

“Even for a highly qualified expert it can be challenging to join the international climate change negotiations for the first time”.

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B R I E F

Guide for REDD-plus negotiators

An updated version of the FIELD Guide for REDD-plus negotiators

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Introduction

The international REDD-plus negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) involve complicated technical and political issues. This guide aims to provide developing country negotiators and others with a simple and neutral overview of the various negotiations and decisions related to REDD-plus.

The guide has four parts:

- Part 1 gives a brief overview of key terms and concepts related to REDD-plus.
- Part 2 provides an introduction to the REDD-plus negotiations. It is followed by a short explanation of the relationship between REDD-plus and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) under the Kyoto Protocol. The final section in this part provides an overview of UNFCCC negotiating bodies concerned with REDD-plus.
- Part 3 gives a summary of developments related to REDD-plus at some UNFCCC meetings since 2007. It includes short summaries of selected UNFCCC documents, together with links to the official documents. Please note that this overview only highlights some issues—please refer to the official documents for the full details.
- Part 4 contains general negotiating tips for new REDD-plus negotiators and other interested parties.

This guide is an updated version of the FIELD Guide for REDD-plus negotiators, which was produced previously by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD).

Part 1: terminology and concepts

This part gives a brief overview of some terms and concepts related to REDD-plus.

REDD-plus and LULUCF

REDD-plus encompasses the activities below, as listed in paragraph 70 of [decision 1/CP.16](#), which the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted in Cancun in 2010:

- (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- (d) Sustainable management of forests;
- (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The different activities, mentioned above, have not been defined and it is not completely clear how they should be categorised. For example, it is not clear if ‘sustainable management of forests’ means the same as ‘sustainable forest management’, which is often mentioned in other negotiations such as in the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF).

In addition, the relationships between some REDD-plus activities are also not clear. For example, conservation could be seen as a means of reducing emissions from deforestation or forest degradation or for the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, some forest terms have been defined, such as ‘deforestation’ and ‘reforestation’, but these are not automatically applicable to REDD-plus, as it has been devel-

oped under the UNFCCC, not under the Kyoto Protocol. The rules relating to land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) under the Kyoto Protocol concern developed countries.

Measuring, reporting and verification (MRV)

MRV of REDD-plus involves assessing anthropogenic (human-caused) forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, changes in forest carbon stocks and forest areas. Assessment includes field data and satellite monitoring. Countries report this data and information to the UNFCCC for consideration. MRV is very important for confidence in REDD-plus.

The three phases of REDD-plus

The COP has agreed that REDD-plus will be implemented in three phases. The first phase involves a country developing a national REDD-plus strategy or action plan, as well as policies and measures. Capacity building is an important part of this first phase. This is often referred to as ‘readiness activities’.

In the second phase, countries implement the national strategies or action plans and policies and measures. This may involve more readiness activities, technology development and transfer and results-based REDD-plus demonstration activities. In the third phase, countries implement results-based REDD-plus, which the COP has agreed should be fully measured, reported and verified.

Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)

Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) by developing countries are voluntary and aim to achieve a deviation in greenhouse gas emissions relative to business-as-usual in 2020.

NAMAs could involve, for example:

- Energy efficiency programmes;
- Improved waste management;
- Policies and legislation;
- Developing hydroelectric potential; or,
- Enhancing soil carbon stocks.

Many developing countries have submitted information about their NAMAs to the UNFCCC. A NAMA registry has been established under the UNFCCC, which records NAMAs that need international support and recognises other NAMAs. Some years ago, countries had differing views about whether REDD-plus actions should be considered to be NAMAs or separated into a category of their own. The current situation is not completely clear, but countries have included REDD-plus actions in the information they have submitted about NAMAs.

Forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels

When a country implements REDD-plus, the results need to be measured against a starting point or benchmark. This is the ‘forest reference emission level’ or ‘forest reference level’. The COP has invited countries to voluntarily submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels for technical assessment ([decision 12/CP.17](#)). These are available on the [UNFCCC website](#). Countries have different understandings of what forest reference emission level and forest reference level mean, so both terms are usually mentioned at the same time in UNFCCC negotiations.

Forest reference emission levels and

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forest reference levels need to be distinguished from what is sometimes called crediting or compensation baselines. These are benchmarks or levels at which countries may start receiving financial benefits for results-based REDD-plus.

Part 2: background

First, this part provides a brief introduction to the REDD-plus negotiations. It is followed by a short explanation of the relationship between REDD-plus and LULUCF under the Kyoto Protocol. The final section in this part provides an overview of UNFCCC negotiating bodies concerned with REDD-plus.

