



ASSESSING SOCIAL IMPACTS OF PROGRAM-LEVEL REDD+

REPORT BRIEF

ENSURING REDD+ SOCIAL BENEFITS

Initiatives for reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+) are advancing across the developing world. REDD+ has the potential to significantly affect the livelihoods of those who depend on forests for their subsistence and income needs – presenting both risks and opportunities for these communities.

REDD+ stakeholders have demonstrated strong interest in making concerted efforts to minimize risks and maximize benefits for these communities.



Assessment and evaluation of social impacts is an important means for identifying how best to enhance positive impacts, and to avoid, minimize, or mitigate negative ones. Many development partners working on REDD+ support the undertaking of social and environmental impact assessments. Impact assessment has increasingly become a central element of international funding pathways in support of REDD+, through processes like the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)'s **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)** and the **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**, the **UN-REDD Social and Environmental Safeguards Framework**, and the **REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES)**. Although such processes exist, to date there is believed to be no nationally-appropriate and comprehensive methodological guidance on how to apply these concepts. These assessments also relate to the information on how REDD+ social and environmental safeguards are being respected, and thus provide information for country REDD+ **Safeguard Information Systems (SIS)**.

This brief provides information from a report commissioned by the Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) program about specific tools, methods, and methodologies that can be used to:

1. assess the potential social impacts of REDD+ during the program design phase; and
2. identify (evaluate) actual social impacts during the program implementation phase.

The full report, and this brief, are designed to be useful for those commissioning or undertaking such social assessments or evaluations. The full report can be found on the FCMC website, www.FCMCglobal.org. The review is a follow-up to an earlier workshop supported by FCMC.

FOCUSING ON SOCIAL IMPACTS BENEFITS AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

The **Learning Initiative on Social Impacts of REDD+ (LISA-REDD)**, a consortium of international organizations, was created in 2011 “to provide methods and guidance for assessing social impacts of national and sub-national REDD+ programs to help governments and civil society design, implement, and build support for, effective and equitable REDD+.” Core members include CARE International, Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), Conservation International (CI), Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR), Forest Trends, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)’s Forests, Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) program. In addition, LISA-REDD aimed to collaborate with a range of other key stakeholders engaged in REDD+, such as the World Bank and UN-REDD.

