



SAFEGUARDS REPORT

SAFEGUARDS CAPACITY TRAINING

CLIMATE CHANGE DIRECTORATE

DECEMBER 2023

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Introduction

The Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition is a unique public private partnership focused on halting tropical deforestation by 2030. By bringing together forest governments, the private sector, donor governments, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and civil society, LEAF aims to raise and deploy the finance needed to tackle deforestation by making tropical forests worth more alive than dead. LEAF works at scale, supporting large scale REDD+ programs to reduce emissions from deforestation across entire countries, or subnational jurisdictions, which involve all key stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples and local communities.

26 Forests Governments (national and subnational) have expressed an interest to work with LEAF to reduce tropical deforestation. Nine, including Ghana, have signed Letters of Intent (LOIs) to supply high integrity credits to the LEAF Coalition.

The LEAF Coalition is fully focused on integrity, only purchasing forest carbon credits that meet the stringent criteria of the robust and independent Architecture for REDD+ Transactions / The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (ART/TREES) which guarantees the highest levels of environmental integrity and social safeguards.

As part of expanding Ghana's forest carbon portfolio in line with accessing the voluntary carbon market, Ghana through the Forestry Commission has accessed ART/TREES.

In a bid to build the capacities of REDD+ project implementers and proponents, the Forestry Commission (FC) with funding support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized a capacity building training for relevant stakeholders on the ART/TREES. The training was held on 22nd December 2023 by the Climate Change Directorate (CCD) of FC. The training brought together representatives from the various regional and district Forest Services Divisions (FSD) within the LEAF area. The training was attended by 33 participants in total. Of these, 25 were males and 8 were females.

This introductory training sets the stage for planned capacity building trainings for 2024, within the landscape.

Proceedings

The training began with a warm welcome from the National REDD+ Secretariat, after which participants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves. The training was exclusively dedicated to introducing stakeholders to the ART/TREES in the context of the LEAF area, which covers 10 regions, encompassing the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP) area. It provided the opportunity to discuss the LEAF coalition and ART/TREES vis-à-vis the ART/TREES safeguards requirements to ensure understanding about the ART/TREES expectations of safeguards operationalization.

Presentation on ART/TREES

A presentation on ART/TREES was made by the resource person, in the person of the Director of Tropenbos Ghana. This covered the overview, aim and vision of ART/TREES, eligibility, safeguards requirements, ART/TREES cycle and discussion about perspective and next steps for Ghana

Overview, aim and vision of ART/TREES

The aim of the LEAF coalition was explained in summary to provide the finance needed to enable tropical and subtropical forest governments (national and subnational) to move more rapidly towards ending deforestation, while supporting them in achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. The presentation also discussed the vision of ART and overview of ART/TREES.

The vision of ART is to provide confidence needed in the integrity of forest emissions reductions to unlock new, large-scale investments to protect and restore forests and reward countries that are delivering those results.

The overview of ART presents it as a global voluntary carbon program (architecture) to register, verify and issue high quality REDD+ emissions reduction credits to countries and jurisdictions.

The overview of TREES also presents it as a precise technical, safeguard, verification, and registration requirements for national and jurisdictional crediting of emission reductions from reduced deforestation and degradation.

Eligible TREES participation

- Participant must be national government or subnational government with national approval
- Registration of subnational accounting areas that meet TREES eligibility requirements allowed until December 31, 2030.
- Boundaries of subnational accounting: one or several jurisdictions no more than one level down from national.
- Subnational areas shall encompass a minimum area of 2.5 million hectares of forest.

