient so as to implement the project activities with high quality standard.

Criteria 9.1: Capacity of the key persons in the FUG executive committee members, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits is strengthened.

Indicator 9.1.1 Training on official correspondence, record management, and accounting is provided to the FUG executive committee members.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Participation of FUG executive committee members in the training (variable: number of persons participated in such training)

Indicator 9.1.2 Capacity development training on rights and responsibilities is provided to the local forest managing communities, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) Training on rights and responsibilities (variable: number of local communities' members, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits participated in the training)

Criteria 9.2: Key decision-making positions in the FUG are provided to the Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits following a gender sensitive and inclusive approach.

Indicator 9.2.1 Concerned stakeholders feel that the idea is incorporated.
◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
a) FUG executive committee, meeting minutes, and/or FUG records (variable: number of Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits as chair, vice-chair, secretary, and/or treasurer)

Criteria 9.3: Budget and activities of the FUGs are participatorily prepared and transparent.
Indicator 9.3.1 Indigenous Peoples, women, and Dalits engaged in budget and activities of the FUGs and such budget and activities are discussed in the general assembly and public hearing/auditing.
   ◊ **Safeguards Implementation Assessment Tools or Verifiers:**
      a) FUGs' constitutional provisions and decisions (variables: number of such provisions; number of relevant decisions; description of such decisions and/or provisions)

5. Overview of designing Web--based Safeguards Information System (SIS) for Nepal

The design and implementation of SIS in Nepal has been conceptualized as national institutional arrangement with the primary objective of information dissemination on safeguard and how the Cancun Safeguards are being addressed and respected in the context of implementation of the proposed REDD+ intervention programs. The SIS will be operationalized, institutionalized, and improved overtime. Two key objectives has been identified during the conceptualization and design phase.

   a. Provide information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of REDD+ intervention programs in line with the Country Safeguards Framework.

   b. To support monitoring of activities in forestry sector by developing feedback and grievance redress mechanism

The initial information needs for the safeguard has been defined based on seven Cancun safeguards. A website has been developed to provide information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders which demonstrates that the seven Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout REDD+ implementation. Along with the features of information dissemination, SIS website of Nepal also has the function of registration of grievances and their tracking. The institutional arrangement for SIS and Grievance Redress has been linked and set in line with the arrangements mentioned in National REDD+ Strategy 2018.

With all the institutional arrangement in place, following are the five major functions of SIS.

5.1. Collection of Information
Collection of information refers to the process of identification and collection of all related provisions made for safeguard in Nepal along with the information of existing information system related safeguard in forestry sector of Nepal. REDD+ implementers are the primary

source of information at the ground level. Hence, it is assumed that collection of ground level information is the responsibility of REDD+ implementers (institutions) of Nepal. Along with the ground level information, data or information on National level provisions on safeguard will also be collected to disseminate the information that addresses safeguard in forestry sector of Nepal. It shall also be noted that SIS will be linked with National Forest Information System for exchange of data.

5.2 Aggregation of Information

This function refers to the process of compiling or aggregating collected information and populating and maintaining the SIS database. The SIS database should make use of modern technological solution for maintenance of collected information. The technological solution must have the basic functions of update (such as add, edit or delete) whenever required. REDD Implementation Center shall be responsible for aggregation of information for regular maintenance of SIS database.

5.3 Analysis of Information

Information after collection and aggregation must be analysed before dissemination to the relevant stakeholders or to the general people. Analysis of information refers to the process of extraction of key information. For this purpose, data will be systematically described and looked for patterns to generalize the information.

The REDD Implementation Centre will analyse the information. Apart from the data provided by the REDD+ program implementers, relevant information collected and reported by SIS Specialist and the consulting firm will be considered and utilized in this phase of analysis of information. The Summary of Information report on SIS submitted by the consulting firm will be utilized and analysed for dissemination of the information through online web platform.

5.4 Dissemination of Information

This function refers to the process of disseminating safeguard information produced by SIS. As stated above a website has developed with modern technological solution where information can be updated on the regular basis by REDD Implementation Center. The website have the function of generating report which will be helpful in preparing of national periodic report of REDD Implementation Center. Reports shall be made accessible to the public through SIS website. REDD Implementation Center shall coordinate with Ministry of

Forests and Environment during the formulation and submission of SOI, as the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment is the entity responsible for submission of national communications to the UNFCCC. As the UNFCCC encourages countries to explore connection between system to enhance efficiency, SIS has been integrated with National Forests Information System, NFIS for synergies between these.

5.5 Grievance Registration and Tracking

Grievance registration and tracking is another important function of SIS. This function is a part of process of Grievance Redress Mechanisms, GRMs which are necessary as part of addressing and respecting the Cancun safeguards. Information on the application of these GRMs provides an important source of information for the national SIS. Any general people or related stakeholders can register her grievance through website along with different redressing tools such as toll-free number, email and social media platforms. Such grievances are received by the administrator of SIS website at REDD Implementation Center and escalated to the concerned authorities. The complaints can be tracked at both the ends. Grievance Redress Mechanism can have significant impact on the execution of REDD+ or any other forest related activities. Hence, it is recommended to institutionalize Grievance Redress Mechanisms considering the scope of grievances.

6 Conclusion

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Appendix 1: ToR

Appendix 2: List of Stakeholders for Consultation