

**FIRST SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ON HOW SAFEGUARDS FOR
REDD+ WOULD BE ADDRESSED AND RESPECTED IN VIET NAM**

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Glossary

CAS	Country approach to safeguards
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FORMIS	Forestry Sector Management Information System
FREL	Forest Emission Reference Level
FRL	Forest Reference Level
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GRM	Grievance and redress mechanisms
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NRAP	National REDD+ Programme
NRIP	NRAP Mid-Term Implementation Plan
PaMs	Policies and Measures
PFES	Payment for environmental services
PGA	Participatory Governance Appraisal
PLR	Policies, laws and regulations
PRAP	Provincial REDD+ Action Plan
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation plus the conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SOI	Summary of Information
State Steering Committee Office	Office of the State Steering Committee for the Target Program on Sustainable Forest Development and REDD+ Implementation
STWG-SG	Sub-Technical Working Group on Safeguards
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
VNFOREST	Viet Nam Administration of Forestry

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 UNFCCC requirements on REDD+ safeguards

The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16)¹ of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) call on countries that will implement REDD+ to address and respect seven broad safeguards related to governance, social and environmental risks and benefits, as well as emission reductions risks. In addition, the Durban Outcome (Decision 12/CP.17)² states that a safeguard information system (SIS) should provide information on how all of the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected. This was reiterated by the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (Decision 9/CP.19)³ requiring countries to submit, among other things, a summary of information (SOI) on how all of the safeguards have been addressed and respected before they can access result-based payments.

Developing countries seeking to receive results-based payments for REDD+ are expected to provide the most recent summary of safeguards information upon commencing implementation of REDD+ actions. Country summaries will be made publicly available. Once the first SOI has been submitted, the frequency of subsequent summaries should be consistent with the provisions for submissions of national communications. Additionally, a country may submit a summary of information directly to the UNFCCC REDD+ web platform at any time. There is no specific UNFCCC-required structure for a country's summary of safeguards information. However, the UNFCCC provides an indication of the proposed contents of the Summary of Information in Decision 17/COP21, including, where appropriate:

- a) Information on national circumstances relevant to addressing and respecting the safeguards;
- b) A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;
- c) A description of existing systems and processes relevant to addressing and respecting safeguards, including the information systems referred to in decision 12/CP.17, in accordance with national circumstances; and
- d) Information on how each of the safeguards has been addressed and respected, in accordance with national circumstances.⁴

1.2 Addressing and Respecting the Cancun safeguards

While there is no official definition of the terms 'addressed' and 'respected' with respect to the Cancun safeguards and the provision of information on the national context by Parties to the UNFCCC, Viet Nam applies these terms in its SIS and this SOI in line with their generally understood meaning,⁵ as follows:

- **Addressed:** the governance arrangements of the Party that are relevant to the contents of the Cancun safeguards, including policies, laws and regulations (PLRs), institutions, grievance and redress mechanisms (GRMs), etc.

¹ The full text of the Cancun Agreements is available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

² The full text of the Durban Outcome is available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf>

³ The full text of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ is available at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf>

⁴ The full text of UNFCCC Decision 17/CP.21 is available at http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/sbsta_42_agenda_item_further_guidance_on_ensuring_transparency_cop_a_uv_template.pdf

⁵ In line with common good practice of other countries as informed by the findings of an expert workshop convened by the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, held in October 2011, where "addressed" was broadly considered to mean that relevant institutions, policies, regulations, strategies, agreements, etc. are in place. "Respected" was broadly understood to mean the safeguard was being implemented successfully.

- **Respected:** how these governance arrangements are working in practice, together with the resultant outcomes of their implementation.

1.3 Objectives of the Summary of Information

In view of the progress made in Viet Nam to date on REDD+ readiness in line with the UNFCCC requirements, and the country's long-term interest in accessing results-based payments for REDD+ actions, Viet Nam is now submitting its first Summary of Information.

This Summary of Information is intended to provide the UNFCCC with an overview of Viet Nam's country approach to REDD+ safeguards, including up-to-date information on the status of designing and implementing the national Safeguard Information System, the national clarification of the Cancun Safeguards and how these safeguards are addressed within Viet Nam's PLRs, and how Viet Nam will ensure that these safeguards are respected during national REDD+ implementation. The Summary of Information also outlines key initiatives, mechanisms and approaches related to REDD+ safeguards in Viet Nam, including the safeguards policies related to Viet Nam's proposed [Emissions Reduction Programme in the North-Central Region of Viet Nam](#) for the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

The submission and public dissemination of the Summary of Information at this stage also provides an opportunity for Viet Nam to receive feedback and recommendations from the UNFCCC and key related stakeholders both within and outside of the country. The Summary of Information provides information on remaining gaps and identifies key measures related to addressing the Cancun Safeguards. It is anticipated that subsequent Summaries of Information will provide information on how these measures have been implemented, and will provide comprehensive information on how REDD+ safeguards are being addressed and respected in Viet Nam as a basis for accessing UNFCCC results-based payments.

