HONEST ENGAGEMENT

TRANSPARENCY AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN REDD

Transparency and civil society participation build trust. Almost all previous attempts to reform the forest sector have failed when these basic principles have been ignored in decision-making. People who feel they have been part of making the rules are more likely to live by them. If a transparent and dynamic relationship can be created between citizen and government it will be the glue that keeps REDD together. But the negotiations are moving so fast and are so complex that the vast majority of people whose lives will be directly affected by REDD are being left behind, while civil society groups new to the climate change negotiations have had to move into high gear just to catch up. Enhancing transparency and understanding of the process, and ensuring broad engagement of civil society organisations and indigenous groups, must move to the top of the agenda if REDD is to avoid failure. These groups know the challenges on the ground. They should be sitting at the negotiating table, not standing at the door of closed sessions.

Introduction

Whatever the final outcome of negotiations at the UNFCCC relating to REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries), the one certainty is that vast revenue flows will be generated for forest-rich nations. Past experience in the oil, mineral and forest sectors has shown the potential for natural resource wealth to result in perverse outcomes, including corruption, poor governance, exacerbation of poverty and even conflict, commonly known as the Resource Curse. Various international mechanisms have been created to address these problems by enhancing resource-revenue transparency, improving governance and targeting illegality - all with an emphasis on full stakeholder participation. This paper highlights some of these mechanisms. The lessons to be learned from them will be invaluable in creating the governance and monitoring systems necessary to ensure that REDD revenues reach their destinations and achieve genuine, sustainable emissions reductions.

Rights holders and stakeholders – how many people are affected by REDD?

Forest-dependent people are more than just stakeholders, they are rights holders. It has been estimated that around 60 million indigenous peoples live in the rainforests of Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, but many more people in developing countries are directly dependent on natural forests for their livelihood.

So just how many people are affected by REDD? A literature review conducted by Global Witness found that 30% of the population in 17 countries participating in UN and World Bank REDD “readiness” programmes, with a total population of around 670 million, can be described as forest-dependent. In participant countries from Africa, the proportion rises to 50 - 60%. Taking a conservative view of the figures, more than 250 million people, or one quarter of the total population in REDD pilot countries are dependent in some way on the forests for their livelihoods.

The legal basis for ownership of and access to forests and their products and services (of which climate mitigation is only one) is typically complex, confused, incomplete and biased. It is widely recognised that resolving this thorny but fundamental issue needs to be an essential element of any REDD strategy. Nevertheless, the uncertainty surrounding tenure and access should not prevent forest-dependent peoples being recognised as rights holders in the negotiating process. The process must also accommodate a diverse NGO community encompassing a broad range of expertise, knowledge and positions on forests and climate change. Many are newcomers to the UNFCCC and not all are members of CAN (the Climate Action Network recognised as the ‘NGO voice’ in the negotiations). Climate negotiators and the UNFCCC Secretariat must recognise that REDD involves a wider community than they have dealt with to date – a diverse community of rights holders and stakeholders in forests who must be fully engaged.

An empty seat….. Is this honest engagement?

Photo © Global Witness
Minimum Requirements

To ensure a transparent and participatory REDD process aimed at promoting good governance, we believe that the minimum requirements must be:

**During negotiations**

- Broad, effective and meaningful participation of civil society, including representatives of local communities and indigenous groups, from the top down and bottom up.
- An open and clear negotiating process in the UNFCCC. All REDD negotiations should be open to all observers. More effort should be made by the UNFCCC Secretariat to ensure that the process is accessible by newcomers, and that the supporting documentation is more accessible for everyone (e.g. by improving the website).
- Representative engagement of civil society, including local communities and indigenous groups, in other relevant international processes such as the World Bank FCPF and UN-REDD.
- A review of existing international mechanisms to promote transparency, public accountability and good governance in the management of natural resources, such as EITI and EU-FLEGT, with a view to identifying best practices and applying them to the negotiation and implementation of REDD.
- The creation of national REDD multi-stakeholder groups comprised of democratically elected representatives of all interested parties to participate in national consultations.
- The establishment of guidelines for national REDD consultation.
- Capacity building for civil society organisations, local communities and indigenous groups to enable them to engage meaningfully in REDD negotiations at national and international level and prevent hijacking of the process by political elites and vested interests (e.g. the industrial scale logging industry and agro-business).

