



REDD+

Subnational Initiatives

REDD+ Subnational Initiatives examines how REDD+ initiatives can be designed and implemented so that their outcomes are effective, efficient and equitable and they deliver co-benefits.

Although REDD+ is still being negotiated in international arenas, some 200 subnational forest carbon initiatives are already underway around the world.¹ These interventions aim to increase forest carbon stocks relative to business-as-usual scenarios (i.e., the scenario if there were no intervention).

How successful are these interventions likely to be? Will their outcomes be efficient, equitable and effective? Will they deliver co-benefits such as improved livelihoods and protection of tenure and biodiversity? What conditions and activities help or hinder these initiatives in achieving their aims? How can they get the necessary support from local people?

To help answer these questions, we collect and analyze socioeconomic and biophysical baseline data at 23 REDD+ sites in six countries, encompassing more than 170 villages and nearly 4500 households. To ensure effects are appropriately attributed to the initiatives, we compare data before and after, and with and without, an intervention.^{2,3}

Global Comparative Study on REDD+
ForestsClimateChange.org





REDD+ Subnational Initiatives Key Points

Clear, secure tenure is essential

For outcomes that are effective, efficient and equitable, property rights over forests, trees and tree carbon must be clear.⁴ To allocate REDD+ incentives, it must be clear who has the right to benefit.⁵ If local people are secure in their rights, they are motivated to manage the land sustainably. If not, they may be reluctant to make long-term investments; some may even clear land as a way of staking their claim.⁴ Others may oppose REDD+ if they fear it means more outsiders taking their land.⁶ Clear tenure also protects people's rights and livelihoods and can prevent a resource rush when the value of forests increases.⁷

Tenure problems are rife

In most REDD+ countries, tenure is ambiguous and contested — and hence, insecure. In an analysis of villages in five countries, more than half of the respondents said that some of their tenure was insecure.⁷ An analysis of sites in Indonesia found existing tenure conditions to be inadequate for effective REDD+ implementation.⁸ Even in Brazil, where there have been some advances in tenure regularization, tenure insecurity was found to be pervasive among households.⁹

Tenure needs reform at the national level

Initiative proponents are trying to resolve tenure issues, for example by addressing causes of conflicts, demarcating boundaries through mapping, developing spatial land use plans, identifying legal right holders and registering property.⁷ However, they are hampered because tenure problems are national in scope and origin.^{7,11} National tenure action is necessary, but has been limited.⁴ Obstacles to tenure reform include limited capacity for demarcation and titling, interests of those competing for land and resources, and ideological barriers.⁴ Also needed are integration of national and local tenure efforts, clarification of international and national REDD+ policies, and development of conflict resolution mechanisms.⁷

For villagers, livelihoods comes first

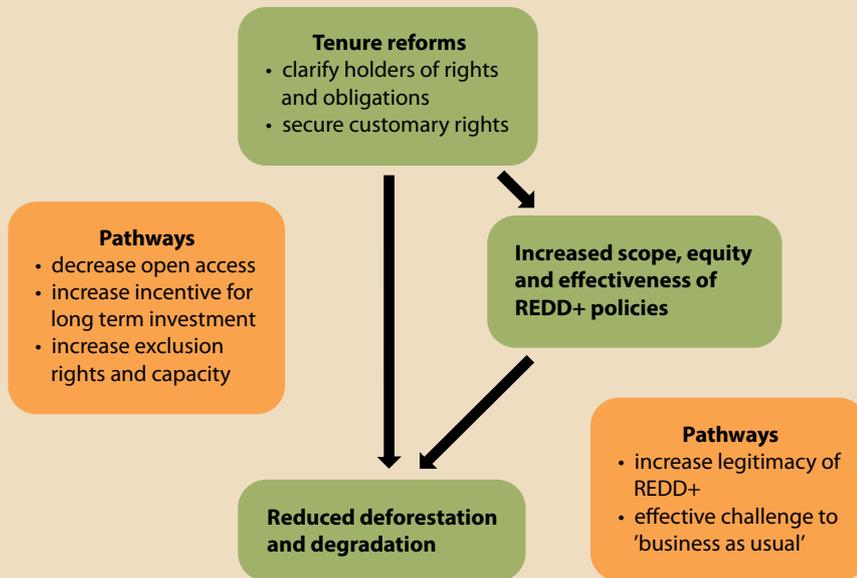
Surveys show that most villagers around REDD+ sites hope the initiative will improve their income and livelihood, but they are worried it could harm them or restrict their access to resources.¹² Many express a greater interest in generating an income than in protecting forest for their own sake. For example, a study in Indonesia found that households have little interest in conserving standing forest unless it is important for their livelihoods.⁸ This suggests that REDD+ will be effective only if it can compete economically with activities that emit greenhouse gases. REDD+ initiatives must balance forest protection with villagers' welfare concerns and protect agricultural livelihoods.¹³

