Multilevel Governance and Carbon Management

*Multilevel Governance and Carbon Management* examines how institutions of different levels and sectors relate to each other in decision-making processes around land use, carbon management and benefit-sharing arrangements, so that economic and policy barriers to adopting REDD+ and other low-carbon emission options can be overcome effectively and equitably.

REDD+ is an example of a policy mechanism that encourages low-carbon emissions land uses. At the same time, REDD+ is inherently a multilevel process. The actors directly or indirectly involved — such as national and subnational governments, businesses, NGOs, indigenous communities, smallholders — come from multiple sectors and operate at multiple levels.

By analyzing diverse cases of increasing and decreasing carbon emissions at the sub-national level, we seek to:

1. Understand how decisions are made by actors across levels and sectors regarding land use, carbon, and benefit sharing at the landscape level, including: how power is distributed; how information flows; the extent to which decision processes are participatory; whether processes and outcomes are legitimate; and why and how change occurs.
2. Identify the different perspectives on REDD+ and other low-carbon emission land-use options, what diverse multilevel governance arrangements (institutions and policies) are relevant for decision making about land use, and to what extent they support the effective and equitable adoption of low-carbon emissions land-use options.
3. Assess the carbon outcomes of different possible future land-use decisions, using scenario building and carbon modeling.
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Key Points and Research Questions

Research methods

The research team uses interviews with key informants to explore the national and subnational contexts and to identify case studies with different types of land-use and benefit-sharing arrangements. Cases are selected to include both REDD+ and non-REDD+ initiatives with decreasing (or attempts to decrease) carbon emissions, as well as important sites of increasing emissions. In each country, groups of cases are located in diverse political jurisdictions (e.g. regional/provincial and/or district). Case selection is followed by the application of ethnographic methods to investigate land use decision-making processes. Interviews are also aimed specifically at understanding the roles of multiple actors in the design and implementation of benefit sharing arrangements. Carbon outcomes of different possible future land-use decisions are assessed using scenario building and carbon modeling.

Process and outcome legitimacy

Decisions are shaped by a variety of governance arrangements — the institutions and processes that determine who makes decisions, how decisions are made, and who influences whom, how and why. The different actors involved in land use and REDD+ have their own perspectives, interests, claims and objectives. They also differ in terms of power, resources, knowledge and interpretations of rules and norms. All of these differences influence the manner in which actors interact, how institutional arrangements play out in practice and the overall legitimacy of decision-making related to land use.

Multilevel governance: participation across levels and sectors

Currently, not all relevant actors are participating in REDD+ processes. The integration of key actors both vertically — among levels of governance and government — and horizontally across sectors is essential to avoid policy and management failures and to bring about change that transforms “business as usual” for a low carbon-emissions future. Local people count on their elected leaders to represent them, yet projects often fail to work with local governments. National, regional and local governments may compete more than cooperate. REDD+ and other similar “conservation” initiatives are often housed in environment ministries while ministries managing agriculture or infrastructure continue to support policies and projects facilitating deforestation.

Jurisdictional, nested, both or neither?

Jurisdictional and nested REDD+ — wherein formal government jurisdictions coordinate programs with harmonized Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems, standards for social safeguards, and coherent policies for benefit

Conceptual example of multiple jurisdictions (based on Peru)

Agriculture Sector
- Regional (Titling)
- National (Regulation)

Forestry Sector
- National (Regulation)
- Regional (Permitting)

Environment Sector
- National (Regulation)

Culture Sector
- National (Regulation)
- Regional (Titling)

Agriculture Sector
- Regional (Permitting)
- Regional (Projects)

Environment Sector
- Regional (Titling)

State Lands

Oil Palm Plantation

Native Communities

Timber Concession

RED+ Conservation Project

Smallholder Communities

Key Points and Research Questions

Research questions

- How can governance arrangements be used to promote broader and deeper consideration of low carbon emission options with full knowledge and understanding of the trade-offs and risks?
- How legitimate is decision making related to benefit sharing and land use? What factors affect legitimacy?
- Which governance arrangements result in just, accountable benefit sharing? Which ones do not?

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Conceptual example of multiple jurisdictions (based on Peru)
sharing — is theoretically advantageous in terms of integrating REDD+ with broader development goals because it houses the purview of environmental sustainability and development as well as downward accountability in the same place: government.4

In practice, however, jurisdictions are not trivial to define, since different offices and sectors of government operating at different levels have both exclusive and shared roles and responsibilities over different parts of the landscape. Even more, what is established in legislation is not necessarily what is found in practice. If the potential advantages of a jurisdictional and/or nested approach are to be realized, understanding what the jurisdictional boundaries are, which actors are important, and options for harmonizing actions under a coherent system are critical steps to advancing REDD+ or other low-carbon emission policies effectively, efficiently, and equitably. Legal studies on the distribution of powers and responsibilities related to land use are being conducted in some study countries to contribute to this understanding.

What should be the primary objective of REDD+?

Different perspectives exist about what should be the primary objective of REDD+. At the global level, carbon emissions reduction is considered the “benefit” of REDD+, while livelihoods, infrastructure, tenure security, biodiversity, and any other ecosystem services benefits accrued by way of REDD+ initiatives are considered “co-benefits." Closer to the local level, the definitions change. To many local actors, carbon is more like a “co-benefit” of REDD+, while other potential benefits, including cash, other livelihoods benefits, infrastructure, and other development outcomes, are considered the main “benefits.” By assessing which actors hold which perspectives about REDD+, this module will enable decision makers to better harmonize the design and implementation of REDD+ across levels and sectors.

Study countries
Peru
Indonesia
Tanzania
Vietnam
Mexico

Trade-offs
Trade-offs among multiple outcomes may exist. It may not always be possible to achieve the desired livelihoods, equity, and carbon outcomes in a landscape with a variety of actors. Trade-offs become further multi-dimensional when different layers of government and governance are considered. Better multilevel governance can offer a pathway to bring land-use decision making at local and regional levels into better alignment with global needs, and also to integrate REDD+ with other development goals. This module will improve our understanding of the ways in which multilevel governance arrangements can support more democratic decision making around these trade-offs.
The role of multilevel governance in land-use decision making and benefit sharing

CENTRAL QUESTIONS
- Relations among levels of government/actors regarding land-use change and REDD
- Procedural and outcome legitimacy (benefit sharing)
- C emissions of current and future land use

SECONDARY DATA
- Legal/policy studies (multilevel and multisector)
- Module 1 data (National)
- Module 2 data (Project)
- Existing carbon data

PRIMARY DATA (FIELD WORK)
- Key Informant Interviews
- Ethnography of land-use change
- Survey on benefit sharing
- Subnational government interviews/budgets
- C scenario building

OUTCOMES
- Trend in C emissions (Effectiveness)
- Trend in livelihoods (Equity)

KEY PROJECT OUTPUTS
- Governance monitoring tool
- Carbon emissions assessment tool
- Country reports
- Policy briefs
- Journal articles

References

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