UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Asia-Pacific Lessons Learned

Multiple Benefits

Safeguarding Multiple Benefits

Photo by Ulf Narloch

When forests that would have been lost or degraded are retained or restored through REDD+, protection and enhancement of carbon stocks are not the only benefits. There are several additional benefits that can be generated or maintained through REDD+ activities. The approaches adopted for REDD+ activities should aim to positively impact the type, extent and quality of the many benefits available from forest ecosystems. Additional biodiversity, ecosystem services and social benefits can be secured through careful planning and implementation.

The UN-REDD Programme supports countries in their efforts to integrate multiple benefits into their REDD+ strategies and development plans. As part of the UN-REDD Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is working on tools and analyses that help decision makers to safeguard and enhance the multiple benefits of REDD+.

Examples of this work include the development of information materials, map overlays and a guide to decision-support tools for Central Sulawesi province, Indonesia, and technical support on biodiversity monitoring and social and environmental safeguards and standards in Viet Nam.

Ensuring Multiple Benefits

REDD+ has the potential to deliver substantial benefits beyond carbon. Other benefits linked to the improved condition of forests can include **cleaner water** and **a lower risk of floods and droughts, soil conservation, larger numbers of rare and threatened plant and animal species** and **a larger supply of timber and non-timber forest products,** as well as **increased availability of forest-based employment opportunities, livelihoods and income.** REDD+ can also lead to **wider social benefits through land tenure clarification, enhanced participation in decision-making** and **better governance.** Together, these potential positive effects are often referred to as 'the multiple benefits of REDD+'.

However, fulfilling this potential depends on careful planning and implementation. At the international level, the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC has agreed that countries should promote and support the **Cancun Safeguards**, They indicate amongst other things that REDD+ activities should be carried out with respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities and with the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, *and that* ***they should incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and enhance other social and environmental benefits*****.** The UN-REDD Programme has agreed on a set of **Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC)** that are intended to assist countries in developing a national safeguards approach.

The UN-REDD Programme

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). It builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Programme supports developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies.

Lesson 1: Landscape-scale planning can help to match different kinds of REDD+ actions with suitable socio-economic and environmental settings. There are many options for REDD+ action (e.g. forest conservation, reduced-impact logging, fire management or forest restoration). These options can each provide different kinds of social and environmental benefits, depending on where and how they are implemented. By identifying those places in the landscape where planned actions can provide the most positive effects, the multiple benefits of REDD+ can be maximized.

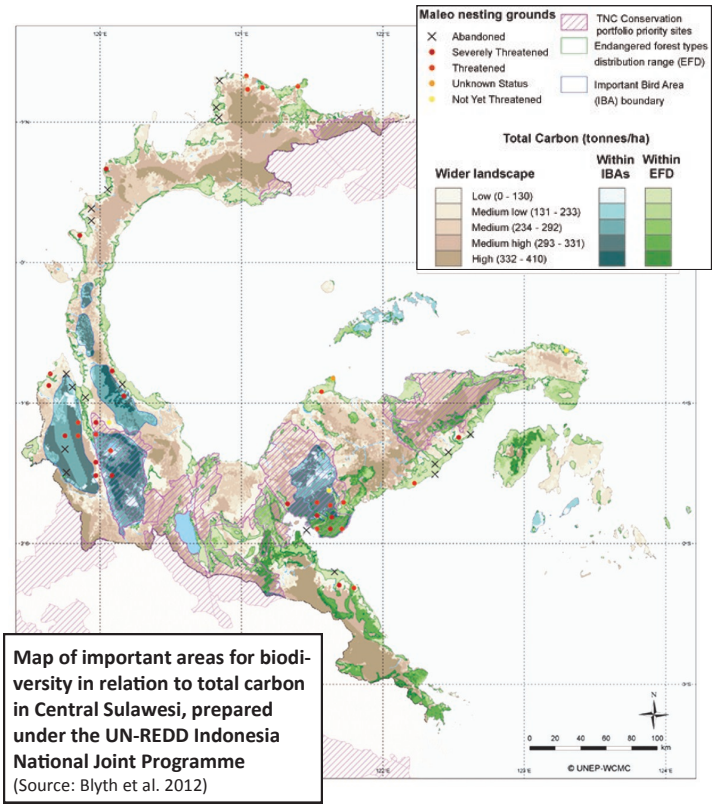
Lesson 2: Multiple benefits can be enhanced by concentrating forest conservation efforts on key areas for biodiversity and ecosystem services. The establishment of conservation areas and protection forest in areas that are important for biodiversity and ecosystem services (e.g. areas that harbour threatened species or protect water resources) can provide the highest multiple benefits. In Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, studies show that a large number of endemic and threatened forest species occur only in natural forests. Natural forests also offer the best protection of soils and water resources. Furthermore, maintaining natural forest can also be a financially attractive approach for REDD+ because it often requires little investment other than identifying suitable areas, raising awareness and strictly enforcing regulations.

Lesson 3: Plantations can still enhance biodiversity depending on the design and location. Although plantations provide lower biodiversity benefits than natural forest, they can still enhance biodiversity if properly designed and located in areas that have been deforested or severely degraded. Mixed cultures of native species that are managed to increase structural diversity tend to provide the greatest benefits. Plantations can also be certified to attest that they are responsibly managed, which can enhance the value of timber or tree crops produced.


Photo by Marion Mehring

Lesson 4: Looking beyond carbon conservation and enhancing the functions of forests can help bring the agendas of the three Rio Conventions closer together. This is a necessary step in ensuring that country actions under the UNFCCC do not undermine their capacities to implement the objectives of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification).

Lesson 5: Maps can support decision-making processes by conveying spatial information. To identify promising approaches to REDD+ for a given area, it is helpful to combine maps of carbon stocks with maps showing the potential for a variety of benefits. These maps can be customized depending on the type of REDD+ actions that are envisaged. Producing overlays of spatial information does not need to be costly. Relevant map themes could include legally designated forest functions, recently deforested areas, population growth, biodiversity or risk of erosion. They can be used as a basis for communication with stakeholders as well as for simple visual analyses of the spatial relationship between different parameters of interest.



Map of important areas for biodiversity in relation to total carbon in Central Sulawesi, prepared under the UN-REDD Indonesia National Joint Programme
(Source: Blyth et al. 2012)

For more information, please visit **www.UN-REDD.org** or contact:
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