

PHASE 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF REDD+ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL VOICES IN RESULT-BASED PAYMENT SYSTEMS

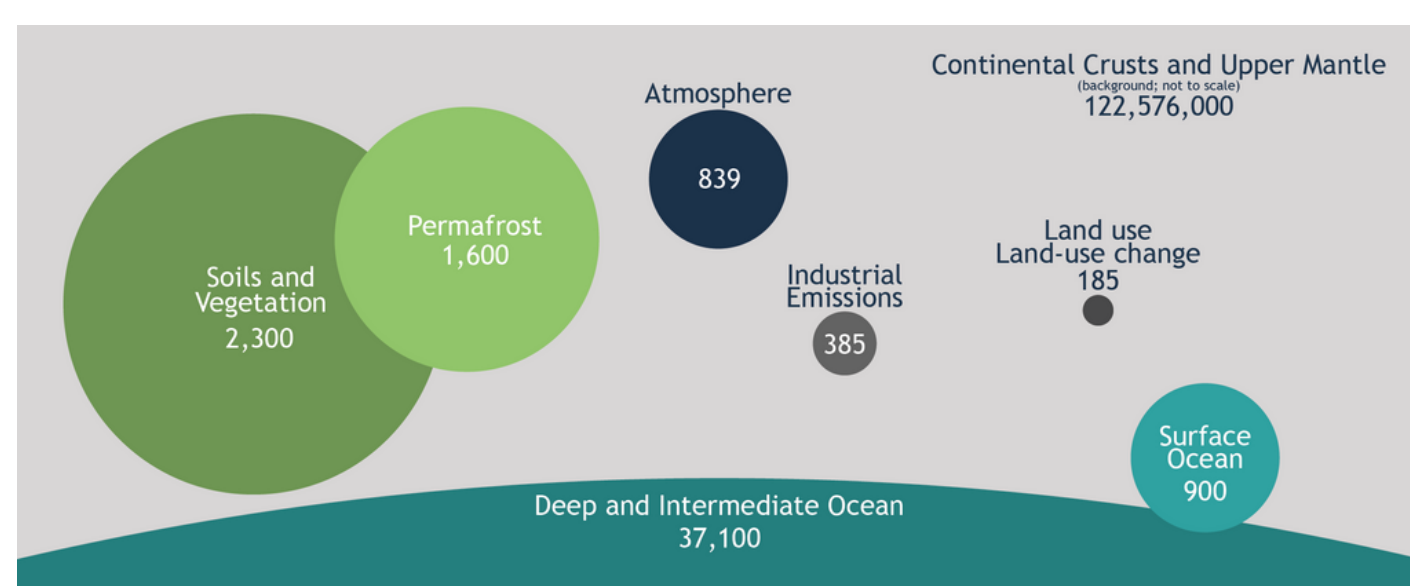
SUMMARY

- REDD+ addresses the global issue of deforestation and forest degradation by creating a framework for payments for results in developing countries that protect and enhance their forest services
- Local, indigenous, and forest communities are often directly impacted by REDD+ strategies, and the UNFCCC implemented CBR+ in order to center local voices in discussions of REDD+
- Local, indigenous, and forest community voices are essential in the implementation of phase 3 of REDD+, as they provide insight into the causes of deforestation and the best practices for carbon storage and nature-based solutions.

ISSUE OVERVIEW

REDD+ stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (plus additional forest-related activities that protect the climate such as sustainable forest management practices) (UNFCCC, 2023a). REDD+ is a framework for climate action in the forest sector. Within this framework, developing countries can receive benefits (either direct funding or result based payments) as incentives to reduce deforestation (UNFCCC, 2023b).

REDD+ was developed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2007 at COP13 where the international community signed the Bali Action Plan, which acted as a formal acknowledgement of the impact that deforestation and forest degradation has on global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Since the Bali Action Plan, REDD+ has taken on a three-phase structure, with the third phase focusing on implementation of pilot programs that provide result-based payments for REDD+ activities (UNFCCC, 2023a). While there are some pilot result-based payment programs in action (most notably in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Brazil), most REDD+ activities have been focused on the first two phases, which include the development of national strategies and action plans, and the implementation of national policies and measures (Green Climate Fund, 2023). Increasingly, discussions of implementation of result-based payment programs have centered around the inclusion of local voices and perspectives in order to ensure proper representation and utilize the benefits of local knowledge systems (Scheyvens, Fujisaki, & Yamanoshita, 2013).



Global carbon stocks (carbon stored in pools), shown in gigatonnes (Kayler, Janowiak, Swanston, 2017).

