

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

The United Nations Collaborative Programme
on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and
Forest Degradation in Developing Countries



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – REDD+ and the UN-REDD Programme

July 2011

Q: What is the UN-REDD Programme?

A: 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 September 2008 to assist developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies, and builds on the convening power and 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). [Press release: Programme launch](#)

The Programme currently supports REDD+ readiness activities in 35 partner countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

[More on the UN-REDD Programme's 35 partner countries](#)

Q: What is REDD?

A: REDD is a mechanism to create an incentive for developing countries to protect, better manage and wisely use their forest resources, contributing to the global fight against climate change. REDD strategies aim to make forests more valuable standing than they would be cut down, by creating a financial value for the carbon stored in trees. Once this carbon is assessed and quantified, the final phase of REDD involves *developed* countries paying *developing* countries carbon offsets for their standing forests. REDD is a cutting-edge forestry initiative that aims at tipping the economic balance in favour of sustainable management of forests so that their formidable economic, environmental and social goods and services benefit countries, communities, biodiversity and forest users while also contributing to important reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Q: What is "REDD+"?

A: REDD+ strategies go beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and include the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in reducing emissions.

Q : What is “REDD+ readiness”?

A: REDD+ readiness relates to the efforts a country is undertaking, with the support of multilateral or bilateral initiatives, to build its capacity to be ready for a REDD+ mechanism.

Q: What is the difference between REDD+ and the UN-REDD Programme?

A: REDD+ is a climate change mitigation solution that many initiatives, including the UN-REDD Programme, are currently developing and supporting. Other multilateral REDD+ initiatives include the [Forest Carbon Partnership Facility](#) (FCPF) and [Forest Investment Program](#) (FIP), hosted by The World Bank.

Q: What are the proposed phases towards a full implementation of REDD+?

Phase 1: Developing a REDD+ strategy supported by grants

Phase 2: Implementing a REDD+ strategy, supported by (a) grants or other financial support for capability building, and enabling policies and measures and (b) payments for emission reductions measured by proxies.

Phase 3: Continued implementation of REDD+ strategy in the context of low-carbon development, payments for verified emission reductions and removals.

Q: Where are the UN-REDD Programme partner countries in their REDD+ readiness efforts? Are they already being paid for the carbon stored in their trees?

A: All nine initial UN-REDD Programme pilot countries have prepared, presented and had funding allocations approved for their National Programmes by the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board. Most of these National Programmes are now in the implementation phase (Bolivia, DRC, Indonesia, Panama, Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zambia), indicating a relatively rapid pace from development to implementation of programmed activities. In addition to the Programme's nine initial pilot countries, four other partner countries, namely Cambodia, Ecuador, the Philippines and Solomon Islands have also received funding allocations from the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board for either full or initial National Programmes, and are now working toward entering the implementation phase.

Funds allocated by the UN-REDD Programme to National Programmes help to support the development and implementation of national REDD+ strategies. No carbon offsets are being paid yet to any of UN-REDD Programme partner countries.

[More on the UN-REDD Programme's 35 partner countries](#)

Q: How is the Programme governed?

A: The UN-REDD Programme has a Policy Board that decides on strategic direction and budget allocation. The Policy Board is made up of representatives from partner countries, donors to the [Multi-Donor Trust Fund](#), Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples and the three UN agencies (FAO, UNDP and UNEP). The Programme's Secretariat, based in Geneva, supports the successful implementation of the Programme by coordinating the activities of the three UN agencies and the work of the Policy Board.

Q: How is the UN-REDD Programme financed?

A: **Norway** continues to be the UN-REDD Programme's first and largest donor. Since the Programme was launched in September 2008, Norway has committed US\$52.2 million for 2008-2009, US\$31 million for 2010 and at least US\$40 million for 2011-2012. **Denmark** became the second donor country to join the UN-REDD Programme, committing US\$2 million in June 2009 and another US\$6 million in November 2010. At the end of 2009, **Spain** announced its pledge of US\$20.2 million to the UN-REDD Programme over a period of three years, and confirmed US\$1.4 million for 2010 in November 2010. In March of 2011, the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board was pleased to welcome **Japan's** first funding commitment to the Programme of US\$3 million for the UN-REDD Global Programme, and a first-time funding pledge from the **European Commission** of approximately US\$14 million (€10 million). The UN-REDD Programme is now actively looking for more donors, to meet the increasing demand from countries seeking support from the Programme.