1.4 Summary of Information development process

This first Summary of Information from Viet Nam has been developed by the Office of the State Steering Committee for the Target Program on Sustainable Forest Development and REDD+ Implementation (State Steering Committee Office), working closely with the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with technical support from the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme, the Viet Nam FCPF Readiness Preparation Project supported by the World Bank, and the Project for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Watershed Area (SUSFORM-NOW) funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The draft Summary of Information was also consulted widely with REDD+ stakeholders prior to finalisation through the following mechanisms and processes:

- **Consultations with related national Government agencies** were undertaken through the Government Working Group on the Safeguard Information System and the Summary of Information (the SIS-SOI Working Group)⁶ throughout the development of the Summary of Information. Written comments were received

⁶ Further information on the SIS-SOI Working Group is provided in Section 3.1.1 of this Summary of Information.

from all 26 Government agencies represented in the SIS and SOI Working Group.

- **Consultations with interested parties and stakeholders from the public sector, the privatesector, social and professional organisations, non-governmental organisations, academics and legal experts** were undertaken through two meetings of the Sub-Technical Working Group on Safeguards (STWG-SG)⁷ established under the National REDD+ Network, and through a national stakeholder consultation workshop.
- **Consultations with provincial authorities and other sub-national stakeholders** were undertaken through a national workshop and through official dissemination of the draft document for comments. Provincial REDD+ Steering Committees in provinces with approved Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (see Table 2 below) were also requested to provide comments on the draft Summary of Information.
- **Public consultation** was undertaken through the [Viet Nam REDD+ website](#).

2. NATIONAL REDD+ CONTEXT IN VIET NAM

2.1 Overview of Viet Nam's national forest estate

As set out in Viet Nam's Modified Submission on Reference Levels for REDD+ Results Based Payments under the UNFCCC (FREL/FRL),⁸ much of Viet Nam's forest cover was removed between 1943 and 1993, declining from 43% to 28%. Since then Viet Nam has made considerable efforts to increase its overall forest cover.

Based on the results of the National Forest Inventory (NFI), the actual forest area in Viet Nam increased to 13.7 million ha in 2010 from 11.3 million ha in 1995. Much of the increase has been due to establishment of new plantations, which account for 2.1 million hectares, and the re-designation and inclusion of previously omitted limestone forests. It is generally acknowledged that the quality of natural forests continues to be more fragmented and degraded. As of 2010, over two-thirds of Viet Nam's natural forests are considered poor or regenerating, while rich and closed-canopy forest constitutes only 5 percent of the total. Between 1995 and 2010, the area of natural forest classified as rich decreased by 35,000 ha/year and medium forest reduced by 66,000 ha/year. These figures indicate that deforestation and forest degradation are still serious issues for Viet Nam.

Area statistics of forest and land use dynamics during 1995-2010, which were derived from NFI forest cover maps, are provided in Table 1.⁹

⁷ Further information on the STWG-WG is provided in Section 3.1.1 of this Summary of Information.

⁸ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam (2016) Viet Nam's Modified Submission on Reference Levels for REDD+ Results Based Payments under the UNFCCC: https://redd.unfccc.int/files/vietnam_frl_modified_submission_final_for_posting.pdf.

⁹ Ibid. The historical NFI forest cover maps have been reviewed for correction, taking the 2010 forest cover map as a baseline and applying the most recent forest definition and a harmonised forest classification system. Where necessary, forest changes were checked against historical satellite imagery.

Table 1: Areas of national forest and land use 1995 – 2010 (unit: 1,000 ha)

No.	Forest and land use types	1995	2000	2005	2010
	Total area	33,015	33,015	33,017	33,017
I	Forest	11,357	11,938	12,741	13,661
1	Evergreen broadleaf – rich	856	804	693	681
2	Evergreen broadleaf – medium	2,004	1,889	1,783	1,674
3	Evergreen broadleaf – poor	1,918	1,785	1,621	1,581
4	Evergreen broadleaf – regrowth	2,399	2,699	3,283	3,654
5	Deciduous	751	722	665	646
6	Bamboos	526	547	490	441
7	Mixed timber – bamboos	734	751	751	748
8	Coniferous	172	177	164	162
9	Mixed broadleaf - coniferous	64	56	54	53
10	Mangrove	199	178	134	142
11	Limestone forest	740	749	759	757
12	Plantation	994	1,582	2,343	3,122
II	Bare land	7,979	7,264	6,249	4,893
13	Limestone without trees	232	224	207	205
14	Other bare land	7,748	7,039	6,042	4,688
III	Agriculture and other land	13,678	13,814	14,027	14,463
15	Water body	824	846	851	870
16	Residential area	1,498	1,569	1,669	1,798
17.	Agriculture and other land	11,356	11,399	11,507	11,796

2.2 Identified drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and barriers to sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration of forests and forest conservation

2.2.1 Drivers of deforestation and degradation of forests

Key current drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Viet Nam include:

- (i) Conversion of forest lands for agriculture and other purposes;
- (ii) Infrastructure development such as roads and hydropower plants;
- (iii) Unsustainable logging; and
- (iv) Forest fires.

