

Lessons from 15 organisations working on REDD+; and points for consideration of Parties and organizations to influence appropriately the negotiating text on REDD+ in COP 18 at Doha

Outcomes of a learning workshop in Palawan, Philippines, from 4 to 10 November 2012.

Conservation and community organisations from Indonesia, Philippines, Viet Nam, India, Ecuador and Ghana convened for a seven day workshop organised by IUCN National Committee of The Netherlands in collaboration with NTFP-EP and WISE in the Philippines on the design and future implementation of REDD+. Participants recognised an urgent need for the building of expertise on projects that use forest carbon finance with measurable and verifiable benefits for climate change, communities and biodiversity.

The participants of the workshop call upon countries with high emissions from forests to reduce the same. Industries that have high emissions are requested to map their carbon footprint and set targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions internally.

In addition, the following initiatives are suggested:

1) Develop a comprehensive and holistic approach that gives equal importance to carbon and other ecosystem functions, and community interests

Participants see carbon as an important entry point through which finances can be generated for conservation and community-led programs to reduce or avoid deforestation and forest degradation. In many cases however, carbon finance alone will not suffice to sustain forest and biodiversity conservation and REDD+ initiatives.

The effectiveness and efficiency of such conservation programs can be enhanced if all ecosystem functions and services are given due importance. Our projects demonstrate that in many cases incentives for other important ecosystem services, like water, can generate finance and ensure the sustainability of a program. Such program strategies that ensure benefits to flow quickly, like access to clean water and non-timber forest products, and introduction of agroforestry, increase the acceptability of the program even if the benefits of carbon service flow later.

Community's rights and interests of tenure on land, and on other forest products should be safeguarded with active participation of local governments, and through formulation of appropriate policy and legislative framework.

2) An integrated community and carbon approach to put communities in charge without increasing their burden

In the current carbon project arrangement, local NGOs and community organisations have been facing difficulties in realising forest carbon projects because they have to deal with various modules and methodologies for carbon accounting for different forestry activities. The mainstreaming of both the role of communities and the role of carbon are proposed in a simplified crossover between the CCBA and the VCS standards.

This new standard would assure a set of minimum benchmarks for eligibility, leakage control, additionality and the measuring and reporting of changes in carbon stocks in eligible project categories including avoided deforestation and forest degradation, sustainable and improved management of

forest and the regeneration or enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Compliance with these simplified standards is expected to be more affordable, and will enable communities to have a role in all phases of project development.

Project proponents may adopt this methodology for government or private sector supported REDD+ initiatives.

3) Upfront finance for community led forest carbon initiatives and benefit sharing

Communities should be enabled to be implementers of forest carbon projects. Governments obviously have a vital role to play in providing institutional arrangements, legal frameworks and regulations to enable community based forest carbon initiatives.

Upfront finance is urgently needed for projects and pilots with forest carbon components, especially those that also support activities that simultaneously result in biodiversity benefits and community development. Private and institutional climate finance should be directed to such initiatives. The full engagement of communities and equitable sharing of benefits are crucial for success of a program.

Effective community participation also includes the two-way exchange of information between government agencies, funding entities and regulating bodies on the one hand, and communities on the other.

Clear modalities for benefit sharing under forest carbon projects can only be developed if forest carbon incentive programs are informed by, and built on local knowledge leading to appropriate incentives for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

4) Message to Parties and organizations dealing with REDD+ negotiations in COP 18 at Doha

Financing should be stable and predictable. Financing for REDD+ in a compliance mechanism should be available for countries that have demonstrated social and technological expertise to effectively reduce and measure emissions from forests.

All workshop participants will endeavour to brief their delegation and other relevant organization participating in COP 18 at Doha from 26 November – 07 December 2012 to insist on safeguarding of the rights and interests of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and also for ensuring predictable financial support for all phases of REDD+ actions including pilot projects through appropriate incorporations in the relevant negotiating texts.
