Community of Practice

Strengthening Social inclusion in REDD+ Implementation in Africa

25th November – 06th December 2024,
Via Howspace, a UN-REDD academy platform Daily moderated sessions: 12.00a.m - 3.00p.m Nairobi time/ 9.00a.m-12.00 pm GMT

Rationale

In the sustainable development goals, issues of inequality are addressed through promoting inclusive and sustainable societies because social (including gender) inequalities reduce opportunities for enhancing human well-being (Pouw and Gupta, 2017). Social inclusion is ultimately about the full, meaningful effective engagement of the diverse stakeholders and rightsholders, such as Indigenous People, local communities, women and youth, to forge public policies and field actions. Social and gender dimensions of REDD+ aim to ensure that forest-related projects and jurisdictional programmes do not harm the environment or communities, particularly the most vulnerable groups like the poor, minority groups, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women. It is important due to the impact of interventions in the forest and land use sector on women, men, youth, boys and girls their livelihoods, and the environment. Social inclusion in REDD+ is essential for ensuring the effectiveness, sustainability, and legitimacy of forest conservation and climate mitigation efforts. By involving and empowering local communities and Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized groups, such as women and youth, REDD+ initiatives can achieve their environmental objectives while also promoting social equity, gender equality and justice. Hence a socially inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement approach is required for effective inclusion of the diverse actors and sectors involved in the implementation and monitoring of forest solutions to the climate emergency. These include diverse governmental sectors and agencies, civil society actors, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, practitioners, the private sector and development financiers, among others. Furthermore, the increasing demand for high-integrity carbon credits, which could potentially attract higher prices, is also linked to clearly defined interventions that adhere to core international standards on Indigenous Peoples community and women's rights, gender equality, inclusive participation and governance. In addition, the demand side of carbon credits expects the benefits from REDD+ initiatives to enhance the living standards and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities while also advancing sustainable management of the environment.

The main dimensions considered in social inclusion for REDD+ include, but not limited to the following principles:
The full and effective inclusion of historically excluded groups including, women, youth, local communities Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities

Gender-differentiated needs, uses and knowledge of the forest are critical inputs to policy and programmatic interventions that will enable the long-term success of REDD+ actions on the ground (UN-REDD, 2011). Various social, economic, cultural inequalities and legal impediments, particularly within the forest sector, limit the ability of African women and often of other marginalized groups, including Indigenous Peoples, the poor, youth and the disabled to fully participate in, contribute to and benefit from REDD+ initiatives (Setyowati, A. (n.d.)) Therefore, strengthening equitable and meaningful involvement of the marginalized stakeholders' groups in planning and implementing, REDD+ interventions, including decision-making processes, benefit sharing, and payment arrangements is therefore of critical importance to ensure effectiveness, transformative power and sustainability,

Benefit sharing mechanism

The local communities and Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups are at the forefront of forest use and management from which they derive their daily subsistence needs and livelihoods. Henceforth, effective social inclusion should ensure that the benefits derived from REDD+ activities are equitably shared among all stakeholders, particularly those who have traditionally depended on forests for their livelihoods and supported its protection. For example, the role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth have been contributing to sustainably managing/conserving forest resources. Studies conducted by AFF found that in some countries like Cameroon and Tanzania, REDD+ issues are usually not accurately communicated through political and mass media processes during awareness campaign leading to misunderstandings and high expectations for the investment phase; as well as reluctance to participate due to lack of incentives, insecure tenure on forest lands and its resources. There is a need for identification, documentation, and clear communication of REDD+ benefits and incentives in order a to build confidence and secure effective participation and social inclusion, as well as ensuring the sustainability of REDD+ initiatives. These benefits also include apart from carbon, existing forest-based socioeconomic opportunities such as development of non-timber forest products value chains, deforestation-free commodities among others.

