

Results of the REDD+ SES Pilot

In 2009 the Ministry of Environment (MAE) began work on the REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards (REDD+ SES) initiative, which seeks to assure additional social and environmental benefits, and mitigate potential risks, in the implementation of the mechanism Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+). The MAE, with the support of Conservation International Ecuador and CARE, established the need to evaluate the REDD+ SES through a pilot project in the field. This pilot project was carried out in October 2012 using the Socio Bosque Program (PSB) as a proxy for REDD+. PSB is a MAE program that provides cash incentives to individuals and communities who agree to conserve their land.

Conceptual Focus and Methodology

The sample was focused on communities with certain traits, such as an internal organization, decision-making processes and management reports on the distribution of benefits. The methodology utilized 1) secondary information related to REDD+ and PSB, 2) an analysis of the REDD+ SES from the perspective of development management, and 3) visits to nine communities and one individual landowner that included open interviews with qualified informants and leaders of the communities that benefit from PSB.

Results

- **Principle 1: REDD+ recognizes and respects rights to lands, territory and resources.**
 - Criterion 1.1: Identify the different rights holders (statutory and customary¹) and their rights to lands, territories and resources.
 - There is no methodology for mapping participation as it is not required for PSB, and the communities are not familiar with the processes of legalizing their territory or resolving land conflicts.
 - Criterion 1.2: Recognize and respect both statutory and customary rights to lands, territories and resources.
 - Even if communities have areas of ancestral use, there were very few cases of zoning plans to demarcate land titles.
 - Criterion 1.3: Require free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of communities for any activities affecting them.
 - In the communities that were visited FPIC had not been done, and the internal decision-making processes can exclude certain groups, such as women; FPIC training is required for the technical officers and relevant rights holders and stakeholders.
- **Principle 2: The benefits of REDD+ are shared equitably among all relevant rights holders and stakeholders.**
 - Criterion 2.1: There is transparent and participatory assessment of predicted and actual benefits, costs and risks of the REDD+ program for relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups at all levels, with special attention to women and marginalized groups.
 - This assessment process remains to be developed.
 - Criterion 2.2: Transparent, participative, effective and efficient mechanisms are established for the equitable sharing of REDD+ program benefits among and within relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups taking into account socially differentiated risks.
 - The benefits of PSB are currently used to satisfy emergency needs, not under criteria of equitability, effectiveness or efficiency.
 - Criterion 2.3: Transparent and participative monitoring of the costs and benefits, including profits and their distribution, is done.
 - The communities do not monitor their PSB benefits. Capacity-building is required to assist in communities' prioritization and to ensure that resources are distributed and accounts are reported under criteria of efficiency, efficacy and equitability.
- **Principle 3: Improve long-term livelihood security and well-being of indigenous and local communities with special attention to women and the most marginalized and/or vulnerable people.**
 - Criterion 3.1: Generate additional positive impacts on long-term livelihood security and well-being of communities.
 - Communities lack the knowledge and skills required to monitor and evaluate program results in this respect.
 - Criterion 3.2: Participative evaluation of social, cultural, human rights, environmental and economic effects takes place.
 - Local populations are not familiar with concepts of payment for ecosystem services or economic incentives for conservation.
 - Criterion 3.3: Assess predicted or actual impacts to mitigate negative, and enhance positive, impacts on communities.
 - Information must be found at the level of policies and strategies in order to define and evaluate REDD+.
- **Principle 4: Contribute to good governance, to broader sustainable development and to social justice.**
 - Criterion 4.1: The governance structure of the REDD+ program is clearly defined, transparent, effective and accountable.
 - Methodologies are needed to generate an investment plan, report of accounts and monitoring of rights violations.

¹ "Customary rights" to lands and resources refers to patterns of long-standing community land and resource usage in accordance with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' customary laws, values, customs and traditions, rather than formal legal title.

