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REDD in Bolivia

Bolivia is the fifth-largest country in South America after Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Peru; with 1,098,581km² (GOB 2010) it is approximately twice the size of France. It borders Brazil to the North and East, Paraguay and Argentina to the South and Chile and Peru to the West.

Bolivia can be divided into three main geographical areas (GOB 2010): (i) Andean, averaging over 3,000m above sea level, in the West (28% of the country’s area); (ii) Lowlands in the North and East (59% of the country); and (iii) Inter-Andean, the area of transition between the Lowlands and mountains with an average altitude of 2,500m above sea level (13% of the country).
According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Bolivia has the sixth-largest extension of tropical forest in the world - 58.7m ha in 2010 - with annual deforestation between 2005 and 2010 averaging 308,000 ha or 0.58 % per year (FAO 2010). Bolivia does not have a series of national standardised forest cover maps, however according to Government, Bolivia has significantly less forest, 45m ha at year-end 2011 (though this excludes the Chaco dry forest, which covered 7.4m ha in 2005 (KILEEN et al 2007)). According to Government, up to end 2011, accumulated deforestation totalled of 6.74m ha (ABT 2012) and the annual rate in 2012 was 204,294 ha or 0.45% (ABT-UMIG 2013).

The Plurinational State of Bolivia (Bolivia) was an early UN-REDD partner country but has publicly opposed REDD+ since 2010 for two main reasons: (i) Because it represented the commodification of nature; and (ii) because it was seen as a way for rich countries to evade their historic responsibility for climate change and need to reduce domestic emissions by transferring the burden of action to poorer countries (MORALES 2010). In 2012, Bolivia announced its alternative to REDD+, the Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism for Holistic and Sustainable Forest Management” (Mecanismo Conjunto de Mitigación y Adaptacion para el Manejo Integral y Sostenible de los Bosques de la Madre Tierra; MCMA).

Bolivia presents ideal conditions for REDD+: high forest cover, high deforestation rates and low opportunity costs to displace a significant proportion of that deforestation. There was therefore significant early interest internationally and domestically in Bolivia’s participation in REDD+. One of the first reduced emissions from deforestation projects worldwide was developed in Bolivia, the Noel Kempff Mercado project. Bolivia was part of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations when it proposed a market-based mechanism for forest conservation in 2005 and in 2008 Bolivia submitted an application for UN-REDD quick-start financing through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) (UN-REDD 2012).

Bolivia began to change its position on REDD in December 2008 with a letter from President Morales before COP 14 in Poznan that included an opposition to market-based solutions to climate change (MORALES 2008). This hardened to outright opposition to REDD after April 2010, when Bolivia hosted the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Tiquipaya. Bolivia wholeheartedly endorsed the conclusion of this conference to: “Condemn mercantilist mechanisms, such as the mechanism of REDD and their versions + and ++, which are violating the sovereignty of peoples and their right to free, prior and informed consent, as well as the sovereignty of National States, and violates the rights, usages and customs of peoples and the Rights of the Nature” (WPCCCRMT 2010). President Morales reiterated this position in October 2010 with a letter that he wrote to the world’s indigenous peoples, as well as in COP 16 (held in Cancun in November 2010) where of the 195 participating countries Bolivia was the only one not to sign the final declaration.

Nevertheless this political realignment took place against a background of continuing engagement with REDD+. In 2009 Bolivia submitted the first draft of its UN-REDD National Joint Programme Document (NJP). This was accepted in March 2010, with a funding allocation of US$4.7m (UNFCCC 2010). Bolivia signed the most recent version of its NJP in October 2010 and the first disbursement of US$1m was approved in January 2011. This period of ambiguity ended at the 7th UN-REDD policy board meeting in Berlin (held in October 2011) when Bolivia requested to amend the NJP to align it with its position on REDD+.

At COP 17 (held in Durban in December 2011), Bolivia presented an early version of its alternative to REDD+, the “Sustainable Life of the Forest” [19]” and as a result Decision 2/C.P. 17 para 67 includes non-market mechanisms as an alternative for REDD+ (UNFCCC 2011). Bolivia continued to develop its alternative mechanism and at the 8th Policy Board meeting (held in Berlin in March
2012), requested that the UN-REDD funds be redirected to support the MCMA.

The MCMA is based on the dual importance of forests in adaptation and mitigation and on the non-commodification of nature. It will allow territorial units of different sizes to voluntarily register “Holistic Forest and Soil Management Plans” that will include controlling un-planned deforestation in return for a range of conditional financial and non-financial benefits. The most recent public version dates from August 2012 and work is ongoing to define exactly how it will work in practice. The Ministry of Environment and Water aims for the MCMA to be operational from January 2014.

