



India takes steps to finalise its REDD+ measures on conserving forest cover

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NEW DELHI: Complying with the UN climate change body's decision on a mitigation option through green cover – known as REDD+ initiatives, India has come out with a draft mechanism to report its progress on this front to the global body.

The mechanism, called 'safeguards information system' (SIS), will help the country report its conservation processes to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on various aspects of safeguards being adopted during its afforestation drives.

The move is necessary to access result-based financial support for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) which is one of the climate change mitigation options in developing countries for conservation of forest carbon stock, sustainable management of forests and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

"India has already developed a national REDD+ strategy and forest reference level. Now, SIS for REDD+ has been developed through an extensive stakeholder consultation process," said an office memorandum (OM) of the environment ministry, seeking comments and suggestions of state governments and other stakeholders for finalising the reporting mechanism.

The SIS will be finalised after analysing comments and suggestions which may be shared with the ministry by October 15. As per the Cancun Agreement of the UNFCCC, developing countries are required to develop SIS to report on compliance of the safeguards while implementing REDD+ activities.

Once the SIS is finalised, India will periodically submit the summary of information on safeguards to the UN climate change body with biennial update reports, national communications or other appropriate means as decided by the UNFCCC.

In order to address grievances related to application of safeguards in implementation of REDD+ activities, three grievance redressal committees are proposed to be established at national, state and local levels. Twenty indicators have been identified for collection of information/ data on how Cancun safeguards will be addressed and respected during the implementation of REDD+ activities.

Since REDD+ activities may pose several environmental and social risks, member countries of the UNFCCC had adopted a set of seven safeguards – known as Cancun safeguards – which need to be addressed and respected. The countries through SIS will inform the UN body as to how they have been protecting the rights of communities while simultaneously taking up forest conservation measures.

India had earlier developed its national REDD+ strategy which aims to achieve climate change mitigation by incentivizing forest conservation. The strategy seeks to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and also develops a roadmap for enhancement of forest carbon stocks and achieving sustainable management of forests through REDD+ actions.

India's National REDD+ strategy is one of the tools to achieve the country's commitment to the Paris Agreement. Its 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC) target for the forestry sector under the Agreement is to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. The country has planned to achieve this target by upscaling

ongoing programmes such as National Mission for a Green India and National Afforestation Programme.

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