

# UN-REDD PROGRAMME



## **DRAFT –** Concept Note for Support to Community- Based REDD+

**(MARCH 2013)**

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**Draft of 14 March 2013**

Experience shows that community-based organizations and local civil society groups are often the primary organizing bodies and normative institutions in rural regions and if REDD+ activities are to have relevance and traction with the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, funding of community-based activities must be given due consideration. Local level interventions present a distinct opportunity to tap into the capacity and local knowledge of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities. They have the added advantages of versatility, flexibility and rapidity, and being low-cost laboratories for getting REDD+ approaches right. Community based approaches can complement national REDD+ action, and successful activities and best practice can be scaled up to the national level.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are essential to the success of REDD+ given that they have for centuries played historical and cultural roles in the sustainable management of forests, which often lie within their ancestral and customary lands. Inadequate mechanisms for equitable and effective participation of indigenous peoples, forest-dependent communities and marginalized populations such as women and the poor in natural resource management and land use decisions have the potential to compromise the delivery of local, national and global benefits and the long-term sustainability of REDD+ investments.

Consultations with, and feedback from, indigenous peoples and local communities have consistently reflected strong concern over potential negative consequences that REDD+ activities could have for local rights, lands and livelihoods if incorrectly designed or deployed. To address these concerns, governments and civil society have introduced safeguards into the negotiated UNFCCC text, and the UN-REDD Programme and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) have developed joint guidelines to ensure communities' rights are protected in REDD+ activities. While much of the responsibility for implementing these safeguards and guidelines will lie with national governments, the UN-REDD Programme and other bodies can help build the capacity of both countries and communities to meet these standards. The UN-REDD Support to National REDD+ Action already provides technical support and guidance to countries on issues related to governance, safeguards and stakeholder engagement. And with the help of this initiative, called Support to Community-Based REDD+ (CBR+), it can go even further in supporting grassroots action on REDD+.

The recent Country Needs Assessment (CNA), jointly conducted by the UN-REDD Programme and the FCPF, supports the advent of CBR+ by pointing to an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of community groups and local NGOs to participate in REDD+, as well as demand for REDD+ pilot projects to create testing and learning opportunities for civil society<sup>1</sup>. The CNA also stressed the need

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the following three extracts from the Executive Summary of Joint FCPF & UN-REDD Programme Country Needs Assessment:

“For the benefit sharing, consultation and participation process, 86 per cent of the countries required procedures for stakeholder consultations, 73 per cent required capacity to improve information dissemination to stakeholders, 48 per cent required assessment of previous experiences related to REDD+, and 46 per cent required implementation of conflict resolution mechanisms;”

to help ensure that indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities receive a fair share of value from REDD+ to help overcome any waning political interest in REDD+ within countries, related to the extensive delay in REDD+ benefits reaching local people. The CNA further highlighted the importance of piloting safeguards and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and other ways to create interest in REDD+ and value for local communities.

Through CBR+, UN-REDD can support communities themselves to initiate activities, build capacities, exchange information, pilot methodologies, develop models of representation and participation, and implement their visions for REDD+ in alignment with national REDD+ goals and objectives. Decades of experience of FAO, UNEP, UNDP and the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) have shown that community-based action, initiated and carried out by local organizations, has an impressive record of successfully delivering development results at the local level<sup>2</sup>. This vast experience has also uniquely positioned the UN-REDD Programme to innovate in important ways in this space of community-based grants.

The utility of this approach has also been recognized by other major donors and agencies involved in REDD+, with whom CBR+ will collaborate closely. For example, the FCPF, the Forest Investment Program (FIP), the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) and the EU FAO Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEGT) Programme have all developed grant mechanisms targeted at community stakeholders in a move to galvanize action at the local-level in the countries supported by these initiatives.

## The Objectives

CBR+ will catalyze REDD+ readiness from the ground up, bringing resources and capacity to communities, empowering them to engage in national REDD+ activities and pilot important REDD+ methodologies and approaches. Specifically, CBR+ will:

- Activate community-based action and build capacities to improve equitability and effectiveness in the implementation of REDD+ readiness;
- Support countries to implement the Cancun safeguards and UN-REDD Guidelines and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, civil society and marginalized groups such as women and the poor in REDD+;
- Ensure critical links and improved coordination between community grants within the biodiversity, climate change and land degradation focal areas of the SGP and national REDD+ activities under the UN-REDD Programme, thereby multiplying potential impacts and results;
- Support learning and sharing of lessons drawn from community-based experiences in support of REDD+.

