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REDD-plus

Scope and options for the role of forests in climate change mitigation strategies

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FOREST CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

REDD-plus

IUCN supports the inclusion of a broad range of measures that promote and facilitate forest-related emissions reductions in a post-2012 climate regime. In order to achieve the full mitigation potential of forests, a future REDD-plus mechanism should include the elements that are listed in the Bali Action Plan. These elements are reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. By strengthening the capacity of forests to conserve and enhance carbon stocks, REDD-plus offers cost-effective and immediate CO₂ emissions reductions while generating strong co-benefits for forest-dependent communities and biodiversity conservation.

Forests and the climate change mitigation agenda

Forests represent a massive carbon reservoir. It is estimated that forests store more than 4,500 Gtons of carbon, which is more than the

estimated 2,400 Gtons of carbon in remaining oil stocks and the more than 3,000 Gtons of carbon currently held in the atmosphere.

The world should give top priority to the conservation of this immense reservoir. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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peoples and forest-dependent communities will enhance the key role that they play in optimizing the mitigation potential of REDD-plus.

Such processes would leave it to stakeholders to agree whether they wish REDD-plus activities to be extended to their lands or not, and would need the clarification and strengthening of

tenure, property and carbon rights. In economic terms, such processes minimize risks for possible investors. By involving indigenous peoples and forest communities we ensure a mechanism that in addition to mitigating climate change guarantees that long-term actions are sustainable.

Safeguards

Safeguards should be developed to *ensure* rather than merely *promote* specific principles or actions. Safeguards will provide the necessary building blocks for a future climate deal. They strengthen the potential for REDD-plus to contribute significantly to climate change mitigation while ensuring that specific social and environmental levels are respected. Safeguards can, as part of the phased approach, be operationalized as triggers that reward countries with the eligibility to move from one phase to the next.

IUCN recognizes the following requirements for the development of safeguards for a post-2012 climate regime:

- Principles and safeguards can specifically apply to actions taken under the scope of REDD-plus activities.
- Specific safeguards are needed against the possible conversion of natural forests and other ecosystems into plantations.
- REDD-plus actions should provide co-benefits for biodiversity, ecosystem services and local communities.
- REDD-plus must build on experiences with multi-stakeholder platforms established in support of forest governance reform processes.
- Women must be explicitly included when ensuring the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders in REDD-plus actions.
- The rights of indigenous peoples should be recognized and developed in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

on tangible emissions reductions as well as on social and environmental issues. There is no single blueprint for forest nations to move from one phase to the next. In order to stimulate sufficient confidence that REDD-plus is capable of delivering durable emissions reductions, the eligibility of countries to move from one phase to the next could be mediated by specific triggers and informed by an independent verification body. In all three phases, REDD-plus finance would need to depend on performance-based delivery.

Stakeholder consultations

Multi-stakeholder platforms with equitable participation are important because they generate efficient interventions. Improved communication and understanding as to the roles of each stakeholder group can therefore help avoid

or reduce potential conflicts. REDD-related platforms should, where possible, build on experiences with stakeholder involvement in forest law enforcement and governance processes. These processes should have equitable participation of all stakeholders and special attention should be given to the inclusion of indigenous peoples, women and youth.

Indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities

The rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities should be safeguarded in accordance with international agreements such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and through locally defined measures and local legal systems. Full and effective participation and informed consent processes of indigenous

(IPCC) estimates that emissions caused by land use change in the forest sector currently account for 17% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than the emissions of the entire global transport sector. Towards 2030, forest-related mitigation could contribute to more than a third of all CO₂ emissions reductions. The IPCC estimates that to reach total forest mitigation potential, 35% can be fulfilled through reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation, 35% through improved management including the restoration of degraded forests, and 30% through afforestation and reforestation under the CDM. If left unabated, global warming will cause dramatic and irreversible impacts on ecosystems and societies during the course of this century. Atmospheric stability can only be reached if the full potential of forest related mitigation options are included in a post-2012 climate regime.