The REDD-plus negotiations

REDD-plus originates from a proposal made by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in 2005. With support from a group of other countries, they proposed a new agenda item on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries at the UNFCCC’s Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP 11) in Montreal, Canada. Many countries were very interested in the proposal, which offered an opportunity to reduce emissions while protecting forests and generating financial resources for developing countries. The UNFCCC’s Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) was asked to consider the issue.

In 2007, COP 13, which was held in Indonesia, adopted the ‘Bali Action Plan’ ([decision 1/CP.13](#)), which launched a new phase of negotiations on strengthening cooperation under the UNFCCC. The Bali Action Plan included REDD-plus, which many countries saw as a priority.

At the Cancun climate conference in 2010 the COP identified a range of

REDD-plus activities, which it encouraged developing country parties to undertake, and set out basic requirements for REDD-plus.

In 2013, at the Warsaw climate conference, COP 19 was able to adopt a series of decisions on REDD-plus, now known as the ‘Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus’. Many welcomed this as significant progress in establishing the rules for REDD-plus.

The ‘Paris Agreement’, a new legally binding treaty adopted in December 2015 under the UNFCCC, now incorporates REDD-plus, with a reference to guidance and decisions adopted previously under the UNFCCC.

One reason why the negotiations on REDD-plus are complicated is that they have links to other issues considered under the UNFCCC, such as negotiations related to financing and market-based mechanisms. These have implications for the REDD-plus negotiations and vice versa.

The REDD-plus negotiations have involved many complicated technical and political issues—how REDD-plus should be financed has been a central question from the start. Some countries have argued for reliance on carbon markets, while other countries do not favour market approaches.

Land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) under the Kyoto Protocol

LULUCF under the Kyoto Protocol concerns developed countries, while REDD-plus concerns developing countries. It is important to note that decisions under the Kyoto Protocol about LULUCF do not apply to REDD-plus under the UNFCCC and vice versa. However, LULUCF and REDD-plus both address forests and the negotiations about LULUCF

have had a significant influence on the negotiations about REDD-plus. The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol are legally separate agreements. The UNFCCC's COP takes decisions relating to the UNFCCC.

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) takes decisions related to the Kyoto Protocol. The COP and the CMP consist of the countries that are parties (have joined) each agreement. Some countries that are parties to the UNFCCC are not parties to the Kyoto Protocol. They can participate in decision making by the COP, but not in decision making by the CMP. Moreover, they can only participate as observers in the CMP.

The main rules for LULUCF in developed countries are set out in Kyoto Protocol Articles 3.3 and 3.4 and in CMP decisions [16/CMP.1](#) from 2005, [2/CMP.6](#) from 2010 and [2/CMP.7](#) from 2011. Decision [2/CMP.7](#) contains new LULUCF rules for 2013–2020 under the Kyoto Protocol. Until 2012 developed countries (Annex I parties) had to include afforestation, reforestation and deforestation since 1990 in their efforts to meet their emission reduction targets (Kyoto Protocol Article 3.3). They were allowed to choose to include revegetation, forest management, cropland management and/or grazing land management (Article 3.4). A major change is that developed countries must now include forest management.

It became clear in the negotiations on the new rules for 2013–2020 that, although these negotiations concerned developed countries, they nevertheless influenced the REDD-plus negotiations. For example, the process for constructing forest management reference levels and the related review

process for developed countries (see decision [2/CMP.6](#)) influenced the negotiations on forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels for REDD-plus.

UNFCCC negotiating bodies concerned with REDD-plus

The UNFCCC has several negotiating bodies. Some, for example the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), are permanent, while others such as the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), exist for a limited time.

Until the Doha climate conference in 2012, the AWG-LCA was the main body for the REDD-plus negotiations, together with SBSTA. The AWG-LCA was established in 2007 by COP 13 to take forward negotiations related to the Bali Action Plan ([decision 1/CP.13](#)).

The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) has also addressed REDD-plus, together with SBSTA. In 2012, the COP requested SBSTA and SBI to jointly consider issues related to improving coordination of support for REDD-plus and to consider possible institutional arrangements.

In 2011, COP 17, in Durban, decided to extend the AWG-LCA for one year and to terminate it in 2012. The COP established the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). It tasked the ADP with undertaking negotiations on a new climate agreement ([decision 1/CP.17](#)). Based on this, the Paris Agreement was subsequently adopted by COP 21 in December 2015. In Paris, the COP also established a new Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement to prepare for entry into force.

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Part 3: REDD-plus at UNFCCC meetings since 2007

This part of the guide gives a brief overview of developments related to REDD-plus at some UNFCCC meetings since 2007. It includes short summaries of selected UNFCCC documents, together with links to the official documents. Please note that this overview only highlights some issues—please refer to the official documents for the full details.