**During implementation**

- The involvement of national multi-stakeholder groups at all levels of implementation, including the establishment of schemes aimed at creating public accountability and transparency in the management of natural resources, such as independent forest monitoring (IFM; see Global Witness briefing on IFM and REDD) and in the implementation of payments for environmental services schemes, including REDD.
- A review of all forest-related laws to identify weaknesses and social and environmental injustices and, where necessary, support legislative and policy reform to strengthen social and environmental standards and participation in decision-making; and to rebalance forest management so it provides co-benefits for forests, people and biodiversity.
- A review of financial systems and their implementation in order to determine the reforms needed to ensure the equitable distribution of REDD revenue.
- The establishment of a mechanism similar to the EITI to ensure transparency, independent oversight and public accountability in the distribution of REDD revenues. There must be clear rules of procedure; a requirement that REDD countries participate in the mechanism (it cannot be voluntary); and monitoring of compliance.
- The establishment of participatory land use planning/zoning to ensure effective management and sustainable use of natural resources based on: strengthening land tenure and access rights for local communities and indigenous peoples; protecting sites of high ecological, cultural and social value; and transparent and public allocation of forest management permits including those related to REDD.

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**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Climate Action Network</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>EITI</td>
<td>Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU FLEGT</td>
<td>European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCFA</td>
<td>Franc de la Communauté Française d’Afrique</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>(UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<td>FCPF</td>
<td>Forest Carbon Partnership Facility</td>
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<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWYP</td>
<td>Publish What You Pay (NGO coalition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>REDD</td>
<td>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN-REDD</td>
<td>Joint programme of FAO, UNDP and UNEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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Putting REDD at risk

The stakes in REDD are high and the negotiations complex, making civil society participation all the more critical. And events are moving so fast that people who are directly affected are being left behind while NGOs are scrambling to keep up. The UNFCCC process does not help. An exclusive club of climate experts, it fails to foster genuine and constructive NGO engagement, resorting all too often to closed sessions. The UNFCCC website, the world’s window on the process, is arguably the worst among environmental conventions. In the headlong rush to seal a REDD deal in Copenhagen in December 2009, no consideration is being paid to making the UNFCCC process more open, accessible, transparent and participatory. In neglecting this, negotiators and the Secretariat are putting REDD, indeed the whole climate negotiations, at risk.

An analysis of several public consultation processes conducted to inform the negotiations of agreements (VPAs) between the EU and timber producing countries revealed numerous flaws that can jeopardise the outcome, providing lessons for REDD. They include:

- limited trust and conflicts of interest
- uneven bargaining power between interest groups
- poor planning and insufficient knowledge sharing
- lip service paid to participation
- lack of political will among government and policy makers fearing loss of power or influence
- limited resources for a genuine consultation process
- hijacking by powerful interests (e.g. political elites and the timber industry)
- poor facilitation and biased chairing
- inaccurate and distorted records of inputs to the process by rights holders and interest groups
- lack of adequate translation into languages and formats that are understandable to participants, including marginalised groups
- lack of clarity on how recommendations by rights holders and stakeholders will affect the final outcome.

REDD negotiators have a responsibility to heed these lessons or risk a flawed or even perverse outcome.

"There have been countless occasions where environmental or social NGOs or indigenous peoples’ organisations have participated in official and public consultation processes and subsequently found that their participation was used to legitimise the process with few or none of their concerns being addressed."

The World Bank FCPF - how not to do it?

Two “readiness” schemes are underway to prepare countries for REDD – the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), with $300 million available for participating countries, and UN-REDD, a joint programme of FAO, UNDP and UNEP. To date, UN-REDD has proved to be the more transparent and inclusive of the two programmes, inviting a range of stakeholders to its first meeting in September 2008 and providing for web-based comment on its roadmap for REDD monitoring and verification. The FCPF process, in contrast, has been characterised by its opacity and lack of opportunities for meaningful consultation.

