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An Approach to Promote REDD+ Compatible Wood-fuel Value Chains

Resource
June 2014

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Summary

Wood based fuels remain the primary energy source for households in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 93 per cent of households in rural areas and 58 per cent of households in urban zones rely on wood-fuel. The extraction of wood for fuel can lead to encroachment into forested areas and has been identified as one of the principal drivers of forest degradation in national programmes on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of forests (REDD+), particularly for Sub-Saharan Africa.

SNV undertook research to examine the wood-fuel value chain and to identify key issues that preclude wood-fuel from being used sustainably. Based on this, SNV developed an approach that can help policy makers and practitioners to better understand the wood-fuel value chain and to target interventions in ways that contribute to reducing forest degradation and improve the livelihoods of those communities involved in the sector. While this approach may have wider application, the focus is Sub-Saharan Africa.

This paper outlines the approach. It follows three basic steps: firstly, to understand the main actors along the wood-fuel value chain; secondly, to identify the key issues which preclude sustainability of

the wood-fuel value chain; and thirdly, to identify interventions to address sustainability along the value chain. This includes ascertaining risks and institutional measures to mitigate such risks. Based on the three steps, an approach, encapsulated in a simple model, has been developed to facilitate design of interventions to ensure a more sustainable wood-fuel value chain. Following these steps can assist policy makers and practitioners to take an inclusive approach to understanding the different stages of wood-fuel value chains, to identify possible solutions, risks and institutional requirements and to target their interventions in ways that achieve greatest benefits in terms of reduced degradation of forested areas and benefits to the poorest communities. This links with the REDD+ objectives of assessing how interventions could contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while improving co-benefits for the many actors involved. In the report the steps are examined with respect to two target countries, namely Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo; both of which are heavily reliant on wood-fuel as an energy source.

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