

REDD+ Scope/Participation

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The scope of a REDD+¹ mechanism is currently defined to include a range of activities that contribute to global greenhouse gas mitigation in the forest sectors of developing countries. Definitions of included activities, as well as frameworks for their associated institutional, methodological, technical, and financial arrangements, contribute to clarifying the scope of a REDD+ framework and should be immediately addressed under the UNFCCC framework.

It is our position that a REDD+ mechanism should include activities that reduce emissions from deforestation; reduce forest degradation emissions, including as appropriate through sustainable management of natural forests subject to strict environmental and social criteria and robust carbon accounting; enhance forest carbon stocks through the restoration/improvement of existing but degraded forests, and through increasing forest cover through environmentally appropriate afforestation and reforestation; and conserve existing natural forest and maintain carbon stocks, including in areas with high forest cover and low deforestation rates.

The inclusion of additional forest sector activities beyond reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation encourages broad participation of developing countries and promotes an effective and efficient REDD+ mechanism at the global scale (e.g., one that avoids emissions leakage and reduces pressures on intact forests). Furthermore, conservation of existing carbon stocks and ecologically and environmentally appropriate application of afforestation/reforestation using native species further contribute to the preservation of highly biodiverse forest ecosystems and can provide additional co-benefits. However, the incentivization of a broader range of REDD+ activities, if improperly implemented, has the potential to adversely impact vital ecosystem functions while still maximizing the conservation of terrestrial carbon. The scope of the REDD+ mechanism should therefore be defined to include only activities that can produce verifiable greenhouse gas mitigation benefits as well as be compatible with robust environmental and ecological safeguards.

The contribution of REDD+ activities to protecting and maintaining ecosystem co-benefits

Compensation for protecting forest carbon stocks under REDD+ will provide incentives to protect standing forests and the biodiversity and ecosystems they house. In contrast, a mechanism that does not incentivize conservation will limit REDD's effectiveness and may fail to protect the full range of benefits associated with intact forest ecosystems. Incentives for conservation are especially important for countries with high forest cover and historically low deforestation rates (HFLD). HFLD countries contain large tracts of intact forest that are vitally important for biodiversity and provide important ecosystem services that contribute to climate change adaptation, reduce vulnerability and enhance species resilience in addition to providing climate change mitigation benefits.

¹ We support a mechanism that encompasses reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), sustainable management of natural forests subject to strict environmental and social criteria and robust carbon accounting, conservation of existing natural forests and maintenance of carbon stocks including in areas with high forest cover and low deforestation rates, enhancement of forest carbon stocks through the restoration/improvement of existing but degraded forests, and increasing forest cover through environmentally appropriate afforestation and reforestation.

The enhancement of existing carbon stocks through afforestation, reforestation, restoration, and sustainable management will contribute significantly to the success of REDD+ for mitigation of greenhouse gases and for the enhancement of other forest ecosystem services. Forest restoration (the process of assisting the recovery of native species and carbon stocks in a standing forest that has been degraded or damaged) has a large mitigation potential² and can improve the resilience of remaining intact forests. Reforestation and afforestation can make a REDD+ strategy more effective by diverting activities such as harvesting and fuelwood extraction from intact primary forests. In order to ensure ecosystem integrity and function, afforestation and reforestation efforts should prioritize the use of native tree species appropriate to the local habitat and be conducted only on ecologically appropriate lands.³ Policy measures to prevent the conversion of natural forests or other natural ecosystems to plantations are critical to safeguarding ecologically valuable lower-carbon ecosystems.

Sustainable management of forests, when conducted in accordance with the appropriate ecological and environmental guidance (i.e., recognized environmental standards such as the Forest Stewardship Council's principles and criteria), can limit carbon losses and enhance ecosystem services relative to business-as-usual management practices. Production forests, whether under industrial-scale concessions or community control, typically represent an important function of nations' forest estates. Given increasing global demand for wood products, forestland lying outside of effectively managed protected areas may be at risk of degradation and eventual deforestation. Providing for the legal harvest of timber under carefully developed management plans that include responsible logging techniques and independent third-party monitoring, the core elements of a sustainable management regime, reduces the risk of deforestation in vulnerable forests.

While we acknowledge the links between forests and other economic sectors, particularly the agriculture sector, as well as the mitigation potential contained in some non-forest ecosystems, we do not support the inclusion of the agriculture or other land-based sectors in REDD+ in the near term. However, there are certain activities in non-forest lands that have the potential to contribute to emissions reductions and the enhancement of carbon stocks in the forest sector. For example, changes in land-use practices that result in avoided deforestation, such as agricultural intensification programs, have clear connections to forest-based REDD+. These activities could be undertaken as part of the REDD+ effort, but would not receive direct incentives under the mechanism; they would instead receive indirect incentives based upon the extent to which they help reduce emissions in the forest sector. Activities undertaken in other land-based sectors that do not contribute to reducing emissions, enhancing removals, or maintaining carbon stocks in the forest sector, such as conservation tillage, should not be included in a REDD+ mechanism at this time.

Defining the scope of REDD+ activities

The international REDD+ mechanism should contribute to long-term, sustainable land management regimes by addressing forests first and laying the groundwork for a comprehensive land-based framework. While it is important to the success of a REDD+ mechanism that its focus in the near

² Blaser, J. and C. Robledo. Initial Analysis on the Mitigation Potential in the Forestry Sector. Intercooperation, Bern, August 2007

³ Parrotta et al. 1997. Catalyzing native forest regeneration on degraded tropical lands. *Forest Ecology and Management* 99(1-2):1-7.

term remain on the forest sector, it could be expanded in the future to include and incentivize appropriate mitigation opportunities in additional land use sectors as the necessary technical, institutional, and financial capacities develop.⁴

At the eighth meeting of the AWG-LCA in Copenhagen, Parties advanced agreement on the scope of REDD+ towards the inclusion of reducing emissions from deforestation, reducing emissions from forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The definitions of these activities, which will determine the parameters of the on-the-ground actions eligible for inclusion under the mechanism, should be developed as soon as possible to allow the full implementation of REDD+.

Existing definitions set forth by the Marrakesh Accord for use in the Annex I land use, land-use change and forestry sector and for the CDM's Afforestation/Reforestation activities under the Kyoto Protocol are not suitable for use in an international REDD+ mechanism. Several of the LULUCF definitions, including those for "forest" and "forest management", have been shown to allow perverse environmental outcomes and create multiple accounting loopholes that are not compatible with a robust REDD+ framework that both protects tropical forests and contributes to global climate change mitigation. Definitions for both activities and forest carbon pools under REDD+ must uphold the high standard of environmental integrity set by the Bali Action Plan and the AWG-LCA's draft decision --/CP.15 on REDD+.

Paragraph 4 of the REDD+ draft decision text --/CP.15 requests SBSTA to undertake a work programme to identify and assess LULUCF activities that have the potential to contribute to the mitigation of climate change. This process is predicated on the development of definitions for each of the five general REDD+ actions; the Conference of the Parties should therefore engage SBSTA and the IPCC to immediately begin work on definitions that are suitable for both the forest sectors and environmental and sustainable development goals of developing countries participating in REDD+. This work should be concluded and reported to the COP at its eighteenth session in 2012.

⁴ These activities should be included to the extent that adequate methodologies are developed to assess the monitoring, reporting, and verification of emissions reductions, as well as provisions for ensuring the additionality and permanence of reductions.