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“In all countries visited, particularly in Africa and Asia, there was an urgent need to strengthen local NGOs and community groups and improve their capacities to participate in REDD+ alongside decentralized government institutions.”

“This is quite consistent with countries in Africa and Asia expressing the need for REDD+ pilot projects, since they offer opportunities for testing and learning and also help to create buy-in by local communities...”

<sup>2</sup> [Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme, 2008](#)

## The Approach

CBR+ will be a joint initiative of the UN-REDD Programme and the SGP to direct funds towards community-level projects that would align with existing National Programme approaches and/or national REDD+ strategies. Building upon the growing collaboration between the UN-REDD Programme and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), CBR+ will be co-financed equally by the UN-REDD Programme and the SGP, leveraging the respective operational and technical expertise of these two programmes to efficiently support the implementation of REDD+ activities at the local level. To reduce entry costs and avoid reinventing a disbursement mechanism where a successful model already exists, CBR+ proposes to build on SGP's wealth of local experience, by leveraging SGP funds alongside UN-REDD Programme funds to contribute to national and global REDD+ objectives more systematically.

Grants would be capped at US\$50,000 and support activities to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, improve the definition of land use rights, explore mechanisms for benefit sharing, and advance the implementation of safeguards for REDD+, among others. Preference will be given to investments in 'no regrets' activities that would be beneficial regardless of the speed at which REDD+ progresses.

***Building on existing approaches and mechanisms in a coordinated way:*** Community-level grants for activities related to REDD+ are currently available<sup>3</sup> and being programmed under the SGP, which has a very well-established national level infrastructure and 20 years of experience working with communities through the 14,500 community-based projects it has funded in 125 developing countries. CBR+ will build on the UN-REDD Programme's National Programmes, technical expertise and partnerships with key national REDD+ actors; and the SGP's effective modality to deliver funding and a range of services directly to the local level, through an established, decentralized governance mechanisms operating across 125 United Nations Country Offices, which guarantees the highest levels of international fiduciary accountability. SGP funds would be channelled to community projects that support national REDD+ programmes' objectives, allowing stakeholders to experiment with and test REDD+ options and approaches. The UN-REDD Programme would co-finance grants, facilitate national-level coordination, and support knowledge management and dissemination activities.

***Leveraging co-funding for a portfolio approach that aligns community grants with national and global REDD+ priorities:*** Countries' CBR+ strategies will be formulated to ensure alignment of community level activities with National Programme goals and objectives. CBR+ will multiply funds already available for stakeholder engagement and REDD+ activities through the SGP and ensure they align with national programme approaches. This will be achieved through the participatory development of national criteria to prioritize actions thematically and geographically so that projects are selected according to a coherent REDD+ readiness framework.

***Independent and participatory selection of recipients of community grants:*** CBR+ will make use of the well-established and highly successful SGP mechanism of multi-stakeholder National Steering Committees (NSC) which are set up to facilitate the grant-making process in countries where SGP

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<sup>3</sup> The UNDP/GEF SGP has US\$52.8 million in grant-making funds available between July 2011 and July 2014 in 30 UN-REDD Programme partner countries. Further funds for additional partner countries may also be available via the UNDP/GEF SGP.

operates. These NSCs include representatives from government, indigenous peoples, civil society and the UN that review and approve project proposals for funding<sup>4</sup>. For matters related to CBR+, these NSCs will be expanded to include national REDD+ focal points and experts from governments, indigenous peoples and civil society who are part of the national REDD+ taskforce or committee as well as those with social/gender expertise. Specific criteria will be established to ensure the independent selection of eligible projects that will contribute to local, national, and global needs in REDD+ readiness.

***Building on early action at the local level:*** CBR+ will support and encourage countries to move ahead with the implementation of REDD+ approaches and methodologies by achieving early successes on the ground at the local level, for example, through community-led action in key REDD+ areas such as those listed above, as well as in free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), conflict resolution, and participatory monitoring, where the operationalization of these approaches can be strengthened, scaled up and lessons transferred to other countries. These actions should be linked to the national REDD+ strategy whenever possible.