For an overview of current funds and budget allocations, consult the Programme's [Multi-Donor Trust Fund](#) office.

Q: How does the Programme work with other REDD+ initiatives?

A: Key strategic partners for the UN-REDD Programme are the [Forest Carbon Partnership Facility](#) (FCPF) and [Forest Investment Program](#) (FIP), hosted by the World Bank. The UN-REDD Programme continues to explore closer collaboration with the **UNFCCC Secretariat** in areas such as supporting the implementation of UNFCCC decisions, providing information and lessons learned from the initial member countries, preparation of technical papers as well as working jointly on capacity development projects. The UN-REDD Programme is also partnering with the [Global Environment Facility](#) (GEF).

Q: Does the Programme have a disclosure policy?

A: The Programme is currently developing a formal information disclosure policy and aims to begin operationalizing the policy in 2011.

Q: What are the Programme's goals for 2011 and beyond?

A: While continuing its support for *initial* REDD+ readiness at the country level, the UN-REDD Programme's strategy for 2011-2015 makes a strategic shift to focus on providing capacity support for *in-depth technical needs* in a limited number of work areas such as MRV, stakeholder engagement and equitable benefits sharing at the national level.

The Programme aims to support up to 40 countries between 2011 and 2015. Support will vary in terms of type, level and duration depending on national circumstances and existing systems. Country programmes will be supported by global activities designed to develop and share knowledge. The UN-REDD Programme intends to broaden its country membership in response to a growing demand from developing countries to receive REDD+ readiness support. In order to meet our goals and the increasing demand for UN-REDD Programme support, resource mobilization will be a key priority for the Programme in 2011.

Q: How much carbon is emitted by deforestation and forest degradation?

A: The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has estimated that deforestation and forest degradation contribute globally to approximately 17 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2007 Fourth Assessment Report), which is more than the global transportation sector and third only to the global energy (26%) and industrial (19%) sectors .

Q: Doesn't REDD+ just give developed countries the excuse not to reduce their own emissions?

A: REDD+ is *part* of the climate change solution but REDD+ alone cannot adequately mitigate or abate climate change. The implementation of REDD+ must co-exist with significant emission reductions in both developed and developing countries if we hope to curb climate change.

Q: How will the UN-REDD Programme ensure that forest- dependent communities and custodians of forests in developing countries benefit from REDD+?

A: The design of any legitimate REDD+ strategy must include guidelines and safeguards that ensure the eventual benefits from REDD+ reach the very communities that maintain and protect forests and biodiversity. The UN-REDD Programme works very closely with countries to involve stakeholders and custodians of the forest at all stages of programme design and implementation, so that *they* are the ones who benefit from protecting forests. The UN-REDD Programme is guided by two very simple, but vitally important principles that REDD+ strategies do no harm, and that they contribute to improving livelihoods.

Q: How will countries reliably assess and “prove” how much carbon is stored in their forests?

A: By implementing Measuring and Monitoring Systems compliant with the Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) concept agreed upon by the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, countries will be able to assess the amount of carbon stored in their forests as well as other benefits from REDD.

The UN-REDD Programme is supporting countries to develop cost-effective, robust and compatible systems for MRV. These systems are designed to use field inventory data combined with satellite data and available technology to produce green house gases inventories and establish reference emission levels. The Programme is liaising with international experts such as NASA, Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and the US Geological Survey to provide partner countries with planning tools and advice to help strengthen their technical and institutional capacity for effective national MRV systems.

Q: In addition to receiving carbon offsets through a REDD+ mechanism, what are the other possible benefits that developing countries and local communities can experience from reducing deforestation and protecting forests?

A: In addition to their carbon storage role, forests provide many other ecosystem services to society. The nature of these services varies from place to place, and includes water regulation, soil protection, non-timber forest products including food and fibre, climate regulation and biodiversity. As most tropical forests deliver a wide range of these essential services, there are many ways in which REDD+ can provide ecosystem and social benefits to countries and forest communities. The UN-REDD Programme continues to work in this area, examining and understanding the likely multiple benefits and risks associated with REDD+ initiatives before they are implemented.