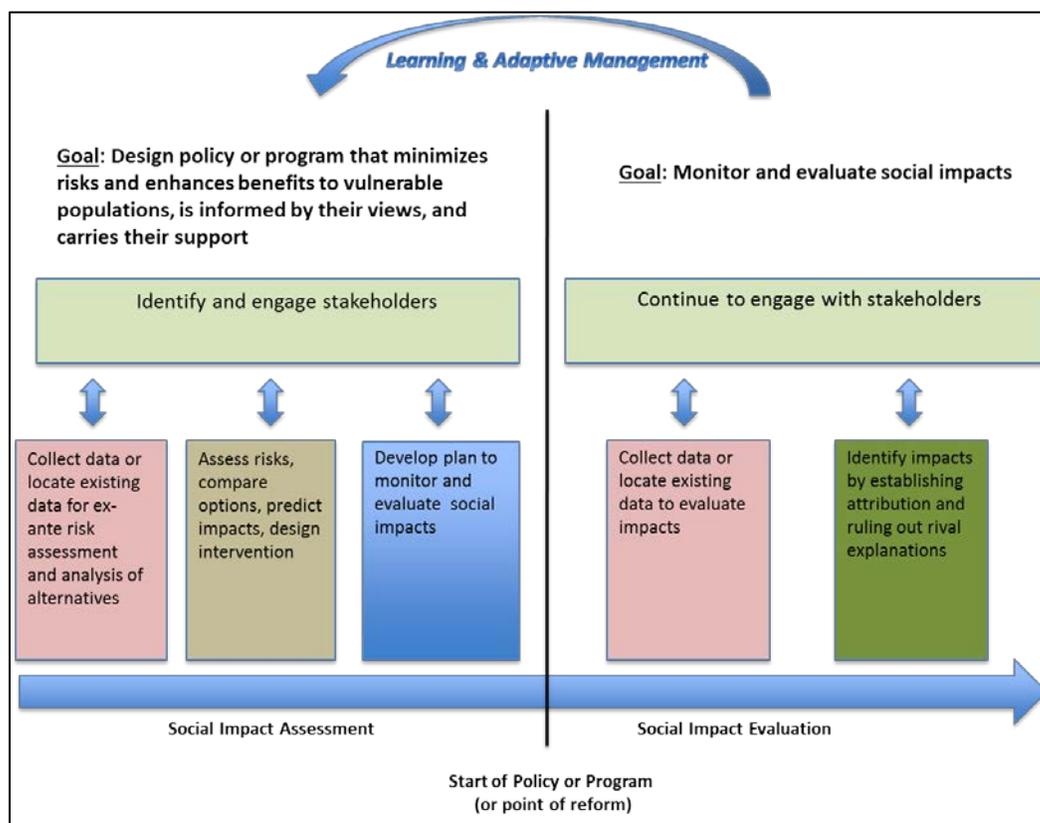


Figure 1: Assessing and evaluating social impacts in REDD+

With support from FCMC, LISA-REDD organized a three-day experts' meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2012 to help address these methodological gaps. The first LISA-REDD+ workshop (March 2011) had explored options, opportunities and constraints for assessment of the social impacts of national REDD+ programs as requested or required by the FCPF and UN-REDD, the REDD+ SES and the UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards. At the second workshop, experts agreed that it would be useful to have a review of methods suitable for program-level, i.e., national or sub-national, social impact assessment of REDD+. Although considerable guidance exists on

methods for undertaking project-level assessment of social impacts, little is available for assessing program-level impact. FCMC, on behalf of LISA-REDD, commissioned the preparation of a summary of key technical methods. This brief highlights key elements of the report, *Methods for Assessing and Evaluating Social Impacts of Program-level REDD+*.

HOW TO ASSESS SOCIAL IMPACTS AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

Social impact assessment can be done at multiple phases during a program – during program design (commonly referred to as *ex ante* assessment), during program implementation (ongoing or synchronous assessment), or after a program is completed (*ex post* assessment). The review focuses on assessment during the design phase and monitoring and evaluating actual impacts during implementation.

As indicated in Figure 1, REDD+ programs need to assess and predict impacts during the program design phase. This assessment can help programs compare various design and policy options and chart a course that avoids harm, enhances benefits, and carries the support of local populations. To ensure that REDD+ programs are achieving their stated goals, it is also necessary to monitor social conditions during the implementation phase and identify impacts. Evaluating impacts during implementation is important for verifying assumptions about how the program works, including the effectiveness of social safeguards, and for making any modifications to program design if necessary (i.e., adaptive management).

FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING A SOCIAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The overall process of assessing potential social impacts during the program design phase and identifying and monitoring actual social impacts during the program implementation phase encompasses multiple goals and objectives. Meeting each objective requires decisions regarding how many and which methods to use. To delineate these distinct objectives and decision points, this review develops a framework (Box 1) to classify the **objectives of social impact assessment and evaluation** and their respective components. The review focuses on methodological options for assessing and evaluating the social impacts of government-led REDD+ policies, programs, and measures implemented at the national and sub-national levels – as opposed to the project-level. General guidance is also provided on how to select appropriate

Box 1. Key elements of this framework:

Objective #1: Develop overall approach for assessing and evaluating the social impacts of policy reforms and programs

Objective #2: Engage stakeholders, assess risks, compare options, predict impacts, and design programs

Necessary component 2(a): Identify stakeholders

Necessary component 2(b): Engage stakeholders

Possible component 2(c): Political economy analysis

Possible component 2(d): Prediction based on stakeholders' views

Possible component 2(e): Prediction based on economic data

Objective #3: Select and monitor indicators of well-being

Possible component 3(a): Use existing data

Possible component 3(b): Collect own data

Objective #4: Identify impacts: establish attribution and rule out rival explanations

Possible component 4(a): Experimental and quasi-experimental techniques

Possible component 4(b): Participatory and non-experimental techniques

methods given a REDD+ program's resources (time, funds, capacity), availability of relevant data, preferences (i.e., discipline, scientific rigor), situations (i.e., those in the program design phase as well as those in the program implementation phase), and the magnitude of potential impacts (positive or negative). Both qualitative and quantitative methods are covered in this manual – and the advantages of using both method types are highlighted.

METHODS SUITABLE FOR PROGRAM-LEVEL REDD+

The full report provides detailed summaries of 22 different methods and practices that are considered suitable for social assessment and evaluation of program-level REDD+. It also references nearly 30 other tools and approaches that can be applied to REDD+. The methodologies summarized include:

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA)
Participatory Theory of Change
Stakeholder Analysis
Appreciative Inquiry
Drivers of Change Analysis
Participatory Rural Appraisal
Participatory Mapping
Household Economy Approach
Economic Modeling
Participatory Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation
Randomization
Repeated Time Series
Regression Discontinuity Design
Matching
Most Significant Change
Stages of Progress
Living Standards and Measurement Surveys
Demographic and Health Surveys
CIFOR-GCS REDD Survey Instruments
Basic Necessities Survey
Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.

Each summary includes the method's major attributes, including scope, key assumptions, ability to capture short-term versus long-term impacts, its level of differentiation, strengths and weaknesses, examples of where the method has been applied, and cited sources of where more information on the methodology can be found.

LISA-REDD Focal Point: Phil Franks, pfranks@iied.org
FCMC Program Chief of Party: Scott A. Hajost, scott.hajost@fcmcglobal.org
USAID FCMC SES Activity Manager: Diane Russell, dirussell@usaid.gov
FCMC Project Website: www.fcmcglobal.org

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