***Systematic knowledge management:*** A systematic goal of CBR+ will be the generation of knowledge about what works and what doesn't in local level applications of REDD+. With this in mind, each project will be designed to produce clear lessons derived from assessment of project impacts, with results and learning coordinated and documented, generating a repository of information on the outcomes of CBR+-funded projects. For example, a case study of each project will produce information and knowledge that will be disseminated throughout a network of CBR+ communities, as well as through UN-REDD and SGP global networks. Analyses of project portfolios will be undertaken and provided to relevant policy makers from the forestry, environment, finance, and rural development sectors. Case studies and portfolio analyses will also be made available on the UN-REDD website. Learning will be supported by local to global level knowledge exchanges and periodic knowledge products, and linked to existing knowledge platforms<sup>5</sup>.

***Scaling up action over a 3-year timeframe towards long-term sustainability:*** CBR+ will focus on six pilot countries for the first year of operation, two from each of the UN-REDD Programme regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean). Learning and progress after year 1 will be used to scale up to additional countries during years 2 and 3. It is envisioned that once processes and mechanisms have been developed and piloted, CBR+ would be mainstreamed into the overall national REDD+ frameworks.

## Management and Oversight

Global Level Steering Committee: a Working Group associated with the UN-REDD Policy Board, composed of representatives from a programme country, donor, IP, UN-REDD agency, and SGP that meet via teleconference and in-person.

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex 1 for more information

<sup>5</sup> E.g. the UN-REDD workspace, the [Equator Initiative Case Study Database](#) and the [UNEP South-South Cooperation Exchange Mechanism](#)

CBR+ National Steering Committees: Decision-making for the selection of grantees will rest with CBR+ National Steering Committees which will consist of the existing SGP National Steering Committee (NSC), supplemented by a REDD+ sub-committee composed of government, IP, CSO, technical expert and UN-REDD Programme representatives<sup>6</sup> on the national REDD+ taskforce or committee.<sup>7</sup>

SGP NSCs are already in place, and are generally composed of 8-15 representatives of IPs, CSOs, government, academia, donors and UN agencies, with a majority of non-governmental stakeholders. These meet according to need, averaging once every month or two.

SGP National Coordinators (NC): are in place and will provide technical assistance to community organizations to identify and prepare projects for funding. The NC presents a portfolio of proposals to the NSC for review and approval. The NC monitors project implementation and supports community organizations to resolve problems of implementation.

### **Funding Allocation Categories**

The UN-REDD Programme will use its country-level presence, relationships with national REDD+ actors and global knowledge management infrastructure to support the implementation of CBR+. To provide the coordinating support and co-financing to leverage SGP grant funding for CBR+, the UN-REDD Programme will fund the following from CBR+ funds:

1. Grants: The large majority of CBR+ funds will be designated for grant funding to local level projects that address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, improve the definition of land rights, explore mechanisms for benefit sharing, and advance the implementation of safeguards for REDD+; funds could also support awareness raising and information sharing, capacity building, network and institution building, policy advocacy, mainstreaming, and scaling up (see Table 1). Grants will be used to leverage and complement multilateral investments by UN-REDD, FCFP and FIP, and potentially other relevant grant-making mechanisms, whenever possible.
2. Facilitation of national processes to develop national CBR+ frameworks: Funds will be used to facilitate national processes to guide CBR+ activities to ensure the maximum positive gains to national REDD+ processes. National and sub-national workshops will be supported to develop clear national CBR+ frameworks that would guide grant-making.
3. Regional and community learning exchanges: In order to promote learning and exchange among communities, countries and regions, it is envisioned that South-South exchanges to review and share lessons emerging from CBR+ activities will be supported. It is proposed that collaboration with Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), which pursues similar aims with regard to knowledge management and sharing, be explored.

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<sup>6</sup> To avoid the over-representation of UN agencies on the CBR+ NSC, the agency (or agencies) sitting on the committee will represent all three UN-REDD agencies and review proposals with other in-country agencies to ensure that the views of all UN-REDD agencies are represented in committee meetings.

<sup>7</sup> Depending on country situation and presence of other relevant grant-making mechanisms, the feasibility of including representatives of these grant mechanisms (e.g. FCPF, FIP, FFF, EU-FAO FLEGT) on the CBR+ NSC could be explored.