Bolivia is in the middle of a series of profound and ongoing political, economic and social reforms that began with President Evo Morales electoral win in 2005. These include a new Constitution in 2009 and the 2012 Framework Law of Mother Earth and Living Well (which created the MCMA). The new legislation emphasizes indigenous ways of thoughts, promotes resource nationalism and opposes the commodification of nature, including REDD+ but also of ecosystem services in general (the Framework Law uses the term “Environmental Functions” instead).

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Institutional arrangements

The Viceministry for Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Forest Management and Development (Viceministerio de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad, Cambios Climáticos y de Manejo y de Desarrollo Forestal; VMMABCC) of the Ministry of Environment and Water (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Agua; MMAyA) is responsible for formulating and implementing environmental policies at the national level, including climate change.

The 2012 Framework Law of Mother Earth and Holistic Development for Living Well created two new dedicated climate change institutions within the VMMABCC, but operationally independent from it: (i) the Plurinational Mother Earth Authority (Autoridad Plurinacional de la Madre Tierra; APMT), which replaces the National Climate Change Programme (Programa Nacional de Cambio Climático; PNCC); and (ii) the Plurinational Climate Change Fund (Fondo Plurinacional de Cambio Climático; FPMT). At the time of writing (December 2013), these are in the process of being established and the VMMABCC aims for them to be fully operational at the beginning of 2014.

The APMT will oversee the three new climate change mechanisms that were also created by the Framework Law of Mother Nature: (i) the Adaptation Mechanism; (ii) the Mitigation Mechanism (for non-forestry mitigation like energy and industry); and (iii) the Joint Mitigation and Adaptation
Mechanism (MCMA). This last is focused on the sustainable management of forests because of their importance to both climate change mitigation and adaptation and is Bolivia’s alternative to REDD+. The APMT will also administer the FPMT, whose key role is to obtain, administer and assign resources to support the three mechanisms.

The Forests and Lands Audit and Social Control Authority (Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra; ABT), is the State authority that regulates forest use, verifies compliance in the field and sanctions infractions. From the draft MCMA and ABT Resolution 250 of 2013 it is clear that communities will participate in the MCMA by preparing Forest and Land Holistic Management Plans (Plan de Gestión Integral de los Bosques y Tierra; PGIBT), which will include restrictions on deforestation. ABT will receive these plans and verify compliance giving the ABT will play a key role in supporting the implementation of the MCMA.

Communities themselves are another, arguably the most, important actor in Bolivian forest Management. Post 1996 many communities, particularly in the lowlands were given communal land title through the figure of Original Community Lands (Tierras Comunales de Origen; TCOs). Post 2006, these were changed to Indigenous Native Peasant Territories (TIOC) and additional TIOC have been created. The thrust of post-2006 legislation in terms of land and forests has been to give TIOC greater rights and responsibility to manage their land and natural resources holistically and sustainably. The intention of the MCMA is for communities to exercise collective control of their resources and for community members to hold each other to account. This is both a philosophy and a practical necessity, given that the ABT does not currently have the capacity that it would need to effectively control management at the property level.

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Stakeholder engagement and participation

The Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism (MCMA), Bolivia’s alternative to REDD+, is the result of a chain of legal and policy developments that followed Bolivia’s rejection of REDD+ in 2010 after the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples in Tiquipaya. At COP 17, held in 2011 in Durban, Bolivia presented the Sustainable Life of the Forest, a statement of five principles on what an alternative to REDD+ should look like. In August 2012, Bolivia published a draft of the MCMA and in October of the same year passed the Framework Law on Mother Nature and Holistic Development for Living Well, which created the MCMA. Each of these steps has had varying degrees of participation.

The Sustainable Life of the Forest was created participatory in five regional workshops held in Beni, Chuquisaca and Santa Cruz departments during June, July and October 2011 (MMAyA 2012). The Framework Law on Mother Nature and Holistic Development for Living Well was the result of two years consensus building between the five different social movements that formed the Unity Pact (Pacto de Unidad) in 2004 (highland indigenous, lowland indigenous, women, peasants and migrant peasants). The MCMA was not included in the version of the Framework Law originally agreed with the Unity Pact but the Ministry of Environment and Water (MMAyA) sought inputs from the same five social movements on an initial draft of the MCMA in a series of workshops in March 2012 (MMAyA 2012).