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS & LOCAL VOICES

Forests play a vital role in storing carbon from the atmosphere. It is estimated that U.S. forests store 14 percent of all annual carbon dioxide emissions produced by the country (Friedel, 2017). On a global scale, the UNFCCC estimated in 2009 that 18 percent of the annual global greenhouse gas emissions were coming from deforestation (UNFCCC, 2009). In addition to the role that forests play as carbon reservoirs, approximately 1.6 billion people globally directly depend on forests and their services for food, energy, shelter, income, and medicine. Aside from these direct services to people, forests also provide ecosystem services to non-human beneficiaries, such as acting as wildlife habitats and homes for most of earth's terrestrial biodiversity (UNFCCC, 2023b).

In 2013, the UNFCCC established the Community-Based REDD+ initiative (CBR+), to enhance the role that local, indigenous, and forest community voices played in national and international REDD+ processes (UN-REDD Program, 2017). There are several essential roles that local voices play in the REDD+ framework. Local, indigenous, and forest communities have direct, hands-on knowledge of forest systems that is essential when considering the efficiency of carbon storage and overall health of local ecosystems (Waring, et al., 2020). These perspectives and experiences can provide valuable insights, particularly regarding nature-based solutions, that incorporate the value systems not just of the ecosystem services, but also of the cultural and social values of forests.

Implementation of REDD+ strategies (specifically of phase 3 REDD+, as the implementation of result-based payments), relies heavily on multi-stakeholder partnerships and a wide variety of actors. The inclusion of local perspectives at every stage of REDD+, but particularly phase 3 of REDD+, will ensure that forest monitoring, verification, and management is addressing not only deforestation, but targeting the sources of deforestation. This creates a system that not only encourages local input but allows those perspectives to shift the core causes of the problem of deforestation, rather than focusing solely on the symptoms (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016).

COP28 SUMMARY

COP28 was a particularly relevant conference for REDD+, not only due to the jurisdictional REDD+ (J-REDD+) programs discussed, but because this year was the ten year anniversary of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. As the framework rounded the decade corner, these were the common themes and major decisions achieved in Dubai:

1. When addressing the operationalization of REDD+, many of the party discussions took place in the Subsidiary Body for Science and Technology Advice (SBSTA) meetings, where negotiations on international cooperative measures through carbon markets (Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement) ultimately did not result in any finalized draft decisions (SBSTA 59 Agenda Item 13b, 2023).
2. Side events with panelists involved in voluntary carbon markets - ranging from Greenbiz to LEAF - emphasized the need for transparency and the production of high quality carbon credits that would bring about development opportunities for the global south.
3. Side events with panelists interested in limiting rainforest based carbon offsets, many of whom represented indigenous groups from Amazonia, expressed deep concerns about the lack of forest inventory capabilities, the harms of exotic tree plantations, the monetization of their relationship with land, the dangers to family agriculture capabilities, and described REDD+ as a “false solution”.
4. Indigenous leaders from Brazil held a side event regarding local perspectives on carbon market integrity and expressed concern regarding indigenous understanding of carbon market opportunities and language. The theme of needing greater education on UNFCCC mechanisms and carbon market rhetoric for indigenous people was commonly mentioned throughout discussions of REDD+.
5. The Coalition of Rainforest Nations, as well as non-party coalitions like the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, emphasized the differences in transparency between jurisdictional REDD+ programs and private sector involvement in voluntary carbon markets. These actors expressed that many private programs using the REDD+ name were not representative of the high quality credits initially aimed to be achieved by the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.
6. The Forest & Climate Leaders’ Partnership announced a statement regarding support for the Jurisdictional REDD+ Technical Assistance Partnership, which will provide technical assistance and capacity building for governments interested in participating in REDD+ (FCLP, 2023).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Discussions of environmental equity and the cultural and social value of forests must be integrated** into national action plans and policies as they are developed for phase 1 and 2 of REDD+ strategies. These action plans are reviewed and publicized by international bodies, including the Green Climate Fund. These bodies should enforce the integration of local, indigenous, and forest community voices by making community discussions mandatory for result-based payments.
2. **Participation of local, indigenous, and forest communities should be paid** as an indication of the value placed on local perspectives and knowledge. Some Participatory Action Research (PAR) has shown that the best way to encourage authentic participation of local communities is to pay for services, including knowledge and time. This will involve finance mobilization that provides funding prior to results, rather than after results. This would be a clear indication that the local communities acting as forest stewards are the ones actually receiving the financial compensation for forest protections.
3. As result-based payments develop in phase 3 of REDD+ strategies, the international community should **consider alternative payment systems that begin to value the cultural and social significance of forests, outside of the monetary credits system**. This can avoid local interactions with forests being changed into exclusively monetized relationship, and allow for local values to be scaled to the international level. While Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement were discussed at COP28 regarding how REDD+ could fit into international carbon markets, this policy recommendation would encourage REDD+ to be considered especially when discussing Article 6.8 of the Paris Agreement, which addresses nationally determined contribution goals through holistic mitigation and adaptation strategies. This inclusion of REDD+ in 6.8 discussions would allow for the framework’s sometimes forgotten aspects - the activities that highlight conservation and enhancement of forest stocks and forest management, rather than reduced deforestation - to become central foci of future discussions.

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