Technical requirements:

- Audit
- style validation / verification and registration required,
- Legal aspects
- Forest monitoring and reference level setting
- Accounting: non
- permanence, leakage, and uncertainties
- Safeguards

ART/TREES safeguards requirements

Safeguards key requirements/eligibility criteria aligned to UNFCCC Cancun safeguards and core safeguards requirements:

National

- Having addressed and respected the safeguards
- Having submitted the most recent Summary of Information (SoI) to UNFCCC for any year where Results Based Payments (RBP) under TREES are sought
- Having a digital or analog system for providing information on safeguards (Safeguards Information System (SIS))

Subnational (interim)

- Having addressed and respected the safeguards at the scale of REDD+ implementation applicable to the Participant in consistency with national legislation and/or safeguards conformance at the national level
- Having submitted a SoI or safeguards report at scale consistent with national reporting to UNFCCC for RBPs year under TREES
- Demonstrating safeguards tracking and/or monitoring tools are consistent with national tracking or tools, in particular with SIS

Structure of safeguards elements & reporting

Each Cancun safeguard unpacked into 16 themes, define conditions that must be met to address and respect safeguards. These comprise 44 indicators categorized under three types,

- Structure: demonstrate relevant governance arrangements (e.g., policies, laws, and institutional arrangements) in place.
- Process: demonstrate that relevant institutional mandates, processes, procedures, and/or mechanisms are in place and enforced.
- Outcome: demonstrate implementation outcomes, including how outcome(s) have been identified and are or will be monitored

ART/TREES safeguards reporting

1st crediting period:

Participants report conformance against all structure and process indicators plus present plan for achieving conformance with the outcome indicators (or report conformance with outcome indicators)

2nd crediting period:

Participants report conformance with all 3-types indicators. All indicators must be met within 5 years, before beginning of 2nd crediting period

- Subnational Participants, safeguards aligned and consistent with national procedures and/or applicable legislation
- Summaries of information and SIS can be used to provide information and demonstrate conformance.

The ART/TREES cycle

Participant selects a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) from list of approved ART VVB to verify and validate all documents and activities.

Validation	Verification
TREES Registration Document	TREES Monitoring Reports
Year 1	Years 1, 3 and 5 (optional years 2 & 4)
Conducted against information provided by Participant in Registration document	Conducted against evidence for safeguards indicators, Registration document & Monitoring report

Validation Report (within 12 months of the kickoff)	Verification Report and Statement (within 12 months of the kickoff)
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The Secretariat will request revisions as needed and submits recommendation to ART Board for approval and credit issuance.

The ART Registry will contain Participant information, program documentation, V&V Reports, records of serialized credit issuance, credit cancellation, transfer, and retirement data, and a pooled buffer account.

**Discussion about perspective and next steps for Ghana
Preliminary TREES safeguards assessment -findings**

SIS requirement	Yes-Have either a digital or analogue system for providing information on safeguards
SOI requirement	Yes-Have SOI submitted May 2019 No-Need to submit the most recent SOI to the UNFCCC for any year where results-based payments under TREES are sought (gap for information after May 2019)
Reporting on Cancun Safeguards	Largely conformant on structure indicators, partially on process indicators, potentially non-conformant currently on some outcome indicators
Verification of compliance with requirements	By accredited verification body. Must conform with all indicators after 5 years.

Assessment findings by safeguard/theme

1 / SG A	1.1 Consistency with forest programs	Structure	Process	Outcome
	1.2 Consistency with international commitments	Structure	Process	Outcome

2 / SG B	2.1 Access to information	Structure	Process	Outcome
	2.2 Transparency, anti-corruption, benefit sharing	Structure	Process	Outcome
	2.3 Land tenure rights	Structure	Process	Outcome
	2.4 Access to justice	Structure	Process	Outcome
3 / SG C	3.1 Identify indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)	Structure	Process	Outcome
	3.2 Traditional knowledge	Structure	Process	Outcome
	3.3 Respect/fulfil IPLC rights	Structure	Process	Outcome
4 / SG D	4.1 Stakeholder participation	Structure	Process	Outcome
	4.2 IPLC participation	Structure	Process	Outcome
5 / SG E	5.1 Non-conversion of natural forests	Structure	Process	Outcome
	5.2 Conservation of natural forests & biodiversity and ecosystem services	Structure	Process	Outcome
	5.3 Social & environmental benefits	Structure	Process	Outcome
6 / SG F	6.1 Risks of reversals	--	Process	--
7 / SG G	6.2 Risks of displacement	--	Process	--

Gaps identified (preliminary):

- Evidence of conformance with several structure indicators available, some additional information needed for other structure indicators (e.g. 2.2 on transparency and prevention of corruption; 3.1 on respect of traditional knowledge; 4.2 participation of IPLC; 5.1-5.3 on non-conversion of natural forests, protection of forest, biodiversity and ecosystem services and enhancement of benefits).