At the time of writing (December 2013), the Plurinational Mother Earth Authority (APMT) is in the process of finalising the details of how the MCMA will work in practice. In doing so the APMT is seeking inputs on issues like indicators from other actors but there has been no formal consultation...
process. An NGO, LIDEMA, took the initiative of organising a series of workshops to collect civil society views on the MCMA in October and November 2013.

There has not been a broad process of consultation with forest communities on the proposed MCMA, let alone a process of participative construction. This is a consequence partly of a lack of funds in the MMyA but mainly because of the TIPNIS conflict that erupted in 2011 over Government insistence to construct a road through the Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous Territory (Parque Nacional y Territorio Indígena Isiboro-Sécure; TIPNIS). The road would link Beni and Cochabamba departments and has been a hugely divisive issue in Bolivia. It is strongly opposed by lowland indigenous peoples, represented by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB), but is supported by coca-growing colonists (BIF 2011). The indigenous organisations that previously supported the Government felt betrayed causing them to leave the Unity Pact and split into pro and anti-government factions. The TIPNIS conflict derailed the planned consultations included in the UN-REDD programme and has made further widespread consultations difficult. That said, the MCMA is designed to devolve responsibility for forest management to communities; they may not have been consulted on the design of the MCMA but the MCMA will give them a large degree of autonomy to decide how to manage the areas they live in.

In March 2013, Bolivia passed the Participation and Social Control Law. This Law classifies social actors into three categories (Art. 7): (i) organic, including neighbourhood associations and unions; (ii) community including indigenous, afro-Bolivian and peasant communities; and (iii) circumstantial, that are set up for a specific reason and later stop operating. The law is intended to give these actors the ability to supervise all public activity (including environmental institutions and policies).

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**Land tenure arrangements and carbon rights**

Land tenure has evolved very differently in the highlands and lowlands. The highlands have historically been more heavily populated and the majority of the early haciendas or latifundia were founded here. The Revolution of 1953 that followed it was therefore also focused in the highlands and the lowlands were less affected by the agrarian reform that followed it. In the highlands, land was titled in small individual parcels under the slogan that “land belongs to those that work it”. With time these parcels have often degraded through overuse and have been subdivided by inheritance to the point where they can no longer support a family, forming minifundia.

The lowlands are home to 36 different indigenous peoples (LA RAZON 2013b). With the notable exceptions of: (i) the late 19th century boom in rubber (which resulted in Bolivia selling what is now the State of Acre to Brazil in 1903), and (ii) the Chaco war of 1932-1935, in which Bolivia sustained 60,000 dead and lost much of the Great Chaco region to Paraguay, the lowlands were essentially ignored at the national level until the 1950s. This changed with “March to the West” announced after the agrarian reform. Government actively encouraged foreign colonisation, drawing Mennonite, Japanese, and Russian Orthodox communities. A new road from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz was completed in 1960 (VARGAS et al 2012), opening the lowlands to development.

Agrarian reform had such widespread support that all the governments from 1953 to the present day have formally subscribed to it (INRA 2008). However Governments mainly paid it only lip service. Land was titled haphazardly (without a centralised registry and often overlapping) and used to favour political allies. The military dictatorships that governed between 1964 and 1982 in particular used the agrarian reform as a fig-leaf to title huge extensions of the lowlands to their friends.
(ACHTENBURG 2013). Of the 57m Ha titled between 1953 and 1992, 70% was granted to large and medium landowners (INRA 2008), leading to social unrest and to large marches organised by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB), which represents the lowland indigenous peoples. Their marches in the early 1990s were key in extracting neoliberal reformist legislation passed between 1994-1996. This included the 1996 INRA law that renewed the agrarian reform and recognised indigenous collective territories for the first time through the figure of Original Community Territories (Territorios Comunitarios de Origen; TCOs). The pace of saneamiento (regularisation and delimiting) and titling picked up after 1996 but the 9.3m Ha titled between 1996 and 2005 (INRA 2013) was still much lower than promised. Resulting popular discontent helped bring Evo Morales to power in 2006.

