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Agriculture and REDD+. The main driver of deforestation and a key sector for successful implementation of REDD+

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August 2013

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Agriculture and REDD+

The main driver of deforestation and a key sector for successful implementation of REDD+

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Summary

Current knowledge surrounding REDD+ suggest most GHG emissions in tropical countries are related to direct and indirect drivers related to agriculture. This report highlights the potential of sustainable agricultural intensification and value chain efficiency to reduce pressure on forests when given the appropriate policy framework and good forest governance conditions.

While agricultural expansion has been the largest driver of tropical deforestation, global food production suffers from less than adequate corresponding growth. This suggests that agricultural value chains are still inefficient in many regions and there is large untapped sustainable intensification potential.

Synergies may exist between sustainable intensification of agricultural production, diversification of income options and climate mitigation through forest protection. The best mix of management options depends on regional and country-specific circumstances.

Clear policy and institutional frameworks are needed to enable synergetic opportunities. Agricultural intensification is not a standalone panacea. We recommend four pathways to delink agricultural production and deforestation:

1. Decouple agricultural growth from agricultural area expansion
2. Connect institutions and sectors for integrated rural development
3. Connect land users with information providers
4. Promote private sector engagement

Different levels of progress in countries engaged with REDD+ provide lessons for how to increase both agricultural production and forest protection along the four pathways described in this report. Brazil emerges as a well-documented and promising case, which provides examples for other tropical forest countries to follow.

German development cooperation should put a stronger focus on sustainable agricultural intensification and rural development in a holistic landscape approach in order to tackle the parallel challenges of forest protection and agricultural sector development. Entry points are suggested along the four presented pathways for further engagement in REDD+.

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