2007: Bali, Indonesia, COP13

The conference in Bali saw the beginning of an intense phase of negotiations under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol that lead up to the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009. There were strong differences in views among countries in these negotiations. For example, there were concerns over what actions developing countries with rapidly growing emissions should take, but also areas where it seemed agreement might be possible. A broad range of countries were interested in REDD-plus, which raised the possibility that it might be one of the areas where agreement could be achieved in 2009.

Decision 1/CP.13 (Bali Action Plan)

The Bali Action Plan provided the basis for a new phase of negotiations to strengthen action under the UNFCCC. It established the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) to advance these negotiations. The AWG-LCA was meant to conclude its work in 2009, but the negotiations were only completed in 2012 (please see below regarding the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009).

The Bali Action Plan identified key issues to be addressed in the negotiations, such as enhanced national/international action on mitigation of climate change. This included REDD-plus in paragraph 1(b)(iii):

‘Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.’

This paragraph provided the basis for the subsequent negotiations on REDD-plus in the AWG-LCA.

Decision 2/CP.13

COP 13 also adopted decision 2/CP.13 on ‘reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action’. In this decision, the COP encouraged parties in a position to do so, to support capacity building, provide technical assistance and facilitate technology transfer. It encouraged parties to explore a range of actions, including demonstration activities, to address the drivers of deforestation.

An annex to the decision provided indicative guidance for demonstration activities, without prejudice to future COP decisions. The indicative guidance included, for instance, that REDD-plus demonstration activities should be undertaken with the approval of the host party and that subnational approaches should be a step toward the development of national approaches.

Decision 2/CP.13 also requested SBSTA to undertake a programme of work on methodological issues.

2008: Poznan, Poland, SBSTA 29

In its report (FCCC/SBSTA/2008/13), the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) referred to ‘reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries’ (paragraph 38 of document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/13). In doing so, it changed the semi-colon between the words ‘...developing countries...’ and the words ‘...and the role of conservation...’ to a comma in the report. This change was made in response to pressure from some countries that wished to see ‘conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks’ given the same level of priority in the negotiations as deforestation and forest degradation. Since then, the issue that started as ‘RED’ (reducing emissions from deforestation) went on to become ‘REDD’ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) and then became ‘REDD-plus’, with the ‘plus’ referring to ‘conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks’.

SBSTA recommended methodological guidance on REDD-plus, without prejudice to any future COP decision, in annex II to its report. In the annex, SBSTA noted the importance of certain elements in relation to its programme of work initiated under decision 2/CP.13. These included, for example:

- Further mobilisation of resources;
- Recognising the need to promote the full and effective participation of indigenous people and local communities, taking into account national circumstances and noting relevant international agreements; and
- Exploring co-benefits.

SBSTA recommended use of the Revised 1996 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, and encouraging the use of the IPCC Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry, as appropriate. SBSTA also recommended taking into account the need to establish robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems.

2009: Copenhagen, Denmark, COP 15

There were high expectations that the Copenhagen climate conference might reach agreement on stronger action to combat climate change, but lack of agreement became increasingly clear during 2009 in the preparatory negotiations. Many world leaders attended the Copenhagen conference, which drew intense media scrutiny, but due to differing views and controversial questions related to how the negotiations were conducted, the negotiations became deadlocked.

As a result, the main outcome was the Copenhagen Accord, an agreement that was not formally adopted under the UNFCCC. Although concluded in Copenhagen, the accord was a political agreement concluded outside the UNFCCC. However, many countries supported the Copenhagen Accord and, in subsequent negotiations, language from the accord was included in various UNFCCC negotiating texts and decisions. The Copenhagen Accord contained several references relating to REDD-plus.

During 2009, the negotiations on REDD-plus had progressed well in the preparations for Copenhagen.

Many countries hoped that agreement would be reached there on several issues related to REDD-plus, and that this would be a basis for starting to implement REDD-plus under the UNFCCC. However, the general deadlock in the negotiations made this impossible. Despite this, the REDD-plus negotiations made progress in Copenhagen. Parties focused on a draft text, which clarified issues such as the scope, guiding principles, safeguards, and a phased approach to REDD-plus.

Decision 2/CP.15

The COP ‘took note’ of the Copenhagen Accord, but, as explained above, did not adopt it. However, many countries supported the Copenhagen Accord and in subsequent negotiations language from the accord was included in various UNFCCC negotiating texts and decisions.

In the Copenhagen Accord, countries agreed on the need to provide positive incentives through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus.