- Additional information is needed to show conformance with process indicators and few structure indicators (priority).
- Information available on conformance of certain outcome indicators, there is the alternative of having a plan for conformance for outcome indicators.

Q & A

Q. As we prepare to register, with regards to benefits sharing, is there a way to identify the contributions of each stakeholder, that is, what activities they are carrying out. We know there are different stakeholders involved in different restoration activities. This is important in order to give what each is due per their input when benefits are accessed and avoid double counting as well.

A. The benefits sharing plan used under the GCFRP will be one of the basis for benefits distribution under the ART/TREES and if the need for modifications arise upon further consultations, that will be done and implemented. A thorough stakeholder analysis was done under the GCFRP to this effect. As registration is ongoing, stakeholders outside the GCFRP area but within the larger leaf area are being identified and their activities catalogued to know how they are contributing to emission reductions. Any concerns will be addressed when consultations on the benefit sharing arrangement are underway.

Q. How are we ensuring emissions sold by private entities / plantations are taken note in avoidance of double counting?

A. The government in its dealings has to always make sure these sold emissions by private entities/ plantations are subtracted from overall emissions of any area in question.

Q. Will the GCFRP area overlap with the LEAF area?

A. The GCFRP area is nested within the LEAF area so there will be no overlap.

Conclusion

In closing, the participants thanked the organizers for organizing this training and providing the platform for active discussions. The participants gave assurance that the knowledge acquired would help them to carry out activities effectively and in appropriate manner. They indicated that the training was a wonderful opportunity to gain and share facts, knowledge, and insights for the implementation of project activities.

The CCD thanked everyone for their continuous efforts for the successful organization of the training. They stressed on the importance of having a collaborative team approach going forward and indicated that the CCD will continue providing support where necessary.

Annexes

Annex 1: List Of Participants

NAME	LOCATION	DESIGNATION
Paul Hinneh	Bolga	District Manager
Priscilla Asomani	Juaso	District Manager
Francis Brobbey	Sunyani	District Manager
Alfred Yabepone	Kumawu	District Manager
Dominic Attebare-Oteng	Dormaa	District Manager
Henry Opoku Boateng		
Emmanuel Donkor Agyapong	Assin Foso	District Manager
Kwasi Frimpong	Northern Region	Regional Manager
Evelyn Appiagyei Nkyi	Kumasi	District Manager
Jamilla Abdul-Rahman	Denu/Sogakope	District Manager
Yaw Boateng Asante	Mampong	District Manager
Grace Barnes	Accra, FSD, HQ (Pltns.)	District Manager
Joe Appiah Frimpong	Yendi	District Manager
George Atta	Buipe/Damongo	District Manager
Cynthia Okine	Akim-Oda	District Manager

Nana Afia Brenya Hodibert	Western Regional Office	District Manager
Selase Paku-Ansah	Achimota	District Manager
Isaac Boamah Amanquah	Nkwanta	District Manager
Henry Opoku Boateng	Asankragwa	District Manager
Adomako-Kwabia Frank	Takoradi	Regional Manager
Lucy Amoh Ntim	Savannah	Regional Manager
Emmanuel Antwi	Kyebi	District Manager
Agbontor Raymond	Nkoranza	District Manager
Nasigri Mahamadu	Gambaga	District Manager
Bernard Tabil	Oti	Regional Manager
Nana Poku Bosompim	Ahafo	Regional Manager
Isaac Noble Eshun	Eastern	Regional Manager
Newton Annobil Atuahene		Asst. District Manager
Gilbert Lartey Ampofo	Kintampo	District Manager
Mercy Owusu Ansah	Kumasi	Director, Tropenbos
Thomas Gyambrah	Accra, CCD, HQ	Manager, Programs
Samuel Kenneth Salami	Accra, CCD, HQ	Consultant, Safeguards

Samuel Tutu Agyemang	Accra, CCD, HQ	Consultant, Governance
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