4. Knowledge management: The UN-REDD Programme will provide a knowledge management function for CBR+ which will include the synthesis of lessons learned, the development of communications products and tools, and the dissemination of communication outputs.
5. Global coordination function: The UN-REDD Programme, in collaboration with the SGP, will provide a global coordination function to ensure coherence between different national-level CBR+ activities in different countries, and manage the global portfolio of CBR+ activities, as well coordinate with relevant UN-REDD, and FCPF, FIP and NICFI-funded activities on stakeholder engagement under national programmes and targeted support.

Table 1: Examples of CBR+ Contributions to Phases I and II of REDD+

Stage of REDD+	CBR+ Objectives	Examples of CBR+ Activities	Expected Results
<b>REDD+ PHASE I – Preparation and Readiness</b>			
<b>Initiation of REDD+ Readiness: Preparation of R-PP document and/or national REDD+ strategy, and early consultations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews of issues related to the rights, engagement and safeguards of indigenous peoples, local communities and marginalized groups including women and the poor</li> <li>• Initial consultations with indigenous peoples and civil society to draft and validate the final R-PP or REDD+ strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial capacity building activities for key national and sub-national stakeholders carried out by indigenous peoples/CSO groups</li> <li>• Reviews of national and local tenure and land rights issues by indigenous peoples and civil society organizations for inclusion in national R-PP documents</li> <li>• Organization of sub-national consultations on the R-PP, FPIC or other REDD+ processes</li> <li>• Training of trainers in REDD+</li> <li>• Building networks of communities and improving organizational capacity to engage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous peoples and civil society stakeholders will be equipped with an adequate understanding of REDD+ issues and will participate effectively in early consultation activities.</li> <li>• R-PP documents will include analyses of key rights-based issues, including risks and opportunities from REDD+ that reflect broad stakeholder perspectives</li> <li>• R-PP will more effectively incorporate stakeholder perspectives and concerns and be more likely to be endorsed and supported by stakeholders in the R-PP implementation phase</li> </ul>
<b>REDD+ Readiness activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive capacity building and consultations with forest dependent stakeholders, including marginalized populations</li> <li>• Participatory development of key REDD+ policies and measures such as: safeguards, fair and equitable benefit distribution systems, forest and carbon monitoring systems, grievance systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building activities for indigenous peoples, local communities, NGOs and marginalized populations to understand REDD+ and associated issues</li> <li>• Community-led pilot activities to trial and refine REDD+ approaches at the community level such as: participatory forest monitoring activities; FPIC and benefit distribution pilots; development of sustainable livelihood alternatives; ancestral domain and rights mapping, land and land use claims and recognition of rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key stakeholders will be able to participate more effectively in REDD+ based on a better knowledge of associated issues</li> <li>• Development of ground-tested methodologies to implement REDD+ at the community level that can be linked to national REDD+ systems and transferred/scaled up</li> <li>• Provision of community-led technical input into the development of key national REDD+ policies and measures</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building networks of communities and improving organizational capacity to engage</li> <li>• Development of materials that can be used at local level to communicate REDD+ concepts and issues.</li> <li>• Development of local conflict resolution mechanisms.</li> </ul>	
<b>REDD+ PHASE 2 – Implementation of national REDD+ strategies</b>			
<b>Implementation of policies and measures proposed in national REDD+ strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory implementation of REDD+ policies and measures relating to safeguards, benefit distribution systems, forest and carbon monitoring systems, grievance systems</li> <li>• Implementation of REDD+ demonstration activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous peoples and civil society involvement in the implementation or monitoring, reporting and verification of relevant policies such as safeguard information systems, benefit distribution systems, forest and carbon monitoring systems, FPIC, and grievance systems</li> <li>• Pilot initiatives in community forest management that address drivers of deforestation; improved land-use management; alternative livelihoods.</li> <li>• Community-led demonstration activities such as: participatory management methodologies to protect forests and avoid deforestation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models of stakeholder-led REDD+ can inform policies and practice and support effective REDD+ implementation</li> </ul>

**Example of potential grant activity: Indigenous peoples-led REDD+ in Mexico**

The GEF SGP-supported U’yool’ché A.C. project began in 2006 with the interest of indigenous communities in developing carbon sequestration techniques in the Mayan Zone.

The project aims to generate an alternative way to finance forest conservation activities by exploring carbon finance, and to generate methodologies to expand such an approach throughout the Corridor region of Sian Ka’an – Calakmul. Grants from the SGP supported the creation of a participatory management methodology to preserve the forest, avoid deforestation and contribute to the carbon credit certification process. The project demonstrates how local communities can engage in REDD+, providing an example that could be replicated and scaled up by other local communities.

