

Raising the standard: Communities, forests and carbon management

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Dr Tim Cadman. Credit: Griffith University

In a world first, a newly released standard for the good governance of forest projects in Nepal will ensure the management of forest-based carbon is guided by the wishes of local communities.

With global implications for wherever the forest sector and [local communities](#) meet, researchers believe that applying the standard will avoid risk and generate local ownership around a wide range of forest projects and activities, including emissions trading, ecosystem services and sustainable development.

Led by researchers from Griffith University and the University of Southern Queensland—in collaboration with the Japan-based Institute for Global Environmental Strategies—the standard is the result of a five-year action-research project with Nepalese community forest user groups, government and non-governmental organisations.

Designed to ensure that communities whose forests are managed for environmental services, including carbon, are well governed, the standard also covers requirements for stakeholder participation in decision-making around forest use, benefit sharing and implementation of forest-based projects and programs.

It is of particular relevance in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris (November 30-December 11), as it applies to the UN's REDD+ initiative, creating incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of [forest carbon stocks](#).

"Large amounts of public and private sector funding are being poured into REDD+ around the world, but whether this money contributes directly to the sustainable management of forests for emissions reduction, and reducing poverty, is unclear," says Dr Tim Cadman, Research Fellow with Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law.

"This standard provides clear information for investors, international

donors, aid agencies and national governments that forest-based carbon is managed according to the wishes of the local communities where these projects are based.

"We have been very privileged to work with local communities, government officials and a wide range of non-government organisations in the development of this unique standard, and we invite all future investors in [carbon](#) trading, and other [forest](#)-based goods and services, to make use of it."

The standard has been released for public consultation and will be available for comments and feedback until the end of December 2015. The standard will be released for a three-year pilot period in 2016.

More information: For further information and a copy of the draft standard, visit: www.iges.or.jp/en/natural-resource/20151022.html

Provided by Griffith University

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