



IUCN UNFCCC Newsletter

Focus on: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation



Dear reader,

This is the first of 3 newsletters that IUCN will be issuing monthly to update you on how we and our Members are contributing to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process in the build up to COP 15 in Copenhagen in December.

We have decided to highlight in each issue one of the nature-based solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation that IUCN is promoting under the UNFCCC process this year. This first issue focuses on REDD - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and the next one will be on Ecosystem-based Adaptation, and the final one will focus on COP 15 itself.

Please send us your feedback, comments, contributions, and inform us if there is any interesting activity, project or initiative you wish to showcase in this newsletter or on our website!

> October is IUCN's REDD month

Please visit

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IUCN and REDD+

As the Bangkok Climate Change Talks open on 28 September 2009, IUCN joins many delegations in calling for a future REDD-plus mechanism that could provide scope for a wide range of measures that reduce emissions, stabilize and safeguard existing forest carbon stocks, and expand forest carbon sinks, including:

Reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation

to protect existing forests from immediate and/or medium term threats of forest conversion and further degradation.

Conservation

to protect existing carbon stocks in natural forests, especially primary forests, including those that face no immediate threat from deforestation and degradation but could in future be subject to land use pressures created by national and international leakage, including in countries and areas with high forest cover and low rates of deforestation.

Sustainable management of forests

to safeguard, and as appropriate expand, existing carbon stocks in working forests against long-term decline while ensuring the economically, ecologically and socially sustainable provision of associated ecosystem goods and services.

Enhancement of carbon stocks

including landscape-scale restoration of forest ecosystems to increase and maintain carbon stocks while improving ecological integrity and human wellbeing.

Voices from the field: REDD in Ecuador

Interview with Marco Chiu

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At what stage is Ecuador in the preparation for REDD?

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment (MAE) is designing the REDD National Strategy under the Climate Change National Strategy and in close relation to the National Environmental Policy. We plan to have a first draft of the REDD National Strategy by the end of November to be presented at the COP 15.

In the next two years, the MAE will be leading a National Forest Assessment and the Definition of the Reference Scenario Emission from Deforestation. Methodologies are being developed and will be finalized by the end of December. By 2010 national data will be gathered and processed. The collected information will be included in an information management system. The system will also include a module for GHG monitoring for the forest sector, and probably for the entire Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector.

Other elements that shall be included into the REDD National Strategy are: i) development of Sustainable Forest Management programs; ii) legal and institutional framework; iii) land tenure regulation including conflict resolution, entitlement, property boundaries definition; iv) capacity building: human and technological capacity building/strengthening in the MAE and other appropriate institutions for the implementation of REDD activities; v) reforestation (MAE has to coordinate and assure the synergies with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, MAGAP-Proforest); vi) strengthening of the forest control system; vii) monitoring and follow-up component for the provision of indicators (implementation of emissions accountability and/or emissions reduction systems and registry systems). Each of the mentioned subjects will be included into the National Strategy and shall be developed under the lead of the MAE with the support of other State institutions and NGO's.

The MAE has acted connecting the national stakeholders, including inputs from international negotiations into the strategy and taking part to the negotiation process. It will further follow international negotiations to guarantee the inclusion of the decisions made in such meetings into Ecuador's National Strategy.

What do you think would be the main strengths and weaknesses of fund and market based approaches to REDD+ financing in your national context?

Financing through funds implies a complete uncertainty about REDD's financial sustainability in the long term. The funds can combine several financial windows that include subjects such as biodiversity conservation. If the notion of co-benefits associated to REDD (such as biodiversity conservation) are acknowledged, it would be an interesting opportunity for Ecuador given its biological diversity.

Ecuador cannot rely on funds for REDD financing. It should explore market potentials because they offer the opportunity of finding relatively sustainable financial flows. Nevertheless, these flows are subject to market regulations, especially supply and demand, which can make them less reliable.

What benefits will REDD+ provide to poor people strongly dependent on local forest ecosystems in your country, and in particular to indigenous people?

It will allow to finance the conservation of communal lands belonging to local/indigenous communities. One of Ecuador's basic principles is that the majority of benefits from Emission Reduction Certificates (CERs) trade go to local communities. In the case of indigenous communities a priority shall be given to ensure the maintenance of the forests these communities depend upon as well as to guarantee that land tenure rights and ancestral resource use rights are assured.

