



Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)

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Introduction

Globally deforestation accounts for approximately 17% of greenhouse emissions or about 5.8 billion tones of CO₂ equivalent released into the atmosphere, per year. This is more than global transport and aviation combined (Meridian Institute, 2009). According to the Stern review, reducing deforestation is the “single largest opportunity for cost -effective and immediate reductions of carbon emissions (Stern Review, 2006)”. This is where REDD comes in.

History

In the talks that led to the creation of the Kyoto Protocol, there was some discussion about making payments to discourage deforestation and forest degradation, but the idea was ultimately rejected.

COP- 11 (2005), Montreal, Canada: The agenda item on “reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and approaches to stimulate action” was first introduced at this conference. The conference was an historic event. The Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met for the 11th time, while marking the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

COP- 13 (2007) , Bali, Indonesia : In December 2007, however, the 13th COP to the UNFCCC Convention, in Bali, called for a decision to reduce emissions from forests to be made by 2009 (Decision 2/CP 13).

In 2008, the SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific

and Technological Advice) initiated a programme of work on methodological issues related to a range of policy approaches and positive incentives that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.

COP -14 (2008), Poznan, Poland: The outcomes of the SBSTA were reported at COP 14 , Poznan, Poland in 2008.

COP-15 (2009) Copenhagen, Denmark: REDD+ gained important momentum from UNFCCC COP 15 at Copenhagen in 2009. The interim and country led REDD+ partnership was established in May 2010.

COP-16 (2010) Cancun, Mexico: in 2010 agreed on the REDD+ policy approaches and positive incentives, including guidance on activities and safeguards to be promoted and supported.

REDD: Is an acronym for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation. It is a mechanism to create an incentive for developing countries to protect and better manage their forest resources, contributing to global effort to fight against climate change. REDD is an idea of creating an international framework to halt deforestation along with helping to fight poverty and conserving biodiversity to sustain vital eco-system services. REDD strategies aim to make forests more valuable standing than they would be when cut down, thereby creating a financial value for the carbon stored in trees. After the assessment and quantification of carbon, the final phase of REDD involves developed countries paying



developing countries carbon offsets for their standing forests. So REDD aims to tip the economic balance in favour of Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF) so that their immense economic, social and environmental goods and services benefit countries, communities and biodiversity and forest users while at the same time contributing to significant reductions in greenhouse emissions.

REDD “+” : A “REDD Plus” approach that includes SMF (Sustainable Management of Forests) and A&R (Afforestation and Reforestation) is required in order to fulfill the principles of equity and efficiency. REDD+ strategies go beyond deforestation and forest degradation and include positive elements of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Countries that reduce emissions and undertake sustainable management of forests will be entitled to receive funds and resources as incentives.

REDD+ is seen as one of the most cost-effective ways of stabilizing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gas emissions to avoid a temperature rise. Further, this provides the market signals, mechanisms and incentives to encourage investments that manage and conserve the world's nature-based resources rather than mine them. If REDD can be structured right, developing countries and communities can benefit by providing this carbon storage service. Putting a market value on global forest ecosystem services is relatively new idea.

India's stand on REDD and REDD +: India believes that reduction of deforestation and conservation and improvement of forests are two sides of the same coin. India favours a comprehensive REDD mechanism that encompasses all policy approaches which enhance carbon or save it. Enhancing carbon refers to increasing carbon stocks through plantations. India wants countries compensated for maintaining and increasing their forests. India emphasized that one unit of carbon saved by checking deforestation should receive the same level of incentives as one unit of carbon added due to

conservation and afforestation, concluding that increasing forest cover should receive the same incentives as avoiding deforestation. India presented that incentives were needed not only for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), but also for Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF) and Afforestation and Reforestation (A&R). A “REDD Plus” approach that includes SMF and A&R is required in order to fulfill the principles of equity and efficiency. India's stand was accepted in the 13th Conference of Parties (COP 13) at Bali when elements of conservation, sustainable management of forests (SMF) and enhancement of forest carbon stocks were added to the then existing text of reducing deforestation and degradation as a part of Bali action plan.

Possible scope of Creditable activities in a REDD / Forestry mechanism (Angelsen CIFOR 2008):

Changes in	Reduced negative change	Enhanced positive change
Forest area (hectare)	Avoid deforestation	Afforestation and Reforestation (A/R)
Carbon density (carbon per hectare)	Avoid degradation	Forest restoration and rehabilitation (carbon stock enhancement)

REDD + activities are broken down into the following three phases:

- Phase 1: Development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures and capacity building.
- Phase 2: Implementation of National policies and measures and National strategies or action plans that could involve further capacity building, technology, development and transfer and result based demonstration activities.
- Phase 3: Results-based actions that should be fully measured, reported and verified.



India's REDD + strategy (2010): India has undertaken the following initiatives:

1. India submitted to the UNFCCC a report on "REDD, Sustainable management of Forest (SMF) and Afforestation and Reforestation (A & R)" in December 2008.
2. National REDD+ Coordinating Agency is being established. Already a technical group has been set up to develop methodologies and procedures for assessment and monitoring of REDD plus actions.
3. A National Forest Carbon Accounting Programme is being institutionalized.
4. The Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA) released its study on the impact of climate change on our forests and released its report titled "Climate Change and India: A 4 X 4 assessment - A sectoral and regional analysis for 2030s" in Nov 2010. The INCCA is a network based programme that brings together over 120 institutions and over 220 scientists from across the country to undertake scientific assessments of different aspects of climate change assessment. In the year 2030, 8 - 56% of the forests are likely to experience a change in vegetation type with respect to those observed in 1970s. There is likely to be an increase in Net Primary Productivity (NPP) ranging from 20 % - 57 %.
5. In 2012, India will be host to the eleventh Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This is even more important as it coincides with twenty years of the Rio summit.
6. **National Mission for a Green India:** This is a part of the country's National Action Plan for Climate Change with a budget of Rs 46,000 Crores over a period of 10 years. The main

objective is to increase forest, tree cover in 5 m ha, and improve quality of forest cover in another 5 m ha. This is aimed at totally improving ecosystem services, biodiversity, hydrological services and carbon sequestration in 10 m ha. This mission thus proposes a fundamental shift from the traditional focus of merely increasing the quantity of our forest cover, towards increasing its quality and improving the provision of ecosystem goods and services.

REDD challenges: REDD+ is based on a very simple and appealing idea, but turning the idea into action is complex. We must address many difficult questions before we can create mechanisms that fully exploit the potential of REDD:

1. How can we measure reductions in emissions when data are poor or does not exist?
2. From where does the money come to put a REDD mechanism in place?
3. How can we reliably "monitor, report and verify" (MRV) carbon emissions from forests?
4. How can we make sure that any reductions in deforestation and degradation are "real" (additional), and that they do not lead to more trees being chopped down in other forest areas (leakage) or next year (permanence)?
5. How can we make sure that the poor benefits?
6. UNFCCC's definition of forests. "Forest" is a "minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectare with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10-30 per cent with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 metres at maturity *in situ*." So how does one distinguish between old growth forests and palm oil plantations?

To combat global warming, forests have to be a part of our solution. It is upto us to make good forest stewardship a reality.



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