Decision 4/CP.15

Decision 4/CP.15 provided methodological guidance for REDD-plus, based on work undertaken by SBSTA in follow up of decision 2/CP.13. The COP requested developing countries to:

- a) Identify drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- b) Identify activities that result in reduced emissions and increased removals, and stabilisation of forest carbon stocks;
- c) Use the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines as adopted or encouraged by the COP; and
- d) Establish robust and transparent forest monitoring systems.

The COP encouraged, as appropriate, development of guidance for effective engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in monitoring and reporting. It recognised that, in establishing forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels, developing country parties should do so transparently, taking into account historic data, and adjusting for national circumstances.

2010: Cancun, Mexico, COP16

After Copenhagen, some countries were of the view that the draft text on REDD-plus that could not be adopted in Copenhagen should be consolidated in a decision at the next COP. In the meanwhile, there should not be attempts to progress beyond what had been agreed in the text in Copenhagen, as that might raise issues that could cause disagreements.

At the AWG-LCA meeting in August 2010, strong differences in views regarding REDD-plus emerged. Some countries made proposals for changes, for example proposing new eligibility criteria for funding forest-related activities and removing the words ‘emissions from’. The latter would have resulted in, for example, the words ‘reducing emissions from deforestation’ becoming ‘reducing deforestation’. However, following negotiations in Cancun in December 2010, the COP was able to agree on a text similar to the draft text from Copenhagen, as reflected in decision 1/CP.16

The COP encouraged developing country parties to undertake REDD-plus activities, as listed in paragraph 70:

- a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- d) Sustainable management of forests; and,
- e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

The decision requested developing countries to develop the following:

- a) A national strategy or action plan;
- b) A national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level (or as an interim measure subnational);
- c) A robust and transparent national forest monitoring system (or subnational as an interim measure); and,
- d) A system for providing information on how safeguards described in appendix I of the decision are being addressed and respected.

In addition, the COP requested developing country parties to address issues such as:

- Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- Land tenure;
- Forest governance; and,
- Gender considerations.

It decided that REDD-plus should be implemented in phases, evolving into results-based REDD-plus actions that should be fully measured, reported and verified.

The safeguards listed in appendix I to the decision include, for example, respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, ensuring that REDD-plus is not used for conversion of natural forests, and actions to reduce displacement ('leakage') of emissions.

Appendix II set out a new SBSTA work programme on REDD-plus, including consideration of issues related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. It included a request to develop modalities for the development of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and forest monitoring systems, and to develop guidance for providing information on safeguards. SBSTA was also asked to develop modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying. This was to be consistent with any COP guidance for measuring, reporting and verification of developing country NAMAs.

2011: Durban, South Africa, COP 17

In Durban, the COP decided to establish the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), marking a new phase of negotiations under the UNFCCC. The ADP was given the task to undertake negotiations on a 'protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties' ([decision 1/CP.17](#)). These negotiations led to the adoption of the Paris Agreement at COP 21 in December 2015.

In the same decision, the COP decided to launch a work plan on enhancing mitigation ambition, which subsequently formed the basis for a technical examination process of opportunities for action with high mitigation potential for the pre-2020 period.

In Durban, the COP launched the Green Climate Fund ([decision 3/CP.17](#)), which may play a significant role in REDD-plus financing in the future.

Decision 2/CP.17

The COP agreed that, regardless of the source or type of financing, REDD-plus should be consistent with decision 1/CP.16 from Cancun, including the safeguards in appendix I to that decision. The decision confirmed that, to obtain results-based financing, REDD-plus should be fully measured, reported on and verified.

Developing countries should also have:

- a) National strategies or action plans;
- b) Forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels (which can be subnational on an interim basis);
- c) A national forest monitoring system (subnational on an interim basis); and,
- d) A system for providing information on safeguards.

In addition, the COP considered that 'appropriate market-based approaches' could be developed by the COP for results-based actions and noted that non-market-based approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches, could be developed.

Decision 12/CP.17

This decision provided:

- Guidance on systems for providing information on how REDD-plus safeguards are addressed and respected; and
- Modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels.

The first part of the decision provided guidance on systems for providing information on safeguards. Systems should, for example:

- Be consistent with the guidance in decision 16/CP.1 appendix I;

- Be transparent and flexible to allow for improvements over time;
- Provide information on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected; and,
- Be country-driven and implemented at the national level.

The COP agreed that developing country parties should provide a summary of information on how safeguards are addressed and respected. It requested SBSTA to consider the timing and frequency of presentations of the summary of information, and also the need for further guidance.

The second part of the decision addressed modalities for forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels. The COP decided that these are to be established taking into account decision 4/CP.15 from Copenhagen, and maintaining consistency with each country's greenhouse gas inventory. It invited parties to submit information and rationale on the development of their forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels in accordance with guidelines contained in an annex to the decision.