Ecosystem functions and social services

REDD-plus is based on the assumption that healthy standing and growing forests conserve and augment carbon stocks, while their over-exploitation leads to the release of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Forests with relatively high biodiversity levels contribute the most to the stability of carbon pools and are more resilient in coping with human-induced pressures and negative climate change impacts than forests with lower biodiversity levels. Natural forests have the greatest adaptive capacity while sustainably managed forests and restored forest landscapes are more resilient than monoculture plantation forests. Forest-related mitigation



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strategies have the capacity to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also reduce the vulnerability of people and ecosystems to climate change. An estimated 410 million people worldwide depend directly on forest resources for their livelihoods, while 1.2 billion people in developing countries earn part of their subsistence from forests and trees. The adequate engagement and involvement of stakeholders and local communities can contribute to policies that address deforestation while achieving improvements in the livelihoods of forest dependents. Safeguarding the social and environmental integrity of forests is the main prerequisite for the successful implementation of REDD-plus.



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Implementing REDD-plus in a phased approach

A growing body of stakeholders believes that REDD-plus will only achieve lasting results if strategies are adapted to the individual circumstances of tropical countries and can directly meet the needs of local people. A phased approach can enable countries with different circumstances to swiftly face this challenge. REDD-plus can be structured to take a learning based approach in addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation while meeting both short- and long-term needs.

Phase one – Preparation and readiness

During this preparatory phase, national REDD strategies should be built in a participatory way, including and recognizing the rights and roles of indigenous peoples, local communities and other vulnerable groups such as women. Coun-

tries should be able to analyse in-depth drivers of deforestation and degradation and carry out analyses of forest governance gaps in order to guide their actions and decisions towards these objectives. A capacity assessment will be needed for the preparation and further implementation of a REDD-plus strategy. Early pilot activities will play an important role in this phase for learning from best experiences. In order to measure success, national reference levels as well as systems for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) need to be defined. Finances for this phase are available through public and private funds, bilateral grants, and multilateral arrangements such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank and UN-REDD.

Phase two – policies and measures

This phase will require the development of national policy frameworks and reforms in the forest sector and the building of links with other related sectors such as agriculture, energy and development. Specific instruments will have to be designed and put in place for the implementation of REDD-plus schemes. A lot of focused training activities will take place in this phase and the needs for enforcing new regulatory frameworks will be recognized. Carbon rights issues should be clarified at this stage, and the definition of national distribution mechanisms for REDD-plus benefits should be developed and agreed upon through consultations. Countries should also work on the preparation of a portfolio of funding options for REDD-plus actions. Phase two requires performance-

based proxies that respond to specific local drivers of deforestation and degradation, such as the overall rate of deforestation, the implementation of policies or the strengthening of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Pilot activities will provide conclusions on MRV systems, results on REDD-plus actions and the effectiveness of the participation of different stakeholders.

Phase three – performance-based payments

Mechanisms such as the carbon market and fund-based mechanisms should, by phase three, deliver performance-based payments for emissions reductions or carbon stock enhancements. National and local REDD-plus projects should demonstrate results in this phase. In order to monitor success, emissions reductions could be subject to third-party verification

against national reference levels. These would include social and environmental audits. Depending on the outcomes, implementation may have to adapt to circumstances. Mechanisms for distributing benefits should be implemented in this phase and monitoring actions can be considered as part of the learning process proposed by the phased approach.

In general, stable and reliable long-term financial flows must be guaranteed by developed countries and underpinned by strong donor coordination. A portfolio approach that moves beyond the “markets versus funds” discussion can coordinate the best use of both of these as well as other sources of funding. The upfront investments required during phases one and two could be covered by bilateral and multilateral loans and grants. REDD-plus funding must be additional to Official Development Assistance. Funding for each phase in the implementation should be based on performance, both

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