

REDD+ May Cut Both Ways - Potential Trade-offs Between Climate Change Mitigation and Biodiversity Conservation Require Well Thought Out Measures

At the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meeting in Hyderabad, India, scientists present key findings on the relationship between biodiversity, forest management and potential REDD+ activities.

Ongoing conversion of forests to agriculture is still a major cause of global biodiversity loss on Earth. Furthermore, deforestation is the second largest source of carbon dioxide emissions induced by humans, after fossil fuel emissions. The UN initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD+) can bring positive impacts for both biodiversity and carbon, as it seeks actions aiming at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, including conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks. However, there are trade-offs between carbon and biodiversity outcomes that can occur locally and at wider spatial scales. "These trade-offs must be carefully considered in any decision made relative to REDD+ implementation", say scientists. A discussion on emerging key findings will be presented in the framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity meeting from 8 to 19 October 2012 in Hyderabad.

The new assessment is being carried out by a Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP), coordinated by the Vienna-based International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). With input of more than 50 leading scientists from around the world, it will constitute the first comprehensive analysis to date of the relationship between biodiversity, forest management and REDD+. It seeks to provide decision-makers with most up-to-date scientific information on how these complex relationships may be affected by management activities implemented to achieve REDD+ objectives.

Forests provide essential ecosystem services to people, such as food, fuel, fiber, and the regulation of climate and water. "Biodiversity is a key determinant of forests' ability to effectively provide these ecosystem services, notably carbon sequestration, and to remain resilient in the face of disturbances such as climate change", says John Parrotta, Chair of the Global Forest Expert Panel on Biodiversity, Forest Management, and REDD+. Crossing ecological thresholds in forests leads to the loss of these ecosystem services. REDD+ management activities should therefore stay within a defined 'safe operating space' to ensure the sustainable provision of ecosystem services.



*Returning from the buffer zone plantation with pine wood, animal fodder and bedding. Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda
(Adrian Martin)*

Considering social implications is crucial for successfully pursuing REDD+ implementation. "For example, poor recognition of tenure rights excludes disadvantaged groups in rural areas from decision making, and denies them access to potential economic benefits arising from REDD+ interventions", says Christoph Wildburger, Coordinator of the Global Forest Expert Panels: "Evidence suggests that pursuing social objectives such as securing tenure rights and local engagement alongside REDD+ will not only

make the process more equitable but will also support better environmental management and increase the likelihood of achieving carbon and biodiversity goals.“ REDD+ implementation can only be effective where tenure and property rights, including rights of access, use and ownership, are clearly defined.

Experts highlight the need for a landscape approach involving all relevant stakeholders to address and reconcile the many environmental, social and economic aspects relevant to REDD+ and to consider the various trade-offs. Moreover, impacts of REDD+ interventions are likely to vary significantly across different forest types and landscape conditions. The development of regionally tailored strategies for REDD+ therefore remains a major priority for future research.

A full report on the relationship between biodiversity, forest management and REDD+ will formally be presented on the occasion of the next UN climate convention (UNFCCC) meeting from 26 November to 7 December 2012 in Doha, Qatar.

“The topic of the analysis plays a major role in international deliberations on biodiversity, climate and forests, and we hope that the study will have an impact on the negotiations in the CBD here in Hyderabad as well as on the Climate Convention’s discussions in Doha“, says IUFRO Executive Director Alexander Buck.

The Global Forest Expert Panel assessment on “Biodiversity, Forest Management and REDD+“ was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the United States Forest Service, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety as part of its International Climate Initiative, through the Netherlands Development Organization SNV.

A discussion of this work will be presented during the CBD’s 11th Conference of the Parties on the occasion of “REDD+ Day“, organized by the Rio Conventions Pavilion, in Hyderabad on **Tuesday, 16 October, at 16:45 IST**. The event will take place in the Novotel Hotel, adjacent to the Hyderabad International Convention Centre.

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About the presenters:

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations ([IUFRO](#)) is the only world-wide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. Its members are research institutions, universities, and individual scientists as well as decision-making authorities and other stakeholders with a focus on forests and trees.

The IUFRO-led Global Forest Expert Panels ([GFEP](#)) initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) established the Expert Panel on Biodiversity, Forest Management, and REDD+ with the aim to provide a comprehensive assessment of scientific knowledge regarding the relationship between biodiversity, forest management, and REDD+.

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests ([CPF](#)) is a voluntary arrangement among 14 international organizations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests. Its mission is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. Global Forest Expert Panels are established under CPF initiative, led by IUFRO, in order to carry out comprehensive assessments of the state of scientific knowledge on forest-related issues.