The guidelines in the annex include, for example, that information should:

- Be transparent, complete, consistent and accurate;
- Include pools, gases and activities listed in paragraph 70 of decision 16/CP.1, which have been included in the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, and the reasons for omitting any; and
- Should include the definition of forest used and, if this is different from the definition used in the national greenhouse gas inventory or in reporting to other international organisations, an explanation of why.

The COP acknowledged that subnational forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels may be elaborated as an interim measure. It invited developing country parties, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, to submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, and requested the secretariat to make these available on the [UNFCCC REDD web platform](#). It also requested SBSTA to develop guidance for a process of technical assessment of the proposed forest emission reference levels and/or forest reference levels.

2012: Doha, Qatar, COP 18

In Doha, the COP adopted the 'Agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali Action Plan' (decision 1/CP.18), which brought the phase of negotiations that started in 2013 to a conclusion. As regarded REDD-plus, countries had differing views in Doha about institutional arrangements following a proposal by a group of countries to create a REDD-plus committee.

Decision 1/CP.18

The COP decided to undertake a work programme on results-based finance for REDD-plus in 2013. The work programme was to address options including:

- (a) Ways and means to transfer payments for results-based actions;
- (b) Ways to incentivise non-carbon benefits; and

(c) Ways to improve the coordination of results-based finance.

The COP also requested SBSTA and SBI 38 jointly to:

- Initiate a process for improving coordination of support for REDD-plus implementation and to provide adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technological support, to developing country parties;
- To consider ‘existing institutional arrangements or potential governance alternatives including a body, a board or a committee’, and to make recommendations to COP 19.

In addition, it requested SBSTA 38 to:

- Consider how non-market-based approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, could be developed.
- Initiate work on methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits.

2013: Bonn, Germany, SBSTA 38 and SBI 38

SBSTA 38 was able to make what many viewed as significant progress and recommend several draft decisions for adoption by COP 19. However, SBSTA and SBI did not consider the agenda item that would have addressed the request from COP 18 to:

- Initiate a process for improving coordination of support for REDD-plus implementation and to provide adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technological support, to developing country parties;
- To consider ‘existing institutional arrangements or potential governance alternatives including a body, a board or a committee’ and to make recommendations to COP 19.

This was due to differences in view among various countries regarding issues related to the agenda for SBI, which made it impossible to adopt the agenda and proceed with work. A workshop on the issues above took place in Bonn.

2013: Warsaw, Poland, COP 19

At the Warsaw climate conference in 2013, COP 19 adopted several decisions on REDD-plus. These are known as the ‘Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus’. Many welcomed the Warsaw framework as significant progress.

Decision 9/CP.19

Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70

The COP reaffirmed that results-based finance may come from a variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources. It reaffirmed that the progression of developing country parties towards results-based financing occurs in the context of adequate and predictable sup-

port for all phases of REDD-plus. In addition, the COP agreed that, to obtain and receive results-based payments, developing countries should provide the most recent summary of information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected before they can receive results-based payments.

The decision encouraged financing entities, including the Green Climate Fund in a key role, to channel adequate and predictable results-based finance in a fair and balanced manner, while working with a view to increasing the number of countries in a position to obtain and receive results-based payments.

The COP decided to establish an information hub on the REDD web platform on the UNFCCC website as a means to publish information on REDD-plus results and corresponding results-based payments. It decided that the information hub will contain information, as reported through appropriate UNFCCC channels, for example the summary of information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected and information on the national forest monitoring system.

The COP noted that insertion of information about results on the hub does not create any rights or obligations. It also recognised the importance of incentivising non-carbon benefits.

The COP requested the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance to focus its soonest possible forum on finance for forests, including REDD-plus.

Decision 10/CP.19

Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements

The COP invited interested parties to designate a national entity or focal point to serve as a liaison with the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC bodies on the coordination of support for REDD-plus, and also for different policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation.

It noted that national entities or focal points may nominate their entities to obtain and receive results-based payments. The COP recognised that needs and functions related to addressing coordination of support for REDD-plus were identified, for example identifying and considering possible needs and gaps in coordination of support.

The decision encouraged national entities or focal points, parties and relevant financing entities to meet annually. The COP requested that the SBI review the outcomes of these meetings no later than 2017, to consider existing institutional arrangements or the need for potential governance alternatives for the coordination of support for REDD-plus. It requested SBI to make recommendations to COP 23.

Decision 11/CP.19

Modalities for national forest monitoring systems

The COP decided that national forest monitoring systems (with, if appropriate, subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure) should take into account guidance in decision 4/CP.15 and should be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the COP.