- Criterion 4.2: Cohere with relevant policies, strategies and plans at all relevant levels; coordinate effectively among agencies.
 - Communities struggle to protect their territory, and have internal conflicts due to poor resource management and distribution.
- **Principle 5: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.**
 - Criterion 5.1: Identify, prioritize and map biodiversity and ecosystem services potentially affected by the REDD+ program.
 - A methodology is needed to generate such information, as well as specific objectives to fulfill this goal.
 - Criterion 5.2: Transparent assessment of predicted and actual, and positive and negative, environmental impacts.
 - Process indicators must be developed, and the program should consider an intercultural dialogue about conservation.
 - Criterion 5.3: Assess predicted and actual effects, in order to mitigate negative and enhance positive environmental impacts.
 - A mechanism is needed for additional planning and measurement to complete this goal.
- **Principle 6: All relevant rights holders and stakeholders participate fully and effectively in the REDD+ program.**
 - Criterion 6.1: Identify all rights holder and stakeholder groups; characterize their rights, interests and relevance to the program.
 - An evaluation mechanism is required, and must incorporate gender and age.
 - Criterion 6.2: All relevant rights holder and stakeholder groups that want to participate in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are fully involved through culturally appropriate, gender sensitive and effective participation.
 - Consultation must be adapted to local contexts, local governments must participate, and financial resources be guaranteed.
 - Criterion 6.3: Relevant actors determine the process and mechanism through which they will participate and be represented.
 - Relevant actors must be involved in developing the participation process, and choose their own representatives.
 - Criterion 6.4: Provide necessary information to rights holders and stakeholders in a culturally and gender sensitive and timely way.
 - Information must be socialized among communities; obstacles to participation should be identified and resolved.
 - Criterion 6.5: Build on, respect, support and protect traditional and other knowledge, skills, institutions and management systems.
 - A participative process to identify and support objectives of this goal is required.
 - Criterion 6.6: Identify and use processes for effective resolution of grievances and disputes related to the program or territory.
 - A transparent, impartial and accessible process, in communities' native languages, is required to address conflicts.
 - Criterion 6.7: Relevant actors have access to legal assistance and understand relevant legal processes.
 - Accessible legal services are required.
- **Principle 7: Relevant actors have timely access to adequate and precise information in order to make decisions.**
 - Criterion 7.1: Adequate information about the program is publicly available.
 - The government must support the adequate, free and timely access to information about REDD+.
 - Criterion 7.2: Information is provided in a timely and culturally appropriate way.
 - It is noted that this cannot be measured as a verifiable indicator.
 - Criterion 7.3: Representatives compile and disseminate all relevant information for those whom they represent.
 - A mechanism for analysis, processing and circulation of information within communities must be developed.
 - Criterion 7.4: Invest sufficient resources to provide and receive information in a timely and appropriate manner.
 - Sufficient resources are required to assure that information is socialized among relevant actors.
- **Principle 8: Comply with applicable local and national laws and international treaties, conventions and other instruments.**
 - Criterion 8.1: Comply with applicable local and national laws, and international instruments ratified or adopted by Ecuador.
 - Identify and monitor possible areas of conflict, and take measures to guarantee compliance.
 - Criterion 8.2: Undertake a process to reconcile inconsistencies between the REDD+ SES and existing laws where necessary.
 - A review process is required to analyze any inconsistencies between the Standards and the law.
 - Criterion 8.3: Relevant actors can understand, implement and monitor the legal requirements related to the program.
 - Mechanisms are required to ensure comprehension, as well as capacity-building among relevant actors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A detailed analysis of Ecuador's extractive policies is recommended to ensure better cohesion and coherence between public policies and land use planning aimed at combating the causes of deforestation. REDD+ planning should take into account the diversity among participants, including the status of groups that require priority attention, and strengthen the process of FPIC. Finally, resources from REDD+ should be invested in activities that improve quality of life among residents, and not to fulfill responsibilities of the state. A monitoring mechanism is required in the field, not only related to the use of economic resources but also with respect to social, economic, cultural and environmental changes associated with the implementation of REDD+.