**Proposed Criteria for Pilot Country Selection:**

- An established SGP programme;
- An existing UN-REDD National Programme or other UN-REDD partner countries;
- Strong potential for REDD+ impacts and benefits;
- Ongoing national REDD+ process as evidenced by either:



- A functioning national REDD+ coordinating mechanism;
  - A history of carrying out REDD+ dialogues, events, activities etc.;
  - Evidence of analytical work on REDD+ in the country; or
  - Political commitment to REDD+.
- Range of geographical representation (e.g. sub-regions: Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, Latin America, Central America & the Caribbean, Asia, the Pacific) and/or potential to become a regional model;
  - A range of countries in different phases of REDD+ development (see Table 1 above); and
  - If possible, at least one country with either FCPF or FIP presence as well as a UN-REDD Programme.

## **ANNEX I**

### **Background on the GEF Small Grants Programme**

For two decades, the SGP has been working with communities around the world to combat the most critical environmental problems supporting more than 14,500 community-based projects in 125 countries, including 39 of the partner countries of the UN-REDD Programme. SGP has invested over \$450 million and leveraged a similar level of financing since its creation 20 years ago. The main focal areas of the programme are climate change abatement and adaptation, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants, and prevention of land degradation.

The SGP has successfully demonstrated that supporting communities in their efforts to achieve more sustainable livelihoods is crucial in bringing change and achieving global environmental benefits. It is rooted in the belief that global environmental problems can best be addressed if local people are involved and there are direct community benefits and ownership. The SGP's experience shows that with small amounts of funding, members of local communities can undertake activities that will make a significant difference in their lives and environments, with global benefits, in contrast with top-down, expert-reliant development interventions.

The SGP has developed impressive national-level infrastructure to support grant-making processes in country. All SGP country programmes have a voluntary National Steering Committee (NSC), which is the central element of SGP and provides the major substantive contribution to and oversight of the programme. The NSC is comprised of a majority of civil society organizations, as well as representatives of the government, UN, academia, indigenous peoples' organizations, the private sector and the media. The NSC considers whether proposals for grants are feasible and meet SGP criteria, and what kind of technical support is needed for implementation. It is also responsible for the final approval of grants, undertaking monitoring and evaluation visits to the projects, providing advice, ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation, helping extract, share and replicate successful SGP projects and practice and promoting SGP at the national and international level. For more information visit: <http://www.sgp.undp.org/>

### **Background on the UN-REDD Programme**

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of FAO, UNDP and UNEP. The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes in 46 partner countries, spanning Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, in two ways: (i) direct support to the design and implementation of UN-REDD National Programmes; and (ii) complementary support to national REDD+ action through common approaches, analyses, methodologies, tools, data and best practices. By January 2013, total funding for these two streams of support to countries totaled more than US\$160 million.

The UN-REDD Programme has a strong history of supporting the participation and inclusion of civil society, indigenous peoples and other community-level stakeholders in REDD+. Acknowledging the crucial importance of these actors from the outset, since its inception in 2008 the UN-REDD Programme has ensured the participation of indigenous peoples and civil society representatives in

its governing body, and has implemented a dedicated work area on stakeholder engagement. Working directly with countries to ensure effective practices for inclusion and engagement in national REDD+ activities as well as developing principles, standards and guidelines at the global level, the UN-REDD Programme has contributed to building mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in countries as well as shaping global thought on important issues such as social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, and free, prior and informed consent.

The UN-REDD Programme has a strong country level presence, with regional and country staff supporting REDD+ actions on the ground. This includes direct support to develop REDD+ strategies, policies and activities in 16 countries receiving direct financial support through the UN-REDD Programme, as well as technical support to an additional 28 partner countries. The UN-REDD Programme has strong working relationships with key REDD+ governmental and non-governmental actors, and would facilitate the connection between CBR+ and the wider REDD+ policy and operational environment in countries. This will support CBR+ to fulfill its goals of connecting to a more coherent framework of action that can leverage greater results and ensure that activities can be transferred and scaled up, as well as support the effective sharing of knowledge between countries via the UN-REDD Programme's strong regional and international structures. For more information visit: <http://www.un-redd.org>