National REDD+ governance system

Effective multi-stakeholders and cross-sectoral platforms created at strategic, technical, and operational levels, have been shown to facilitate commitments and participation of all relevant stakeholders with the ability to easily mobilise human and financial, resources needed for REDD+ implementation. Such stakeholders' platforms also serve as avenues for capturing their perspectives, knowledge, and rights into decision-making processes. The REDD+ countries have developed their approaches to safeguards according to their national circumstances, incorporating requirements outlined in the Cancun Safeguards, along with other safeguards policies and procedures established to comply with various funding entities involved in REDD+

implementation. Therefore, creating opportunities for sharing countries experiences for social inclusion and related safeguard frameworks will contribute to documenting best practices for more gender inclusive REDD+. In the framework of the UN-REDD/AFF partnership project, a 2-day capacity-building workshop on social inclusion was organized in June 2024 in Abidjan with the participation of over thirty REDD+ actors from 12 countries. It was recognized that social inclusion is becoming one of the key requirements for high-integrity carbon credits and for accessing climate finance. Hence, participants strongly recommended a Community of Practice on the Social Inclusion related topics to give opportunity to many more stakeholders to share on their social and environmental measures when implementing REDD+ This CoP is being organised to respond to that stakeholders' request

Objectives and outcomes of the CoP

The aim of the CoP is to improve understanding of African REDD+ Stakeholders on Social Inclusion related aspects and how it could be strengthened in REDD+ implementation. The CoP will provide a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices on social inclusion in REDD+ thus, enabling peer-to-peer learning while contributing to addressing specific capacity needs and priorities of African countries. It will also help to explore opportunities to support countries in deepening their engagement for high integrity Carbon Credits.

The specific objectives of the CoP are as follows:

- Improve understanding among REDD+ stakeholders of the importance of social inclusion for successful and sustainable REDD implementation.
- Enhance capacity of stakeholders on how to mainstream gender and women's empowerment concepts into REDD+ policy and actions.
- Enhance capacity on developing and ensuring gender-responsive benefit sharing and payment for REDD+ results mechanisms for compensating actions toward protection of the forests share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in integrating social inclusion and gender approaches into REDD+ national and jurisdictional programmes.
- support countries in strengthening social inclusion of their third NDCs due in early 2025

Methodological Approach:

The (CoP) will be held virtually via Howspace, a UN-REDD Academy platform for learning and knowledge sharing from 25th November to 6th December 2024. The two-weeks activities facilitated by a moderator will be articulated as follows:

(i)   The first week will be dedicated to webinar series during which the community members will be provided daily with a presentation (webinar) by selected experts on a specific topic related to social inclusion principles, measures and practices as per the detailed program below. The Webinars aim to ensure a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the critical dimension of Social Inclusion in REDD+, stimulate experience sharing among community members, invited guest

speakers and experts. Each presentation will be followed by open-live discussions and then continued by the chat session on the Platform to allow participants to continue sharing their country and own experiences and learning from other members of the community.

(ii) The second week will be a live moderated discussion to exchange and learn from each community members how social inclusion is being addressed in their countries, paying attention to countries' approaches to promote and implement gender responsive processes, benefit sharing mechanism, good governance in REDD+, along with the challenges and potential opportunities for improvement. Best practices will be captured, consolidated and disseminated as lessons learnt from the CoP.

(iii) The 2 last days of the second will serve to consolidate, validate, and distill the lessons and best practices learned during the CoP as well as action plan to ensure continued interaction and peer to-peer learning within the community beyond the webinar sessions. The moderator will prepare comprehensive summaries of key messages for discussion with stakeholders.

Synopsis of the two- weeks CoP on social inclusion

Week 1: Webinars series and live discussion on REDD+ Social Inclusion

The aim of this first week is to provide participants with all the fundamentals needed to understand Social Inclusion and related topics. Through PowerPoint presentations delivered by keynote speakers, participants at the end of the week would have:

- Improved understanding on key concepts and principles of REDD+ safeguards
- Understood the basic concepts and policy frameworks supporting the social and gender inclusion in REDD+
- Gained knowledge on how to set up a robust benefit sharing plan that ensures sustainable engagement of stakeholders in REDD+ process.
- Improved knowledge governance system that ensures effective and full participation of stakeholders in the REDD+ process.
- Improve knowledge on the contribution of social inclusion to High integrity carbon credits
- Received tools and approaches to successfully monitor, evaluate and report on social safeguards.