The results under President Morales have been impressive: 55.4m Ha were titled between 2006 and 2012 (INRA 2013), more than five times the amount titled in the previous ten years. The composition of land ownership has also changed beyond recognition. In 1950 4.5% of landowners held 70% of rural property (TITO 2013). At year-end 2012, approximately 23.2m Ha of land had been titled to communities through the figure of Original Indigenous Native Peasant Territories (Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino; TIOC), which replaced TCOs post-2006. Of these 13.2m Ha are in the lowlands and 10.1m Ha in the highlands. The State holds title to another 23.3m Ha, known as tierras fiscales. Smallholders own 13.8m Ha while large and medium businesses own 4.4m Ha. 60.6% of the country has been regularised and titled, titling is underway in 9.4% of the country and has not begun or is paralysed in 29.9% (INRA 2013). Though great progress has been made, expectations were even higher: Government’s target was to complete the entire country by November 2013 (TITO 2013).

The 1953 Agrarian Reform Law created different categories of rural land ownership. With some modifications made by the 1996 INRA Law and the 2009 Constitution these are still applicable (INRA 2012). There are three types of property classified by the area they occupy (the limits depend on the region): (i) Small, for the personal use of the peasant family; (ii) Medium, commercial enterprises directed at sale of produce; and (iii) Agribusiness. Additionally there are three further kinds of property that, like Small properties, may not be subdivided, sold or seized: (iv) Peasant Homesteads (Solar Campesino), for the subsistence of peasant families; (v) Communal Properties (Propiedades Comunales), titled to communities for their subsistence; and (vi) TIOC, a figure created to replace the TCO, thereby opening up the category to non-indigenous peasant communities.

Under the Agrarian Reform Service Law, property rights themselves are contingent on the land fulfilling either a Social Purpose (FS) or a Socioeconomic Purpose (FES). Land that does not fulfil either of these will revert to the State, a provision designed to combat large private landholdings or latifundia. Since 2006, the Government has begun procedures to revert approximately 300,000 Ha (INRA 2013). A separate question in the 2009 Constitutional referendum was to set the maximum size of land holding. 85% of respondents voted for 5,000 Ha instead of 10,000 Ha, the other option. This is not retro-active; pre-existing larger landholdings were not affected.

The requirement that land fulfil a FES has had the perverse effect of driving deforestation; deforestation has been the most common way to show that land is fulfilling a FES. The 2007 Communitarian Re-organisation of the Agrarian Reform Law clarified that standing forest could fulfil a FES but in practice Government continued to apply a formula that includes head of cattle and area under pasture to determine whether land is or is not fulfilling a FES (INESAD 2013).

The Constitution stipulates that natural resources (including forests) belong to the State but the State will grant and respect individual and collective property over land and natural resources (specifically excluding hydrocarbons and water, which are referred to as “strategic resources”). It also obliges the State to distribute State land to landless peasants. Of the 23.3m Ha titled as State
property, 17.1m Ha are not eligible to be distributed since they are protected areas or forestry concessions that have not yet been cancelled. Of the 6.2m Ha eligible to be distributed to peasants, Government has so far distributed 1.5m Ha (INRA 2013).

There are two main types of forest protection in Bolivia: (i) Permanent Forest Production Lands (Tierras de Producción Forestal Permanente; TPFP). Supreme Decree of 2001 declared 41m Ha of forest as TPFP in 2001, meaning that they should not be converted to another use; and (ii) Protected Areas. Bolivia’s National Protected Areas System (Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas; SNAP) is made up of 49 National and Departmental Protected Areas. Of these, 22 are National Protected Areas, covering a total of 17m Ha. or 15.5% of the country Additionally Bolivia has 27 Departmental and an unknown number of Municipal Protected Areas. The exact extension of these is unknown, but Bolivia estimates it at a further 7% of the country, meaning that approximately 22.5% of the country is protected (SERNAP 2013).

A 2009 study gave the following breakdown of forest ownership: (i) State owned, 23.7m Ha including 12.7m Ha of Protected Areas and 11m for sustainable use (mainly concessions); (ii) private, 14m Ha; (iii) TCO, 13.4m Ha; and (iv) community property, 3.9m Ha (VARGAS & OSINAGA 2009). Many TCOs overlap entirely or partially with Protected Areas (RIASCOS 2008). More up-to-date figures specifically relating to forestry ownership are unavailable but the significant changes will be an increase in the areas owned by TIOCs and the State, and an increase in community management of State-owned TPFP (ABT 2011).

Under the Constitution forests belong to the State, but the State will respect private property rights over them (Art. 349). Rights to carbon are not specifically covered in Bolivian legislation.

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Forest management

The principle Government institution in forest management is the Forest and Lands Audit and Social Control Authority (Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra; ABT). It issues forestry concessions, approves and monitors Forestry Management Plans (Planes Generales de Manejo Forestal; PGMF), monitors harvest levels, issues logging and land clearing permits and controls illegal logging and forest fires. The National Protected Areas Service (Servicio Nacional de Areas Protegidas; SERNAP) has jurisdiction over the approximately 12.7m Ha of forests found within national Protected Areas.

