



DRIVERS AND STRATEGIES...DO THEY MATCH?

“The long-term viability of REDD+ depends on altering business-as-usual activity in sectors currently driving greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from forests.”

So claims a recent report on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. But surely, I hear you ask, haven't we known this for years? Indeed we have. But have we acted on what we know?

The authors of the report, Gabrielle Kissinger, Martin Herold and Veronique de Sy, analyzed and reviewed scientific literature and 31 REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PPs) or UN-REDD National Programme Documents (NPDs). They make a clear distinction between direct and indirect drivers, an issue that many people continue to struggle with. They conclude that agriculture has been identified as the direct driver for an estimated 80 percent of deforestation worldwide. Timber extraction is the direct driver for more than 70 percent of total degradation in Latin America and subtropical Asia. Indirect drivers are divided into three different levels of relevance. At the international level, commodity prices and markets are the dominant indirect drivers. At the national level, the authors identify population growth, domestic markets, national policies and weak forest sector governance and institutions. Indirect drivers at the local level are primarily illegal activities (related to weak law enforcement), subsistence needs and, above all, poverty. Finally, the authors conclude that pressures from many international drivers to clear forests are expected to increase in future due to urbanization, increasingly meat-based diets, long-term population trends, increasing developing country prosperity, growth in developing country regional markets for key commodities, and climate change adaptation measures.

Again, we knew that, didn't we? Perhaps what we were not aware of is that most recommended actions under national REDD+ strategies (based on the assessment of the 31 R-PPs and NPDs) focus on direct drivers and not on indirect drivers, on forestry and not on other land-use sectors and on the past instead of potential future developments. Fifty-five percent of the R-PPs and NPDs identify sustainable forest management as a key element of a national REDD+ strategy, fuelwood efficiency and cookstoves are also identified by 55 percent of the documents, and 45 percent mention illegal logging, enforcement or institutional strengthening and some form of participatory forest management. This certainly does not sound like the full picture.

What could happen if tens of millions of indigenous peoples and rural communities expend major efforts to reverse fuel inefficiency and unsustainable practices in their areas, while the key indirect drivers continue unaddressed? Ultimately, their hard work may not generate the revenues required through the REDD+ mechanism to sustain such limited national strategies. They would not make the necessary progress in reducing deforestation and forest degradation. And that would spell a problem for the whole international initiative.

The report is intended to support the work of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) as it supports a process leading, hopefully, towards a decision on REDD+ at the COP18 in Doha.

If you would like to delve into the matter of drivers, you can download the report at <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/tackling-climate-change/international-climate-change/6316-drivers-deforestation-report.pdf> or <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/md/Whats-new/news/2012/new-report-on-the-drivers-of-deforestati.html?id=698382>. Then check whether business-as-usual activities in your country, project or strategy are adequately addressed. You may be surprised, one way or the other.

Go-REDD+ is an e-mail listserv managed by the UN-REDD Programme team in Asia-Pacific, based in Bangkok. The main objective of Go-REDD+ is to distribute information, synopses of research results and activities related to REDD+ in Asia-Pacific, to assist countries in their REDD+ readiness efforts. Old messages will be archived on the [Regional Activities pages](#) of the UN-REDD Programme website. Discussion forum on Go-REDD+ is available through UN-REDD Programme's online knowledge sharing platform, www.unredd.net. Please note that you must be a member to join the Discussion Forum. To request membership, please contact admin@unredd.net with your name and affiliation. The Go-REDD+ team welcomes feedback, suggestions or inquiries to goredd.th@undp.org.