What are your expectations from the COP 15 with regards to REDD?

With regard to Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) agreements, we expect to have a guide on general principles and methodologies to be applied on REDD as a way to provide the necessary flexibility to incorporate different points of view regarding other countries' proposals on the methodologies. Such a guide shall be wide in scope to allow the inclusion of all countries' points of view and for the avoidance of lack of agreement due to methodological issues. SBSTA will start a work program after COP15 on methodological issues.

In the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA), in charge of policy negotiations, the "shape" that REDD is going to have will be discussed. It is expected that the decision on the incorporation of REDD as a formal mitigation mechanism of developing countries will be made. Nevertheless it is not feasible to obtain detailed characteristics of such a mechanism.

Voices from the field: REDD in Ghana

Interview with David Kpelle

National Coordinator

Non Legally Binding Instruments Program
Ghana

At what stage is Ghana in the preparation for REDD?

Ghana has completed the preparation of the REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). A validation process has been held to review the draft before submission to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility this month. The next steps involve further consultation and enhancement of participation of key stakeholders in the Readiness Strategy Development.

What has been your role so far, what will it be in the future?

I have participated in the R-PP development and validation process. Currently I have been listed among the Roll of Experts (RoE), and I have been chosen to join the team of the Technical Advisory Panel for the review of the Ghana R-PP.

> Contacts

Ghana Forestry Commission

<http://www.fcghana.com/>

United Nations Forum on Forests

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

What do you think would be the main strengths and weaknesses of fund and market based approaches to REDD+ financing in your national context?

The main opportunity of a market based approach is in the possibility to develop a proposal through a broadly inclusive and transparent stakeholder consultation process. Its main weakness is that carbon stocks are too low in Ghana to competitively attract market based approaches. A substantial enhancement of carbon stocks will therefore be necessary before a market based approach can effectively be implemented.

What benefits will REDD+ provide to poor people strongly dependent on local forest ecosystems in your country, and in particular to indigenous people?

Poor people could benefit from payment for ecosystem services through avoiding deforestation and enhancement of carbon stocks.

What are your expectations from the COP 15 with regards to REDD?

The successful negotiation of a comprehensive and incisive framework convention that will help in drastically reducing emissions and in supporting and favoring pro-poor programs in Africa and other developing countries.



UNFCCC process update

The UNFCCC negotiations aiming at establishing a post-2012 climate regime at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December this year, will be holding the next preparatory talks in Bangkok, 28 September - 9 October.

The two 'negotiation streams', one under the Convention (the AWG-LCA) and one under the Kyoto Protocol (the AWG-KP) will deal with a wide range of issues.

An important area of negotiation is the action to be taken in the next decades by both developed and developing countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions ('mitigation'): the authoritative IPCC has recommended that the upwards trend in emissions needs to be curbed by 2015-2020 if a global temperature increase of more than 2°C above pre industrial levels is to be averted. It is now widely accepted by politicians from both developed and a large number of developing countries that higher increases would have dangerous impacts on humankind and ecosystems. The developing countries emphasize the responsibility of the developed world for climate change and want them to take the first steps. The position of the US will be crucial in the negotiations, as it is a big emitter and has yet to adopt national reduction targets.

Another important issue which will make or break the adoption of an agreement at Copenhagen in December is the financial assistance that the developed countries will make available to the developing world for adapting to the now inescapable effects of climate change, and for their reduction efforts.

Both these crucial issues, and a large number of others, have yet to come to conclusions: the pace has been very slow.

Further negotiation sessions will take place in Barcelona, 2 - 6 November. It may be that at Copenhagen, it is possible that Parties to the Convention may reach an agreement on the overall architecture of a new post-2012 climate change regime, rather than a detailed instrument. In that case, the 'rulebook' for the new regime will have to be worked out in the forthcoming 2 or 3 years.

IUCN at UNFCCC Bangkok

IUCN is attending the UNFCCC Climate Change Talks in Bangkok from the 28th September - 9th October. Our position papers for the session can be viewed at:

http://www.iucn.org/unfccc/resources/position_papers/

or click on the title to download the pdf:

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries

Operational Framework for REDD action with specific reference to means of implementation and finance

For more information on IUCN's attendance at Bangkok, please visit:

<http://www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/bangkok/>



> For more information

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<http://unfccc.int/>