Data and information should be transparent, consistent over time and suitable for measuring, reporting and verifying REDD-plus. National forest monitoring systems should:

- (a) Build on existing systems, as appropriate;
- (b) Enable assessment of different types of forest, including natural forest as defined by the party;
- (c) Be flexible and allow for improvement; and,
- (d) Reflect, as appropriate, the phased approach.

Decision 12/CP.19

The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected

The COP decided that developing country parties should start providing the summary of information on safeguards in their national communication or communication channels agreed by the COP, after the start of implementation of REDD-plus. It agreed that the summary of information could be provided, on a voluntary basis, via the REDD web platform on the UNFCCC website.

See also decision 9/CP.19 above regarding the summary of information on safeguards and results-based payments.

Decision 13/CP.19

Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.

The COP adopted guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, set out in an annex to the decision. This includes, for example, assessing:

- Consistency with national greenhouse gas inventories;
- How historical data has been taken into account;
- The extent to which information is transparent, complete, consistent and accurate; and
- If assumptions about future change to domestic policies have been taken into account.

Decision 14/CP.19

Modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying

The COP decided that data and information should be provided through parties' biennial update reports. It requested developing country parties seeking payments for results-based actions to voluntarily supply a technical annex, as per decision 2/CP.17 annex III paragraph 19, when submitting data and information through the biennial update reports.

The COP decided that, on the request of the developing country party seeking results-based payments, two LULUCF experts from the UNFCCC roster of experts will be included in the technical team of experts that will analyse the report. It agreed that results-based actions that may be eligible for future market-based approaches may be subject to further modalities for verification.

Decision 15/CP.19

Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

In this decision, the COP reaffirmed the importance of addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. It recognised that actions to address drivers are unique to countries' national circumstances, capacities and capabilities. The COP encouraged parties, organisations and the private sector to take action to reduce the drivers of deforestation and degradation.

2014: Bonn Germany

In 2011, following the launch of a work plan on enhancing mitigation ambition in decision 1/CP.17, a technical examination process of opportunities for actions with high mitigation potential took place in Bonn, Germany. It focused on the implementation of policies, practices and technologies that are substantial, scalable and replicable, with a view to promoting voluntary cooperation on concrete actions.

A Technical Expert Meeting on land use, including REDD-plus, took place in June 2014 as part of this process.

2014: Lima, Peru, SBSTA 41

SBSTA 41, held in connection with COP20/CMP10, considered the need for further guidance relating to safeguards and non-market based approaches.

SBSTA was not able to reach conclusions on these issues and agreed to continue consideration at SBSTA 42. Some countries were of the view that further guidance regarding safeguards was needed, while others were of the view that this was not necessary.

2015: Paris, France, COP 21

The Paris conference marked the completion of the ADP negotiations with the adoption of the Paris Agreement, a legally binding treaty under the UNFCCC. The Paris Agreement explicitly incorporates REDD-plus, referring to the existing framework set out in guidance and decisions already agreed under the UNFCCC. The agreement also establishes a new mechanism for international transfers of mitigation outcomes and defines a framework for non-market approaches, both of which may have implications for REDD-plus.

The content of the Paris Agreement will be elaborated through further guidance and rules. For example, COP 21 requested the new Ad Hoc Working Group that will prepare entry into force of the Paris Agreement to develop further guidance on features of nationally determined contributions and related accounting. This could have implications for REDD-plus, where it features in nationally determined contributions.

In parallel with adoption of the Paris Agreement, COP 21 adopted three decisions on REDD-plus, based on work by SBSTA 42.

Paris Agreement

Article 5 of the Paris Agreement explicitly incorporates REDD-plus. It encourages parties to take action to implement and support, including through results-based payments, the existing REDD-plus framework set out in guidance and decisions under the UNFCCC. The article also includes alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests. In addition, it reaffirms the importance of incentivising non-carbon benefits, as appropriate.

The Paris Agreement recognises, in Article 6, that some parties choose to pursue voluntary cooperation in implementation of their nationally determined contributions to the agreement. According to the article, when parties engage in voluntary cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes towards nationally determined contributions, they shall promote sustainable development and ensure environmental integrity and transparency, including in governance. Parties shall apply robust accounting to ensure, inter alia, the avoidance of double counting, consistent with guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

Article 6 establishes a mechanism to contribute to mitigation and support sustainable development for Parties' voluntary use. Its aims are to:

- a) Promote mitigation while fostering sustainable development;
- b) Incentivise and facilitate participation in mitigation by public and private entities authorised by a party;
- c) Contribute to the reduction of emission levels in the host party, which will benefit from mitigation activities resulting in emission reductions that can also be used by another party to fulfil its nationally determined contribution; and
- d) Deliver an overall mitigation in global emissions.