The World Bank launched the FCPF in Bali in December 2007, ignoring widespread controversy and a request to delay the process pending public consultation. Instead it forged ahead with approving ‘Readiness Plan Idea Notes’ (R-PINs) for countries willing to participate, based on an application process that appears to be little more than a formality. Many of the approved R-PINs received low overall scores from an external Technical Advisory Panel that raised serious questions about ownership of the proposals by governments and stakeholders. The majority of the R-PINs were written and financed in part by big international NGOs or consulting firms with close ties to the timber industry. In many cases, there was little or no consultation with forest-dependent peoples or the wider NGO community; moreover, R-PINs were not made publicly available until after the selection process. Nevertheless, 25 out of 28 R-PINs have been approved with a final selection round scheduled for March 2009. Approved countries will receive a grant to finance the development of ‘Readiness Plans’ (R-Plans), or more detailed national strategies for REDD.

Forest Carbon Partnership Fairytale

In early 2008, the Bank came under fire for its “near-total lack of consultation with the peoples most likely to be directly affected”. Since then, consultation with indigenous groups has been prioritized and some funds are being made available for REDD capacity building among indigenous peoples. The R-Plan process requires the design of a ‘Consultation and Outreach Plan’ and is now subject to Bank operational safeguards. However, serious doubts remain about whether these retroactively negotiated measures represent good faith efforts by the World Bank and participating governments, and if they will pave the way for a genuinely inclusive and transparent process.
The governance of billions

Billions of dollars are expected to flow through REDD every year. However, most of the 27 countries selected to receive funding from the FCPF and UN-REDD face serious challenges with corruption and government accountability. According to a survey of governance indicators in 212 countries conducted by the World Bank, around 80% of FCPF and UN-REDD countries rank in the bottom half of those surveyed, while nearly 30% are in the lowest quarter. In other words, they are among the most corrupt countries in the world.

80% of countries selected for REDD “readiness” programmes rank in the bottom half of a World Bank survey of governance indicators in 212 countries, indicating serious problems with corruption and failures in governance. Nearly 30% are in the lowest quarter.

Preventing misappropriation of REDD revenue and ensuring its equitable distribution in countries with such serious governance problems will be a major challenge. Civil society’s role will be critical in achieving the reforms necessary. Many resource-rich developing countries have derived substantial revenues from the forest and mining sectors, but through poor governance the money has failed to benefit local people, reduce poverty or protect forests. In Cameroon, taxation of the timber industry was decentralised to enable redistribution of revenue to local councils and communities living near timber concessions. But in the absence of financial governance the revenue was captured by the elite. Billions of FCFA (worth millions of dollars) were stolen. A few corrupt officials were recently arrested, but trials are being obstructed and communities are still waiting for their money. Similar failures in revenue distribution are evident in other countries, notably DRC, Gabon, Ghana and Papua New Guinea.

Strengthening financial governance will be essential to REDD. Watertight mechanisms to ensure transparency, independent oversight and public accountability, combined where necessary with legislative, institutional and fiscal reforms, will be required in beneficiary countries. Otherwise the impact of REDD on forest protection and poverty alleviation, and ultimately on reducing emissions, is likely to be minimal.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) has developed systems that could be adapted for REDD.

The EITI – how to do it?

Extractive industries are about money. The revenues created are enormous and mismanagement of potential windfalls is a real danger. Consequently, there is widespread agreement on the need for transparency and independent oversight.

The EITI is a coalition of governments, companies, civil society, investors and international organizations which aims to strengthen governance by improving transparency and accountability in the extractives sector (oil, gas and minerals). To date, 23 countries have signed up, many of them REDD candidates. To achieve its objectives, the coalition has developed methodology for monitoring and reconciling company payments and government revenues. Civil society participation, not just consultation, was a feature from the outset. This proved important in setting the tone for a constructive relationship.

Implementation takes place at national level, with the EITI Board and International Secretariat overseeing the process. Civil society groups participate directly (they have a seat on the Board) and through ‘Publish What You Pay’ (PWYP), a coalition of over 350 NGOs in 50 countries. There is a process of self-selection and representation from amongst the NGO community through PWYP, preventing governments from hand-picking participant NGOs.

EITI Validation

To achieve EITI compliant status a country must complete an EITI Validation. Validation is an essential element of the EITI global standard, providing an independent assessment of the progress achieved, and identifying the measures needed to strengthen the EITI process. It is carried out by an independent Validator selected and overseen by the multi-stakeholder group using methodology set out in the EITI Validation Guide.