Week 2: Live discussion on experiences, best practices and lessons learnt

The aim of the second week is simply to share best practices and lessons learnt in implementing social inclusion in REDD+. This experience sharing aims to promote peer-to-peer learning and development. It will also serve to path the way for future interventions on Social Inclusion in REDD+ within the region. The week will end with discussion to consolidate, validate and distil the lessons and good practices learned during this CoP. To this effect, the moderator will prepare summaries/synthesis of the key messages to be presented for discussion with participants to provide additional information, and other inputs.

Dates:

This event will take place from 25th of November to the 6th of December 2024. Both web-based (chat) and webinars sessions will be moderated daily from 12.00 am - 3.00 pm Nairobi time/ 09.00 am to 12:00am GMT via the African Forest Forum page of the REDD+ Academy Howspace.

Agenda

Day	Activity	Objectives	Responsibility
Pre-CoP 18-22 November 2024	Familiarisation of the CoP moderator with the platform Invitation and Engagement of the CoP members and speakers	• Enable good navigation on the platform during the CoP • Enhance visibility, popularity and stakeholders' engagement	**All project team and the moderator**
Week 1: Webinars series and live discussion on REDD+ Social Inclusion			
Day 1	Virtual meet and greet	To enable participants meet and interact with others	Daphine Gitonga/Moderator
	REDD+ Safeguards: review of key concepts and Principles.	To enable participants to familiarize with the principle of safeguards: such as the **Cancun Safeguards and Other safeguards policies/frameworks** that may also be relevant or applicable in some countries (e.g. standards of funding institutions or accreditation bodies) How the REDD+ safeguards are understood in the national context, and how they will be addressed and respected (e.g., through implementation of policies, laws & regulations, and procedures)	Victoria or Sarah Beard Experience sharing from selected African countries
Day 2	Social and gender inclusion: Basic concepts and policy frameworks	Enable participants to circumscribe and understand the scope of social and gender inclusion and, above all, the international policies and frameworks that guide its application and its importance in the context of REDD+	Manja Experience sharing from selected African countries
Day 3	Determining best options for REDD+ benefits sharing plans: Reflexions and Lessons Learnt	To pride participants with key knowledge on benefit sharing mechanisms as critical factor to achieving and incentivizing a sustainable behavioral change among multi-levels actors as well as key ingredients	Francesca Feliciani Robles

		to set-up a robust benefit sharing plan in the context of REDD+	Experience sharing from selected African countries
Day 4	Governance system for effective participation of stakeholders	To provide participants with tools and practical examples on how to engage more stakeholders and ensure their implication at all the stages of REDD+ process	Sarah Beard Experience sharing from selected African countries
Day 5	Social inclusion compliance for high Integrity carbon credit Monitoring and Reporting on Social Dimension of REDD+	To provide participants with tools and guidelines to monitor, evaluate and report on social safeguards as to fulfil the compliance for High Integrity Carbon Credit (Why, What and How do we measure and report on social dimension of REDD+)	Daniel Fisher Sarah Beard Experience sharing from selected African countries
Week 2: Chat-based discussion on issues and challenges related to Social Inclusion in REDD+ implementation			
Day 6	Experiences, best practices and lessons learnt in implementing indigenous rights, gender equality and women empowerment in REDD+	How is gender equality and women's empowerment concepts, and Indigenous Peoples rights integrated into REDD+ action in your country? Challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for improvement.	Moderator/participants
Day 7	Experiences, best practices and lessons learnt in implementing and promoting the benefit sharing schemes in REDD+	Describe your country's approach for generating, promoting and sharing REDD+ benefits and co-benefits. Challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for improvement.	Moderator/participants
Day 8	Experiences best practices and lessons learnt in REDD+ Governance systems for effective social inclusion	How is REDD+ governance system in your country? How do you ensure effective participation of all stakeholders (IPLP, CSO, Private Sector, Development partners)? How do you ensure collaboration and coordination between public institutions?	Moderator/participants

		Challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for improvement.	
Day 9	Summary of key insights (best practices, lessons learnt, Key messages)	To document and validate lessons learned, best practices and key messages in order to build ownership and scaling up	Moderator/participants
Day 10	Key areas for capacity building and sustainability strategy and action plan	To agree on future actions related to improve on social inclusion in Africa	Moderator/participants