In addition, Article 6 defines a framework for non-market approaches to sustainable development. According to the article, such approaches shall:

- a. Promote mitigation and adaptation ambition;
- b. Enhance public and private sector participation in implementation of nationally determined contributions; and
- c. Enable opportunities for coordination across instruments and relevant international arrangements.

Further work under the decision below can be expected to clarify the implications of this article for REDD-plus.

Decision 1/CP.21

In this decision, COP 21 requested SBSTA to develop guidance relating to voluntary cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (Paris Agreement Article 6.2), including guidance to ensure double counting is avoided on the basis of a corresponding adjustment.

The COP recommended that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement adopts rules, modalities and procedures for the mechanism established by Article 6 of

the Paris Agreement on the basis of:

- a. Voluntary participation authorised by each party involved;
- b. Real, measurable and long-term benefits related to mitigation of climate change;
- c. Specific scopes of activities;
- d. Reductions in emissions that are additional to what would otherwise occur;
- e. Verification and certification of emission reductions resulting from mitigation activities by designated operational entities; and
- f. Experience gained with and lessons learned from existing mechanisms and approaches adopted under the UNFCCC and its related legal instruments.

The decision requests SBSTA to develop and recommend such rules, modalities and procedures.

The COP also requested SBSTA to undertake a work programme under the framework for non-market approaches to sustainable development (Article 6.8).

The decision mentions REDD-plus in relation to finance. It recognises the importance of adequate and predictable financial resources, including for results-based REDD-plus payments, as well as alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests.

Part of this decision addresses enhancing action prior to 2020. It includes, for example: strengthening the existing technical examination process on mitigation; future high-level events recognising voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions; and appointment of high-level champions, acting on behalf of COP Presidents. Many expect these efforts to include REDD-plus. As noted above, the technical examination process has included a meeting on land use, including REDD-plus, in 2014.

Decision 16/CP.21

Alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests

The COP acknowledged that alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, are subject to the methodological guidance in decision 4/CP.15, paragraph 1. This also applies to guidance on safeguards and systems for providing information on safeguards when addressing REDD-plus issues. It recognised that alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, are one of the alternatives to results-based payments that may contribute to the long-term sustainability of REDD-plus implementation.

According to this decision, developing country parties seeking to receive support for the design and implementation of such approaches may consider the following elements:

- a) Development of national strategies or action plans referred to in decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 70;
- b) Identification of support needs, including financial resources and technical and technological support;
- c) Development of proposals demonstrating how such approaches are contributing to REDD-plus; and

d) Consideration of outcomes and areas of improvement in accordance with national circumstances using adaptive management and learning, as appropriate.

In addition, the COP noted that financing entities referred to in decision 9/CP.19 paragraph 5 are encouraged to continue providing financial resources for alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests. It decided to conclude its consideration of alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests.

Decision 17/CP.21

Further guidance on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected

COP 21 strongly encouraged developing country parties to include the following elements in the summary of information on safeguards, where appropriate:

- (a) Information on national circumstances relevant to safeguards;
- (b) A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances;
- (c) A description of existing systems and processes relevant to safeguards; and
- (d) Information on how each of the safeguards has been addressed and respected, in accordance with national circumstances.

In addition, the COP decided that there is no need for further guidance pursuant to decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 6, to ensure transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how safeguards are being addressed and respected.

Decision 18/CP.21

Methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70

In this decision the COP recognised that non-carbon benefits associated with REDD-plus are unique to national circumstances, in accordance with national sovereignty, legislation, policies and priorities. It recognised that developing country parties seeking support for integration of non-carbon benefits into REDD-plus, with a view to contributing to the long-term sustainability of those activities, may provide information addressing, inter alia, the nature, scale and importance of the non-carbon benefits. It also decided that methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits do not constitute a requirement for developing country parties seeking support or results-based payments. In addition, the COP agreed to conclude the work on methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits.

“Many negotiators have been involved in the negotiations for a long time and know each other well.”

Part 4: Tips for new negotiators

Even for a highly qualified expert it can be challenging to join the international climate change negotiations for the first time—for a new negotiator with limited experience, it can feel intimidating.

The issues are complicated. Delegates

speak to each other in ‘code’, using terminology and acronyms that are only ever heard in the climate negotiations. Many negotiators have been involved in the negotiations for a long time and know each other well.

It can, therefore, be helpful to keep in mind that every party has an equal

right to have a voice in the negotiations.

