Learning from REDD

A global comparative study

CIFOR's multiyear Global Comparative Study on REDD aims to inform policy makers, practitioners and donors about what works in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+)

Realising REDD requires new knowledge and expertise

Tropical forest countries are beginning to develop policies and initiate projects to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Everyone involved – project proponents, government ministries, donors and United Nations agencies – needs to know what works and what doesn't. But given the urgency of climate change, we don't have the luxury of decades to study and publish before refining pilot programmes. The information is needed in real time.

CIFOR, the Center for International Forestry Research, will analyse REDD policy, practice and implementation and disseminate lessons learned to a national and global audience. Our goal is to generate knowledge and practical tools to support efforts to reduce forest emissions in ways that are effective, efficient and equitable and that generate co-benefits such as poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. CIFOR intends to make this information easily accessible to our partners and the entire REDD community.

The goal is to influence REDD design and implementation at three scales:

- Local: Site and landscape project activities, including methods for community-based monitoring
- National: Development of strategies and policies, including scenarios for national reference levels
- Global: REDD architecture in the global post-2012 climate-protection agreement

network

CIFOR

CIFOR works with an extensive network of partners on three continents

Our partners include project practitioners, who have much to gain from analytical reflection on their own activities and those conducted around the world; policy makers, who require an impartial guide for course corrections; donors and aid agencies, who look for guidance on low-carbon development pathways; and negotiators who require knowledge on feasible mitigation options. Through this initiative, CIFOR will inform the pre-2012 period in designing national and international REDD architecture, and the post-2012 period in implementing them.

The work is divided into four interrelated and simultaneous components. They involve analysing REDD policies and processes, observing and documenting the implementation of project activities and their impacts, developing reference levels and monitoring systems, and widely sharing the results of the research. At least nine countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia will serve as laboratories during this 4-year initiative (2009–2012). In the first year we are working in six countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Annual workshops and conferences will be used as a place to share ideas and preliminary lessons. Concrete products will be produced on a regular basis to support REDD implementation. These include a book on national REDD strategies and policies to be launched at UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen, an interactive website with extensive scientific and technical information, working papers and various other publications and guidelines to help practitioners conduct their own monitoring and learning as our findings become available.

National REDD processes and policies

REDD is in its infancy, so it will be a continuously evolving process. Component 1 of the study analyses how national processes that formulate and implement REDD policies, reflect diverse interests at all levels. It also aims to ensure that the resulting outcomes are effective, efficient and equitable (the '3Es' principle) while also producing co-benefits.

We will assess first-generation (pre-2012) processes and policies and use the lessons learned to improve second-generation activities. We will use rigorously designed methods to ensure high quality comparative analysis of policy processes and strategies. These include country profiles, analysis of media discourse, policy network surveys and scoring of strategy content as regards their likelihood to secure 3E outcomes. Structures for feedback will ensure that lessons are shared among subnational, national and international levels every year, as the findings become available.

The assessment aims to determine the extent to which national REDD processes lead to REDD strategies likely to secure effective, efficient and equitable outcomes. It will identify decisive factors or conditions that allow similar countries to ensure desirable outcomes.

Component 2

REDD project sites

Component 2 will conduct research at 20 to 30 REDD project sites in six countries, including at this stage Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Knowledge generated from this component will assist first-generation REDD practitioners to improve their performance in attaining 3E outcomes, provide guidance to design second-generation (post-2012) REDD activities and will serve as one reference point for evaluating the success of national REDD policies and practices (Component 1).

The research involves collecting data before and after implementation of study interventions to see changes in carbon stocks, human welfare and other relevant outcomes. Where feasible, the research design will include comparisons between REDD project sites and comparable sites that are not part of the REDD initiative ('control sites'). The research will include not just impact evaluation on the outcomes of REDD but also process evaluation on how REDD is implemented.

In-depth, intensive research at the 20 to 30 sites will be complemented by less detailed, extensive data-gathering at a larger number of sites. Component 2 will create a global database on REDD posted at a website.

The main product of Component 2 in the first study year will be a practitioners' manual on how to learn from REDD. The manual will be a valuable tool to help practitioners measure progress towards effective, efficient and equitable outcomes and make course corrections during REDD implementation.

Component 3

Monitoring and reference levels

The research of this component will lead to new knowledge and improved approaches to monitoring carbon stocks and changes, and assessing emission reference levels and REDD schemes. We will make a significant investment in designing and testing methods and tools.

The first activity will focus on improved methods for supporting establishment of so called reference emissions levels (RELs) or emissions levels with business as usual development activities. While RELs will ultimately be a political decision taken within the UNFCCC, we will develop a bio-economic modeling framework that will allow countries to model future deforestation and analyse scenarios of plausible future emissions. This analytical tool should help countries determine likely future ranges of emissions with transparent assumptions about known drivers of deforestation.

The second activity will be to improve the availability of emissions factors for implementing IPCC methods for national greenhouse gas accounting. We will assess the current state of knowledge of these factors in target countries and in important forest ecosystems and set priorities for collection of additional data. We will then work with technical services in the countries to collect the needed data to improve accounting. During this work we will build the skills of local researchers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in empirical qualitative methods.

Finally, we will work on developing appropriate community based measurement methods to facilitate participation of local stakeholders in the process. We expect that this will increase transparency of REDD studies and enhance community ownership of the study outcomes.

4

Component

Sources of emissions from global land use change 2000
(Baumert *et al.* 2005 Navigating the numbers. WRI, Washington, DC.)

Knowledge sharing

CIFOR aims to serve as a focal point for sharing knowledge about REDD. A key goal of our work is to deliver information to those who need it in forms that are easy to access and simple to use. In this component our four main activities are:

- Prepare a knowledge sharing strategy through consultations with partners and through audience research
- Develop an online learning community through the creation of an interactive website
- Disseminate information at major events (such as CIFOR's Forest Day during UNFCCC COPs), conferences and other relevant stakeholder meetings
- Use media outreach creatively to engage journalists from diverse outlets

The key goal is to provide REDD policy makers and practitioners with knowledge about what works in policy formulation and implementation to help them achieve the 3E outcomes.

Funding for the Global Comparative Study on REDD comes from Norad, AusAID, DFID, the European Commission, FINIDA, Packard, PROFOR, USAID and US Forest Service.

If your organisation or institution would like more information on the Global Comparative Study on REDD or would like to participate in the study, please contact:

Louis Verchot

Research Leader, Enhancing the role of forests in mitigating climate change
c/o CIFOR

P.O. Box 0113 BOCBD

Bogor 16000, Indonesia

Tel: +62 251 8622622

Fax: +62 251 8622100

Email: gcs-redd@cgiar.org

www.cifor.org

©2009 Center for International Forestry Research

Page 5 photo © Mariatun-Labian Leboyan, West Kalimantan-Photovoices Doc.

Other photos © Petrus Gunarso, Miriam van Heist, Adrian Albano, Eko Prianto, Daniel Murdiyarso, Douglas Sheil and Terry Sunderland.

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

CIFOR advances human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that affect forests in developing countries. CIFOR is one of 15 centres within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). CIFOR's headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia. It also has offices in Asia, Africa and South America.