Once a country is compliant it must undergo validation at least every 5 years, or on request from the Board.

Multi-stakeholder participation in the EITI

- Civil society groups from the South (where most resources are) and the North (where most investment comes from) have a seat on the EITI Board along with implementing country governments, extractive companies, investors, and supporting country governments.
- A candidate country must commit to working with all stakeholders. A national multi-stakeholder group must be established, and a work plan published, documenting how the country intends to achieve EITI compliance. The plan must be discussed with, and agreed by, key stakeholders.
- Civil society must play an active role in the process, both operationally and in policy terms, independent of other stakeholders; must continue to monitor and evaluate the process after its inception; and must be free to voice its independent opinion without fear of reprisals.
- The government must address capacity constraints of civil society organisations and be seen to help and communicate with civil society and other stakeholders through regular meetings and media outreach.
- The multi-stakeholder group selects the independent Validator and oversees the Validation Process.
The lessons learnt so far from the VPA negotiation processes show that without the active participation of civil society through skilled representatives with adequate resources the principle objective of improving governance and securing forests through international agreements will fail.

Peru – a chance for success

In Peru, a bottom-up process of engagement and capacity building has begun, spearheaded by NGOs working with local and regional governments. In October 2008, a workshop was organized by the regional government of San Martin and the Peruvian REDD Group to strengthen capacity with respect to REDD of local and regional authorities, civil society, project managers, and other actors involved in forest issues. Outcomes of the workshop included a roadmap, the proposed establishment of regional roundtables across the country with active involvement of local government, and the Tarapoto Declaration.

Tarapoto Declaration, October 2008

“It is necessary to construct – with the most comprehensive participation of the public and private sectors, the civil society and other interested stakeholders – a national stand regarding the deforestation problem, its effects on climate change and REDD’s implementation mechanisms in the country, which can be presented in the international negotiation processes our country participates in.”

“Priority is to be given to the participation of local communities as of the early stages of the design of REDD activities and it is to be kept throughout the project implementation process, emphasizing their participation in the monitoring activities.”

Although the World Bank’s external review of Peru’s R-PIN notes that consultation by the central government was not widespread, preliminary input was at least obtained from national representatives of local communities while key stakeholders from industry, indigenous groups, NGOs and research organizations in 60% of the country’s regions were informed about opportunities presented by REDD.

On the evidence of this and the Tarapoto workshop, it appears that multi-stakeholder engagement is being built from the ground up – and with it a chance that REDD may succeed in Peru.
Papua New Guinea – a recipe for failure

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is one of the prime movers behind REDD, but it stands out as following a starkly different path from Peru.

The World Bank external review of PNG’s R-PIN states: “There was no consultation process organized in the preparation of the R-PIN, neither forest owners, NGOs nor private sector representatives have been involved in the preparation of the R-PIN...Over 80% of the population of Papua New Guinea is still directly dependent on the local environment for their subsistence and livelihoods.”

On 17 October 2008, a Public Notice “To NGO’s, and Carbon Brokers” from the PNG government’s Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade appeared in the daily Post-Courier, sending shock waves through civil society.

The harshly worded Notice, authorised by the Executive Director of the Office of Climate Change in Port Moresby, Dr Theo Yasause, warned that NGOs and carbon traders will be prosecuted if they start developing REDD activities without written permission. In asserting its authority over all transactions involving forest carbon, even on private land, the government’s move has effectively blocked landowners from signing private deals with carbon traders.

Although the Notice claimed that the Office will “undertake a consultative process with all stakeholders”, its actions to date afford little faith that the government is willing to engage on any level in a meaningful consultative process with civil society or any other stakeholders – and bodes ill for the future of REDD implementation in PNG.

In November 2008, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reported on what now appears to be a growing conflict between the PNG government and landowners who fear they will receive no revenue from REDD. Theo Yasause is quoted as saying “The state has absolute control over the resources. Once you sign up landowners, it doesn't give you the legitimacy, only the state has the legitimate authority... We want to deal directly with credible businesses traders who want to do business with the office and the people of Papua New Guinea.”