Up until the Morales Government the model of development favoured private forestry concessions. Between 1972 and 1996 only private businesses could make commercial use of forests; 50 families operated concessions over 22m Ha (CONTRERAS & VARGAS cited in VARGAS & OSINAGA 2009). The 1996 Forestry Law (still in force) continued to prefer private concessions but also created the figure of Local Forestry Associations (Agrupaciones Sociales de Lugar; ASL) to licence previously illegal loggers to extract wood from Municipally owned forests (VARGAS & OSINAGA 2009).

The 1996 Forest Law requires owners of forests to prepare PGMF every five years and file annual plans for timber harvesting. Even partial compliance with the law made Bolivia a world leader in sustainable forest management, at least on paper (inspections carried out by ABT in 2011 found a myriad of irregularities). In 2005 Bolivia had a total of approximately 8.9m Ha with management plans in place. Of these 77% were private plans or concessions and 18% were communal, ASL or Original Community Territories (TCOs).
Since 2006 the tendency has been to reduce commercial concessions and to increase the area under management by communities. The most recent statistics (at November 2013) show that the area under management is similar at 9.8m Ha but that private and concession management has reduced to 52% while communal, TCO or ASL management has increased to 44% (ABT 2013c). However, even accounting for the overlap between Permanent Forest Production Lands (Tierras de Producción Forestal Permanente; TFPF) and Protected Areas, this means that at least half of the 41m of TFPF (which should not be converted) do not have any management plans in place. The amount of forest under community management will increase; the Constitution mandates titling State owned land (including non protected area forests) to communities and SERNAP can permit communities to make holistic and sustainable use of Protected Areas. In many cases private companies have signed agreements with communities to exploit their forests, this means that private participation in forest management might be higher than it appears.

ABT Resolution 250 of 2013 creates the new figure of Forest and Land Holistic Management Plans (Plan de Gestión Integral de los Bosques y Tierra; PGIBT). PGIBT are comprehensive documents that set out a community's decisions relating to the use of their land and natural resources (in accordance with zoning and resource laws) integrated with the productive activities they intend to carry out and with commitments around rates of deforestation, controlling fires and restoring degraded ecosystems. This concept is also mentioned in the draft MCMA and ABT Resolution 250 of 2013 makes it clear that the PGIBT will be the means by which communities participate in the MCMA. Communities wishing to participate in the MCMA will file their PGIBT with the ABT, which will pass it on to the Plurinational Mother Earth Authority (Autoridad Plurinacional de la Madre Tierra; APMT). If the APMT approves it, the community will be eligible to receive the benefits offered by the MCMA, provided that they meet the environmental commitments made in the PGIBT and imposed by law.

Deforestation not explicitly permitted by a PGMF or logging plan has long been illegal in Bolivia, under the 1994 Constitution, the 1996 Forestry Law and the 1996 INRA Law (LIDEMA 2013). The post 2006 legislation continues this prohibition including the 2009 Constitution, which classifies damage to natural resources as treason. Nevertheless in 2013 Bolivia passed Law 337 for the Support of Food Production and Forest Restitution, which effectively gave an amnesty for all illegal deforestation between 2006 and 2011 in exchange for a minimal fine and the commitment to reforest 10% of the area felled. According to the Chamber of Agriculture, this legalised 5m Ha belonging to 25,000 property owners (LA RAZON 2013). The size of the area illegally deforested, however, means that the reforestation commitment represents an important opportunity. Approximately 50m trees will need to be planted, cattle ranching associations are looking to take advantage of this to implement improved practices including silvo pastoral systems, while the ABT is looking create forest connectivity. At the time of writing (December 2013), WWF is working with ABT to help it develop a land and forest monitoring system, ideally integrating land tenure and titling.

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**Reference levels**

Bolivia has not established a reference level to predict future levels of deforestation. The 2010 UN-REDD National Joint Programme document identified this as a key outstanding task (GOB 2010), however Bolivia subsequently rejected REDD+ and carbon markets. Bolivia’s alternative to REDD+, the Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism (MCMA) is focused on local holistic land
management and therefore does not require a national reference level, much less one linked to carbon. Nevertheless, Bolivia is working on improving its forest measurement capacity. The Forest and Lands Audit and Social Control Authority (Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques; ABT) has reinforced its Geospatial Monitoring Unit (Unidad de Monitoreo Geospatial; UMIG). The UMIG produced a national forest cover map for 2011 based on Landsat images and is currently (at December 2013) working on maps for 2012 and 2013 (ABT 2013a).