Q: Can this “carbon” value in standing trees really change deforestation trends?

A: Having a value for carbon can provide incentives for forest resource users to change their use of forest resources if benefits reach them in a timely, appropriate and effective manner that builds confidence in the process. Payments under a REDD+ mechanism can translate into incentives for changes in land use and better stewardship of forest resources. This, however, can only be achieved if the socio-economic drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are addressed and current forest resource users have sufficient confidence in the REDD+ mechanism to change the way they use forest resources. This will not be easy, as current emission-intensive uses of forest resources are often an important source of foreign exchange, energy, food security, new settlements or employment.

Good and efficient governance of forest resources and the distribution of benefits will be central to the success of REDD+ policies and measures.

A: If the allocation of forest or carbon rights is opaque and uncertain, if the distribution of benefits is unpredictable, untimely or captured by a few, if lack of enforcement allows free riders to exploit the system, or if corruption is perceived as high, stakeholders will not take the risk of forgoing the income they derive from their current uses of forest resources. When the rights of forest dependent communities are violated or communities are marginalized, investors, weary of insecure business environments and unpredictable emission reductions, are deterred.

Q: What are some strategies to identify and deal with the drivers of deforestation?

A: To identify drivers of deforestation, studies that take into account socioeconomic factors are key. These feasibility studies can assess a wide range of drivers including: population growth; whether or not fuel wood is used; the kinds of policies and tenure systems in place; pressure from small scale agriculture expansion; pressure from larger agricultural activities like soya and palm oil production; government concessions; corruption; levels of settlements and infrastructure development. To deal with these drivers of deforestation, governments can help provide and/or develop options to the population, such as Payment for Environmental Services (PES), clear legislation and policy enforcement and proper, robust tenure rights.

Q : What is the role of forests in the developing world?

A: More than three quarters of the world's accessible freshwater comes from forested catchments. Water quality declines with decreases in forest condition and cover, and natural hazards such as floods, landslides, and soil erosion have larger impacts (MEA, 2005).

Forests annually provide over 3.3 billion cubic meters of wood (including 1.8 billion cubic meters of fuelwood and charcoal), as well as numerous non-wood forest products that play a significant role in the economic life of hundreds of millions of people. The combined economic value of "nonmarket" (social and ecological) forest services may exceed the recorded market value of timber, but these values are rarely taken into account in forest management decisions (MEA, 2005).

The rural poor are particularly dependent on forest resources. As many as 300 million people, most of them very poor, depend substantially on forest ecosystems for their subsistence and survival. The 60 million indigenous people who live in forest areas are especially dependent on forest resources and the health of forest ecosystems (MEA, 2005).

Q: Why is there so much interest in forestry, deforestation and carbon at present? Is it a case of making money versus conserving the planet?

A: REDD+ is seen as one of the most cost-effective ways of stabilizing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to avoid a temperature rise of two degrees Celsius. But standing forests also conserve carbon while supporting the livelihoods of a large number of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities as well providing essential ecosystem services such as habitat for biodiversity and provisioning clean water supplies.

Further, it's about making the private sector part of the solution by providing the kinds of market signals, mechanisms and incentives to encourage investments that manage and conserve the world's nature-based resources rather than mining them. So it is about making money and conserving the planet too and if REDD can be structured right, the money will be made not just by carbon traders, but also by developing countries and communities for providing the forest-based carbon storage service.

Indeed it is predicted that financial flows from North to South for GHG reductions from REDD could reach up to US\$30 billion a year—funds that can be invested in renewable energy projects to assist the two billion people without access to electricity or hospitals or new schools.

Q : Does the UN-REDD Programme purchase carbon credits or act as a credit buyer?

A : The UN-REDD Programme does not purchase credits. We focus our efforts on capacity building to support countries in developing and implementing REDD+ strategies on a range of technical issues including MRV, engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, governance, management of funds, social and ecosystems benefits and transformations towards a green economy.

For more information, refer to our five-year Programme Strategy (2011-2015), available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).