2.2.2 Barriers to sustainable management of forests, reforestation and forest conservation

Barriers to sustainable management of forests, reforestation and forest conservation have also been identified:¹⁰

- (i) **Barriers to sustainable management of natural production forests** include the quality of forest resources, low production volumes and high production costs, lack of clear management rights, as well as a lack of incentives for state

¹⁰McNally, R., Vu Tan Phuong, Nguyen The Chien, Pham Xuan Phuong, Nguyen Viet Dung (2016) Issues and options: support for the revision of Viet Nam's National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP), 2016-2020.

forest companies to engage in sustainable forest management in economically viable forests or to rehabilitate degraded natural forests.

- (ii) **Barriers to the sustainable management of plantations** include production practices that are not yet effective, limited market options and ineffective governance and support.
- (iii) **Barriers to reforestation and restoration of forests** include limited economic benefits support for forest rehabilitation, a lack of support for reforestation, and insufficient incentives for local communities to partake in forest land restoration activities.
- (iv) **Barriers to effective forest conservation** include limitations in the institutional capacity to manage special-use forests, lack of engagement with nearby communities, and ineffective and limited financing for conservation.

2.3 National REDD+ Implementation Plans

2.3.1 National REDD+ Programme

In June 2012, the Prime Minister approved the country's first National REDD+ Programme (NRAP), covering the period 2011-2020.¹¹ A review of progress of the NRAP was carried out at the end of the 1st phase of its implementation (2011-2015). The report highlighted that while some good progress had been made, it also revealed the necessity to revise the direction of the NRAP so as to better guide implementation under Phase II of REDD+.

An inter-sectoral drafting team was established, and a transparent and participatory process was applied, including extensive direct, bilateral and informal consultations with the public sector, the private sector, social and professional organisations, non-governmental organisations, universities, institutes and international organisations, and circulation of drafts for comments through the National REDD+ Network and on the Viet Nam REDD+ website.

Viet Nam's revised NRAP was approved by the Prime Minister in April 2017, and covers the period from 2017-2030.¹² The NRAP aims to contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest development, national strategies on responding to climate change, and national strategies on green growth, linking to sustainable development, ensuring national environmental security and poverty reduction. The NRAP has been designed in compliance with the policies and laws of Viet Nam, and is consistent with international treaties and agreements that Viet Nam has participated or signed. It aims to ensure consistent steering, management and coordination by the responsible authorities, optimising the participation and monitoring of socio-political, professional associations, non-governmental organisations and communities, and utilising mechanisms for effective international cooperation in the development and implementation of REDD+ in Viet Nam.

¹¹ Prime Minister's Decision No. 799/QĐ-TTg dated 27 June 2012 on Approval of the National Program on Reduction of Green-house Gas Emissions through Efforts to Reduce Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forest Resources, and Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks, 2011-2020.

¹² Prime Minister's Decision No. 419/QĐ-TTg dated 5 April 2017 on Approval of the National Programme on the Reduction of Green-house Gas Emissions through the Reduction of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forest Resources, and Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks (REDD+) by 2030.

The NRAP sets out key overall policies and measures (PaMs) to be implemented during the period from 2017-2020 (further detail on these is provided below), together with information on the overall arrangements and responsibilities for NRAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The overall goal and specific objectives of the NRAP

Overall goal

Contribute to protecting and improving the quality of the existing natural forests, expanding the forest area and improving the quality of plantation forests; linking with the implementation of national goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, forest protection and development, green growth; mobilising international support, getting access to carbon markets; and improving people's lives and the country's sustainable development.

Specific objectives

For the period 2017-2020:

- a) Contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through REDD+ activities; expand the forest cover to 42% and reach 14.4 million hectares of forest by 2020;
- b) Meet the requirements of REDD+ readiness, ensuring there is capacity to access financial resources for results-based payments as per international requirements;
- c) Improve the quality of natural forests and planted forests to increase carbon stock and environmental forest services; replicate effective models of forest plantation; sustainable management, protection and conservation of natural forests;
- d) Contribute to improve forest governance, create jobs, improve the living conditions of the people associated with the New Rural Programme and ensure security and national defence.

For the period 2021-2030:

- a) Stabilise the natural forest area by 2030 at, at least, the same level as 2020, and increase forest cover up to 45% of national territory, contributing to realise the national target of reducing total greenhouse gas emissions by 8% by 2030 compared with business as usual (BAU) scenario as committed in the Paris Agreement on climate change. This contribution may increase to 25% if receiving international support;
- b) Replicate highly effective models on REDD+ and sustainable forest management, integrate fully REDD+ into sustainable forestry development programmes;
- c) Complete policies, laws and action framework of the REDD+ programme and access financial resources for results-based payments in accordance with international requirements.

(Prime Minister's Decision No. 419/QĐ-TTg dated 5 April 2017 on Approval of the National Programme on the Reduction of Green-house Gas Emissions through the Reduction of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forest Resources, and Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks (REDD+) by 2030.)