

SUBMISSION BY THE AFRICAN GROUP OF NEGOTIATORS (AGN)

**VIEWS ON METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO NON-CARBON
BENEFITS RESULTING FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES
REFERRED TO IN DECISION 1/CP.16 PARAGRAPH 70**

The AGN appreciates the opportunity to present its views on methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits (NCBs) resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, in response to the invitation contained in paragraph 48 of FCCC/SBSTA/2013/3.

Activities and programs to “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation including the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” (REDD+) have the potential to generate multiple non-carbon benefits (NCBs). The inclusion of these benefits in REDD+ programs can reduce the risk of failing to meet REDD+ expectations while strongly supporting the long-term success of these programmes. Such a direction is seen as broadening forest policy objectives beyond carbon and to address the many direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. It also means that NCBs are not limited to emission reduction activities but include NCBs from the other three activities of REDD+ namely promoting conservation, promoting sustainable forest management and enhancing carbon sinks. The AGN believes that the chances of delivering NCBs at scale will be enhanced if their consideration is not limited to and go beyond safeguards, and if they are included early in the design of REDD+ activities, strategies and policies with clearly defined incentive mechanisms. To further buttress this, it is worth pointing out that at the heart of national REDD+ strategies or action plans of most African countries is the implementation of NCBs during Phases I and II. Therefore in the African context, effective implementation of NCBs should be considered as an important prerequisite for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of REDD+.

Pursuant to this, the AGN proposes that for REDD+ countries for whom the implementation of NCBs is considered a prerequisite for the success and sustainability of REDD+, there ought to be a voluntary and optional process where those countries can elect to meet additional requirements of proving successful implementation of NCBs and receive additional support in the process.

Classification of NCBs

To deliver NCBs, they should be identified in advance and factored into the design and implementation of REDD+. Further they should be part of the results of REDD+ activities. Adequate funding should be provided to ensure that the associated costs are covered. The range of NCBs that can be generated under REDD+ depends on the type of REDD+ activity, programme or initiative; forest type; costs and who is defining the NCB within a particular context. NCBs may fall under one or more of the following categories:

- ✓ Governance, such as recognized and improved land rights, improved participation of forest dependent groups, new and revised policies and laws;
- ✓ Ecosystem services provision;
- ✓ Biodiversity and soil conservation;
- ✓ Watershed protection¹;
- ✓ Climate change adaptation such as reduced vulnerability of communities and forest ecosystems to climate change impacts;
- ✓ Economic and livelihood conditions such as alternative livelihoods, improved employment and income, improved health well-being, increased contribution of forests to economic development;

¹ Including flood risk reduction by decreasing the impacts of increased runoff on watersheds and protective dikes

- ✓ Social and cultural values such as the promotion of traditional knowledge and the preservation of spiritual sites.

Validation of Implementation of NCBs

Given the importance of these NCBs for the long-term viability of REDD+, it is important that adequate support is given for their implementation. Adequate support should be secured on the back of confidence that they are being successfully implemented. A process that offers the validation of the implementation of NCBs but respects national sovereignty will be useful to demonstrate this. In order to do this and support NCBs in the conception, design and implementation of REDD+ activities, the AGN proposes a 5-stage methodological guidance that would among others recognize, respect and promote indigenous peoples' and local communities' participation in the process.

- ✓ Identify key stakeholders (Who are involved?)
- ✓ Define and identify key NCBs (Who define NCBs?)
- ✓ Identify performance indicators (What to measure?)
- ✓ Develop a monitoring plan and select data collection methods (How to measure?)
- ✓ Measure, report and verify NCBs generated (What has changed?)

For this methodological guidance to work, the AGN believes that a voluntary and optional process for validation for NCBs is required and should be embedded into existing national and international REDD+ frameworks. This approach is efficient, cost effective and aligns with existing internationally accepted procedures as well as avoids the need for multiple reporting on REDD+ activities, programs and initiatives. At the national level, the national REDD+ entity can coordinate all validation activities related to NCBs while at the international level, under the UNFCCC convention, validation of the implementation of NCBs can build on, for instance, international guidance on safeguard information system (SIS), or the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process leading to REDD+ result-based payments.

Supporting NCBs

Once implementation of the NCBs has been validated, the next stage should involve the matching of the next set of NCBs with the appropriate support, and that this support should be provided both at the international and national levels and during all three Phases of REDD+. These should include (i) the transfer of appropriate technologies related to generation of different NCBs, (ii) capacity building on diverse aspects related to different NCBs and (iii) provision of support to cover costs associated with the generation of NCBs.

While we acknowledge that several “approaches for incentivizing NCBs” have been proposed² including for example, premium, non-bundled, the priority/eligibility/quota, and the composite approaches for supporting and integrating NCBs into REDD+ result-based finance, we believe that the composite approach is the most promising in terms of supporting because under the composite approach the NCBs are fully integrated into the conceptualization, design and implementation of REDD+ rather than treating NCBs as an add-on. It represents a more holistic and bottom-up approach. If well implemented, this approach provides better assurance on the success and sustainability of not only the emissions reduced but also the NCBs generated.

Conclusion

² Submissions by parties and observers to SBSTA 40 UNFCCC on methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities. The organizations include: Central Africa Forestry Commission (COMIFAC), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Conservation International (CI), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Rainforest Alliance (RA), The Nature Conservancy (NC), and Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), REDD+ Safeguard Working Group (RSWG), The Accra Caucus, and Indigenous Peoples' Caucus and COICA

In conclusion, REDD+ activities, strategies and programs that address the direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation catalyze changes that result in emission reductions while those that promote conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon sinks catalyze the generation of diverse NCBs. Considering the importance of NCBs to the success of REDD+, ways to validate and supporting NCBs in all Phases of REDD+ as well as identifying different funding sources remains a central issue. Therefore, adequate support should be invested in Phases I and II activities that generate NCBs and which lay the ground work for achieving additional NCBs in later Phase III.

The AGN reiterates its commitment to work in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders to advance this issue of supporting NCBs.