Bolivia has also manifested that it is willing to report on the carbon results of the MCMA in return for ex-ante international financing. The work plan with FAO under the modified UN-REDD programme includes work on forest inventory and the application of IPCC factors.

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MRV

The State institution responsible for forest monitoring is the Forest and Lands Audit and Social Control Authority (Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques; ABT), which replaced the Forestry Superintendency (Superintendencia Forestal) in 2009. Until recently, however, the organisations with most forest monitoring capacity were those that acquired it through their involvement in the Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project, one of the world’s first avoided emissions from deforestation projects. These are: (i) Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN); (ii) Noel Kempff Mercado Natural History Museum (MHNKM), which is attached to the René Gabriel Moreno University; and (iii) Conservation International.

During 2012, the ABT has strengthened its Geospatial Monitoring Unit (Unidad de Monitoreo Geospatial; UMIG). In 2012, UMIG produced a national forest cover map for 2011 based on Landsat images and is currently (at December 2013) working on maps for 2012 and 2013 (ABT 2013a). The ABT is also considering incorporating other data sources like IKONOS (which has a 3m resolution and is already used by Bolivia to monitor coca cultivations). It is also in negotiations with Venezuela to use images from its Miranda satellite.

The Bolivian Forestry Institute (Instituto Boliviano Forestal; IBIF) is participating in the European Union’s Role of Biodiversity in Climate Change Mitigation (ROBIN) programme, working on indicators for biodiversity monitoring. IBIF has also digitised all the Forest Management Plans in the country and used the resulting data to prepare a national map of carbon density. At the time of writing (December 2013) this is the nearest Bolivia currently has to a forest inventory.

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Safeguards

Since Bolivia is not participating in REDD+ it is not working on a safeguards system as such. Bolivia has ratified ILO Convention 169 (in 1991) and voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Several of these principles are incorporated in the Constitution of 2009, which recognises (Art. 30) the right to: collective titling of territory, auto determination and free, prior and informed consent.

The dispute over the construction of a road through the Isiboro Secure National Park and
Indigenous Territory (Parque Nacional y Territorio Indígena Isiboro-Sécure; TIPNIS) in the face of strong indigenous opposition, however, has raised questions over the Governments commitment to indigenous prior and informed consent. Some commentators argue that as a Government that came to power backed by social movements, it tries to internalise them and is thus intolerant of external dissent (ZUAZO 2010).

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**Gender Equality**

Bolivia has a long history of gender-specific policies. In 1997, Bolivia adopted a Decree on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (Decreto Supremo No 24864), which seeks to mainstream gender issues into public policy, as well as political, economic, social and cultural arenas. A National Gender Equity Plan was in place from 2001-2003, and in 2009 the Women’s Coordinator, a network of civil society organizations and the private sector, collaborated with the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to identify gender gaps in existing legislation.

Bolivia has adopted a National Development Plan 2010-2015, which places an emphasis on eradicating inequalities between women and men. Additionally, a National Biodiversity Plan (2001) identified a number of women’s organisations that deal with biodiversity and women’s empowerment, namely Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Barolina Sisa, Central de Mujeres Indígenas del Beni and Tinku de Mujeres. The Regulation for Forest Certification (2014) (Reglamentación para la Implementación del Sistema Boliviano de Certificación de Bosques e Incentivos – SBCBI) states that certification requires equality of women and men in terms of development, access to forest products and monetary and non-monetary benefits (Article 5.4) (La Cámara Forestal de Bolivia, 2014).

However, Bolivia’s 1996 Forestry Law (Ley Forestal) and the Forest Policy of 2008 (Política Nacional para la Gestión Integral de los Bosques) do not explicitly mention any gender-related issues. For example, the 2008 policy pledges to integrate the considerations of all stakeholders into forest management, but there is no specific mention of the need for gender equality.

A new Constitution entered into force in 2009, in which fundamental freedoms to women and gender equality are enshrined (Articles 15, 26, 45, 48, 210, 300, and 302). In 2012, the Framework Law of Mother Earth and Living Well came into force, which assures equitable sharing of monetary benefits to women (Article 28). Furthermore, the Constitution (Article 402) and the legislative framework stipulates equal access to land between men and women. The 1996 Land Reform Act secures favourable allocation and tenure of land for women, and women may put their name on a proprietary deed where land is jointly held (Article 3.5).

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