Ken Mondiai, a spokesman for several NGOs working on behalf of private landholders, told ABC that landowners have little faith the government will handle the carbon market fairly or transparently. He is quoted as saying that “The Government of Papua New Guinea has failed terribly in the forestry sector, the oil and gas sector. There is no equitable distribution of benefits coming from these resource developments and so at this early point in time, when the office of climate change is not fully set up even himself, I don't know where he understands climate change and carbon trade (sic).”

PNG currently ranks 151 out of 180 on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, and has been moving steadily downwards since the index was first launched.
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON TRADE
PUBLIC NOTICE
TO NGO’s, AND CARBON BROKERS

It has come to this office’s knowledge that certain NGO’s are organizing seminars, workshops and discussions on payment systems for environmental services, including payments for reducing deforestation and degradation (REDD).

There has not been any consultation process between NGO groups and the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade in the development of this proposal.

The Office is currently having consultation with World Bank, UNDP, FAO and AusAid to develop policies and institutional arrangements including the development of guidelines for the payment system. Any system and process not recognized by the World Bank and UN system maybe contrary to our efforts.

It appears that there are endless groups of NGO’s and Carbon Traders coming to PNG with ideas on REDD and proposal for benefit sharing. This dynamic is not constructive for either the government or the rural communities.

The Office is developing a Policy Paper in consultation with the World Bank, UNDP and other development partners to propose the payment system for sharing the benefits from Carbon Trading. The Office will undertake a consultative process with all stakeholders in the design and implementation of this system including its institutional arrangements.

It would be in the interest of parties, NGO’s, and Carbon Trade Brokers to register with the Office of Climate Change and without specific written authority from the Office, no REDD carbon trading credits will receive legal recognition from the government. The government will regulate all activities dealing with REDD and co-activities.

REDD activities are part of PNG’s climate change strategy guided by the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

I seek your support and cooperation on the matter.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON TRADE
PUBLIC NOTICE

This is a general notice to inform all landowner groups and interested stakeholders in PNG that the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade:-

- Wishes to advise the public to be aware of imposters posing to be Officers or employee representatives of the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade in order to acquire monies from landowners.
- Currently does not have any Officers or employee representative working in other Provincial centres.
- Currently has no established office outside Port Moresby. The Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade is located at Gabaka Street Gordons, Port Moresby, National Capital District.
- Any matter regarding Climate Change and Carbon Trading is ONLY to be dealt with by the Head Office in Port Moresby with the authority of the Executive Director.
- All Brokers and Facilitators will first get registered with the Office to facilitate ther involvement.

Imposters beware if caught you will be prosecuted

Any queries, please contact our Office on telephone number: 3239444 and Fax: 3237248

Authorized by Dr Theo Yasaus
Executive Director

P.O Box 854, WAGANI, National Capital District Phone: (675) 323 9444 Fax: (675) 323 7248
References

1. Recently described as REDD+ (i.e. including conservation and sustainable forest management) by C. Loisel in ‘Linkage between forest-based mitigation and GHG markets’, Idées pour le Débat, IDDR, No 19/2008; www.iddri.org/Publications/Collectins/Idees-pour-le-debat/id_0819_loisel_linkage-forest-based-ghg-markets.pdf
4. The Bali Action Plan on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.13) was agreed in December 2007 and anticipates a global climate deal, of which REDD will be a part, at the 15th Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in December 2009.
6. NGO Statement on the World Bank’s proposed Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, November 2007; wbcarbonfinance.org/docs/NGO_Statement.pdf
9. Nicholas Stern, ‘The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review’, 2007; 62.164.176.164/stern_review_final_report.htm. The Stern Review estimates the opportunity cost of forest protection in 8 countries responsible for 70 per cent of emissions from land use would initially be around US$5 billion. Other estimates put total annual costs at $20 billion or more (for example, see www.ucusa.org/assets/documents/clean_energy/Briefing-1-REDD-costs.pdf)
10. The World Bank World Governance Indicators are aggregate indicators based on 35 individual data sources from 32 organizations, including surveys of households and firms, and experts from forest management and the private sector. Accessed at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp
19. The Bali Action Plan on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.13) was agreed in December 2007 and anticipates a global climate deal, of which REDD will be a part, at the 15th Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in December 2009.
24. REDD Monitor website (see note 21).
(Websites active as of 23-Nov-2008)

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December 2008
www.globalwitness.org

Printed on recycled, non bleached paper