How to find out what is happening

Delegates can find out what is happening, for example through the following:

- Reading the Daily Programme on the [UNFCCC website](#). The Daily Programme lists the day's events and provides information about the status of documents and contact persons in the UNFCCC secretariat.
- Keeping an eye on the electronic screens, usually located in several places at the conference location, and the UNFCCC website. Meeting times and rooms often change during the day.
- Reading the [Earth Negotiations Bulletin \(ENB\)](#) daily updates.
- Reading [Third World Network \(TWN\)](#) updates.
- Reading the ECO Newsletter, produced by the [Climate Action Network \(CAN\)](#).

Country groups

Countries negotiate in groups that meet every day, often several times a day. Countries can be members of several groups at the same time. Group memberships change and sometimes new country groups are established.

Groups include, for example:

- The G77 and China;
- The Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group;
- The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS);
- The European Union (EU);
- The Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC);

- The Association of Independent Latin American and Caribbean States (AILAC).

The five 'UN groups' listed below are mainly used when electing officers, such as Chairs and Vice-chairs of UNFCCC bodies:

- African countries;
- Asian countries;
- Eastern European countries;
- Latin American and the Caribbean countries;
- Western European and Other countries.

The formal rules for the negotiations

The draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties and its Subsidiary Bodies have not been adopted. This is because the parties have not been able to agree on draft rule 42, which concerns voting. In the meanwhile the COP usually decides that the draft Rules of Procedure will continue to be applied, with the exception of draft rule 42.

The draft Rules of Procedure can be found in [Adoption of the Rules of Procedure, Note by the Secretariat, FCCC/CP/1996/2](#).

Meeting documents

Different kinds of documents have different status in the negotiations. For example:

- *Misc. (miscellaneous) documents* usually contain submissions received from parties.
- *Conference Room Papers (CRPs)* are documents produced during negotiating sessions and tend to be of a temporary nature.
- *L documents* are draft reports and outcome texts at a fairly advanced

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stage. Usually L documents are adopted at the end of a session. Even though these are usually advanced drafts, changes are sometimes made just before adoption.

An [introductory guide to UNFCCC documents](#) is available in English at the UNFCCC website.

Tips for making statements

It is not considered appropriate to make a statement, for example in a plenary meeting, which disagrees with the group’s position if the G77 and China, or another group that your country belongs to, has agreed on a position. Instead, a country should make its views known in the group meeting.

When making statements on behalf of a country, it is expected that you speak after your group or groups. For example, if your country belongs to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group, you should speak after the representative of the G77 and China and the representative of the LDC Group have made their statements. You should start by mentioning that you support the group statements.

It is important to check that you are asking to speak at the right time. Check which agenda item is under discussion and what the Chair is expecting from parties. For example, in a discussion about financing, the Chair may want to resolve a point about process, e.g. if a contact group should be established or not. In that situation, until the question of the contact group has been decided, the Chair will usually only want to hear statements about that question, not statements about financing.

It is helpful to keep your statements short, which Chairs will appreciate. It is important to speak slowly so that the interpreters can follow you.

Agreeing to text changes

The negotiations are conducted

mainly in English. It is important to be cautious with wording, especially if English is not your native language. For example, there is a big difference between ‘shall’ (have to) and ‘should’ (weaker).

Words like ‘bis’ and ‘ter’ in paragraph numbering in text

It is UN practice to use these Latin numbers for alternative paragraph proposals in negotiating text, which is why you may see a paragraph numbered, for example, ‘2 bis’. The numbers from two to nine are:

- Bis (2)
- Ter (3)
- Quater (4)
- Quinquies (5)
- Sexies (6)
- Septies (7)
- Octies (8)
- Novies (9)

Legal issues

International treaties (which can also be called, for example, conventions or agreements) are legally binding agreements between states. Protocols, such as the Kyoto Protocol, are sub-agreements to existing treaties. They are also legally binding.

As a general rule, decisions by the COP, CMP or other similar bodies are not legally binding: they are political decisions. COP and CMP decisions can be changed by subsequent COP and CMP decisions. Changing a treaty or protocol usually requires amendment, which is a much more complicated process, both at international and national levels.

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About this paper

This brief provides a guide for developing country negotiators and others with a simple and neutral overview of the various negotiations and decisions related to REDD-plus. Separated into four parts, the brief gives an explanation of key terms and concepts related to REDD-plus; an introduction to REDD-plus that summarises its relationship with land use, land-use change and forestry under the Kyoto Protocol; an overview of developments related to REDD-plus at UNFCCC meetings since 2007; and a set of general negotiation tips for new REDD-plus negotiators.

This guide is an updated version of the FIELD Guide for REDD-plus negotiators, which was produced previously by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD).

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