Villagers want to – and should – be involved

Villagers surveyed¹² wanted to engage and participate meaningfully in REDD+ initiatives. They also wanted proponents to communicate better, demonstrate greater transparency, and respect and uphold their rights;¹² these wishes reflect some UNFCCC safeguards.¹⁴ However, villagers' knowledge of REDD+ and/or the local REDD+ initiative was found to be generally low.¹² Most initiatives have some activities to obtain free, prior and informed consent from villagers, but not all are successful and some proponents are delaying education.⁷ Proponents must inform villagers better about REDD+ and involve them in initiative design and implementation.

REDD+ initiatives must balance forest protection with villagers' welfare concerns and protect agricultural livelihoods.

Clear tenure protects people's rights and livelihoods and can prevent a resource rush when the value of forests increases.



Countries studied

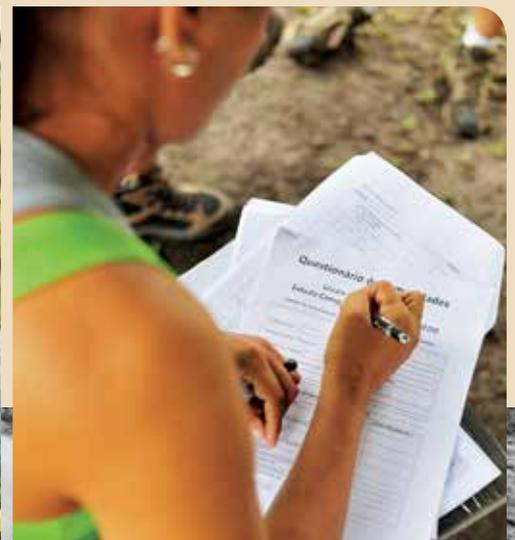
Brazil
Cameroon
Indonesia
Peru
Tanzania
Vietnam

Common tenure problems^{4,7,10}

- encroachment
- contestation
- land competition
- ease of revoking rights
- outdated land registers
- government restrictions on land use
- company restrictions on land use
- discrepancy between perceived customary rights and formal rights
- overlapping titles or claims
- invasion
- conflict
- elite capture
- lack of title

International talks affect local actions

Lack of clarity over where REDD+ is heading creates uncertainty, particularly as to whether payments for ecosystem services (PES) — central to REDD+ policies — will materialize. This delay in international negotiations hampers the implementation of initiatives. Initiative designs tend to combine PES with earlier approaches to conservation, so proponents can get started and have a fallback option, but the old model has a history of problems.¹⁵ Some proponents are delaying efforts to fully engage and educate villagers, to avoid raising expectations in case REDD+ benefits never arrive.⁷ Furthermore, when (or if) REDD+ becomes fully operational, additional issues with tenure will likely emerge, which proponents can only guess at now.⁷ In addition, social safeguards must be guaranteed at the international level to generate real action.¹³



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