

# Towards an efficient, effective and equitable REDD+

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An exclusive focus on forests -- as opposed to the entire landscape -- could lead to inequitable and destructive outcomes for the poor in developing countries, said a Nairobi-based agroforestry research organization today.

Most deforestation and forest degradation is driven by forces outside forests, so capturing emissions and managing carbon stocks from land uses that involve the whole landscape, not just forests, must be included for the successful implementation of REDD+, according to World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

A recently published ICRAF policy brief noted that the emissions from changes in land use in Indonesia, which is the highest in the developing world, are as high outside as inside what is defined as a forest area. Yet, most REDD+ discussions so far have bypassed the trees on farms and the changes in agroforests.

"Issues of carbon leakage and emission displacement will haunt REDD's effectiveness until it is more inclusive and comprehensive," said Dr. Meine van Noordwijk, the Chief Science Advisor at the World Agroforestry Centre.

A whole landscape approach could save REDD+. What is included or not included in REDD+ as currently framed is still subject to much debate. Yet trees on agricultural landscapes represent a globally important carbon stock. Forty-six percent of [agricultural land](#) globally

has at least 10% tree cover.

In Southeast Asia and Central America, 50% has at least 30% tree cover. The carbon stocks in peat lands are equivalent to 70 years worth of current global [carbon dioxide emissions](#). The current REDD+ scope does not include peat lands that constitute already lost forest cover but keep emitting carbon dioxide. This is 3-5% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

"Ignoring this issue will undermine the success of global mechanisms for emission control," says Dr. Henry Neufeldt, Leader of the Global Research Programme on Climate Change at ICRAF.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) accounting rules for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) provides a simple alternative: include all land use proportionate to actual emissions and emission potential. A whole-landscape approach can help address the drivers of deforestation, reduce problems like leakage, and eliminate the need for precise forest definitions.

According to Dr. Peter Minang, The Global Coordinator of the ASB Partnership for Tropical Forest Margins, there are strategies that can be adopted by developing countries.

"We are compiling evidence that shows how developing countries can adopt strategies for these high-carbon storing land-uses to reduce global emissions and benefit local people," says Dr. Minang.

According to Dr. van Noordwijk: "Four 'pillars' that support a whole landscape agenda must be considered." He lists the four pillars as "Reducing forest-based emissions, Reducing emissions from peat, Restocking land through trees and soil carbon, and Reducing emissions from agricultural greenhouse gases."

"What is needed now is a global commitment to move forward,

comprehensively, to reduce emissions from all land uses," adds Dr. Neufeldt.

Emissions embodied in trade may well be the hottest issues in trying to reduce emissions from land use: much of the emissions due to change in forest is linked to export and the responsibility for these emissions will have to be shared by the importing as well as exporting countries, for a fair and efficient accounting system.

Before REDD projects are able to cut carbon emissions and benefit livelihoods, many developing countries will require substantial investments in capacity building, science and institutions. For example, countries will need technical support to develop carbon inventory systems and their remote sensing capacity. In addition, they will need support to set up the institutional infrastructure required to distribute REDD benefits and implement the various incentive schemes. Land tenure and forest governance are key factors determining the success or failure of REDD initiatives.

The pressing need is for deforestation policies that reduce the rate of logging, enforce policies on the replacement planting of felled trees, and recognize and scale up agroforestry options as an important win-win solution to climate change – through mitigation and adaptation – as they improve the environment and generate income for poor people.

## **Role of Agroforestry in REDD+**

One REDD scheme with considerable potential in Africa is agroforestry, the use of trees on farms to sustainably intensify agriculture, increase yields and conserve the environment. Developing countries' quest for food security through agricultural expansion often leads to deforestation and forest degradation. Agroforestry integrates growing trees with agricultural and horticultural production. It can help reduce deforestation

indirectly by providing tree products and services that would have otherwise been exploited from the forest, such as fuel wood, charcoal, and timber.

Poor people in developing countries are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Increasing variability in year-to-year rainfall and more frequent extreme events will change ecosystems and speed up the degradation of soil and water resources. Smallholder farming communities that rely on these resources, and have limited ability to expand or intensify, will suffer most from the negative impacts of climate change.

There is growing recognition of the role agroforestry can play in improving the resilience of farming systems to climate variability. The agroforestry approach of increasing the use of trees on farms sequesters carbon and contributes to mitigating climate change, builds resilience to climate variability and increases food security and income. "At a small scale so far there is positive news in the use of new contracts for 'village forest' in Indonesia, that resolves conflicts between forest authorities and local communities. This way 'agroforests' on 'forest land' can be used for watershed protection as well as income security," said Meine van Noorwijk.

"Promoting agroforestry within REDD+ policies could help address drivers of deforestation," says Dr. Minang. "There is a need to scale-up proven tree-based farming practices, such as combining conservation agriculture with agroforestry. This requires support from policymakers for effective implementation," he adds.

Policymakers need to provide start-up inputs, including high-quality seeds, nurseries, and agroforestry training and extension materials. Further requirements include markets for agroforestry products, effective systems for managing carbon credits and payments for

environmental services, and financial stimuli for farmers to plant trees. REDD strategies will also have to address other issues, including the causes of deforestation, sustainable forest management and monitoring capacity. Funding for agricultural research and extension programmes for agricultural intensification must be part of all REDD packages.

Provided by World Agroforestry Centre

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