**A comparative Overview of REDD+ Policy and**

**Governance Approaches Across the Africa Region**

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***Background:*** As many countries are moving forward in the REDD+ process, the institutional aspects of managing the process and activities are becoming increasingly important. ‘Institution’ in this context refers specifically to the set of rules and structures that organize and define human interactions (Ostrom et al. 2007). In the REDD+ framework, institutions are the agreements that are made on structures for management, deployment and monitoring of REDD+ funding.

***REDD-Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PP)*** developed by each country serve as a good foundation to compare first outlines of the institutions that countries are envisioning. With their R-PPs countries outline their respective REDD+ work plans in order to request funding from the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD programme. They outline management arrangements, consultation mechanisms, implementation frameworks reference levels and provisions for monitoring, reporting and verification.

***Synopsis***: The purpose of the study – on which this short presentation will be based - was to gain a better understanding of the approaches African countries are taking, or expect to be taking in terms of institutional structures related to REDD+. R-PPs of 13 African REDD+ countries (FCPF participants and candidates) have been compared in a desk-analysis. For each section of the R-PPs different indicators serve as points of comparison, highlighting any similarities or differences in approach. The result of the study was a mapping of country positions and their respective approaches to the different aspects of REDD+ institutions as articulated in the various sections of the R-PPs.

The study was commissioned by Carole Megevand (Sustainable Development Unit in the African Region of the Word Bank) and Benoit Bosquet (at that time Head of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, World Bank). The study was conducted by Johanna Wehkamp, Erik Winter Reed and Rajesh Koirala. The study is currently unpublished and in the review process. The results and views expressed do not reflect official positions of the World Bank.

***Major Findings***

***1. Governance issues are a central driver of deforestation in African countries***

Governance – as a broader concept – can be defined as efforts to coordinate human action towards a goal. [[1]](#footnote-1) Governance issues (corruption, weak land tenure, inconsistencies in policy, lack of coordination among sectors, non-enforcement of land management plans etc.) were emphatically identified as domestic drivers of deforestation in Africa, as described in national R-PPs. As the figure below shows, governance issues are systematically identified as a dominant concern when it comes to drivers of deforestation.

**Figure 1***: Relative frequency of different drivers of deforestation (as mentioned in the R-PPs)*

Part of the difficulty of this assessment is that most countries do not have reliable data on drivers of deforestation and the identified drivers are estimates. It is very difficult to assess and prove the direct impact of weak governance on forest cover. Most R-PPs are generally based on stakeholder feedback and reflect the given information that is available.

The high priority given to governance issues creates a paradox: On the one hand countries tend to perceive them as crucial, but on the other hand most of them do not propose concrete measure to address governance issues beyond the early preparation phase. Governance issues create the challenge for countries to define actions that are concrete and feasible.

***2. African countries have different priorities in their REDD+ strategies***

In spite of the similarities in drivers of deforestation, countries put forward rather different REDD+ strategies, adopting REDD+ to their needs, political system and national context.

The approach that countries identified related to improving institutions for REDD+ can be distinguished along three major lines:

(1) Focus on *designing a new legal framework* (improving the legal framework, e.g. reforms in the land tenure system, reforms in the tax system (or code)),

(2) *Strengthen the existing institutional framework* and policies (e.g. monitoring of implementation, enforcement and capacity building),

(3) Focus on *direct emission reduction projects* (e.g. reforestation, agro-forestry of the distribution of improved plant material…).



**Figure 2:** *Mapping of the priorities in the REDD+ strategies of African countries[[2]](#footnote-2)*

***3. The interconnectedness of different elements of the implementation framework***

The implementation framework in the R-PPs outlines the set of rules and institutions that countries propose in order to implement their strategy. The three major elements that have been analyzed in the report are (1) the definition of carbon rights, (2) the financial architecture for REDD+, and (3) the proposed benefit sharing mechanism. In most cases, there is still a high level of uncertainty regarding the definition of these elements and propositions are preliminary.

In the context of this workshop, I will concentrate on the definition of carbon rights and the proposed benefit sharing mechanism, because they are more relevant to our discussion.

***3.1. The Definition of Carbon Rights***

Models for Carbon Ownership range from state ownership to individual ownership. Yet, a lot of countries haven’t taken a clear stance on this yet.

* + ***National ownership*** of carbon might allow more structural and coordinated action, yet it is not sure how much local ownership of REDD+ could ultimately be achieved through state ownership.
	+ ***Individual/Communal ownership*** of carbon can allow a higher level of local involvement. It is as such a relatively more liberal model, with stronger links to the idea of carbon trading. However, individual ownership restricts the state in its capacity to implement structural measures and address indirect drivers of deforestation.

The table below gives an overview of different approaches to carbon rights of African countries that have been advanced in a preliminary manner in the R-PPs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **State Ownership** | **Individual /Community Ownership** | **Both approaches are considered**  | **Issue has not been explored yet**  |
| Burkina Faso CameroonGhana Liberia | Kenya MadagascarMozambiqueUganda  | Central African Republic Republic of the CongoDR Congo | EthiopiaTanzania |

 **Figure 3**: *Mapping different approaches to carbon ownership* [[3]](#footnote-3)

***3.2. Benefit Sharing Mechanism***

Models on benefit sharing range from national benefit sharing mechanisms to decentralized local benefit sharing mechanisms.

* *National benefit sharing*: With national benefit sharing mechanisms reforms could be financed
* *National redistribution fund*: Strongly associated with the idea of natural resource redistribution funds. Yet, while many sovereign wealth funds (such as Norway) attempt to invest in the long-term needs of the country, in the REDD+ context national redistribution funds are often associated with a potential link to direct cash-transfer.
* *Local level benefit sharing through state authority*: With local level benefit sharing mechanisms the needs of the population surrounding the project can be addressed effectively (e.g. schools, clinics…).
* *Project level benefit sharing:* Some propose direct project level benefit sharing, realised by the project operators, with taxes on carbon credits being directed to the state to assure its share of the revenue.

The below figure illustrates the different propositions of African countries regarding benefit sharing. Most countries have not yet definitely decided on one of the approaches.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **National benefit sharing mechanism** | **National redistribution fund** | **Local BS managed by a decentralized state authority**  | **Local or project level benefit sharing with a share to the state** | **Not yet clarified**  |
| Burkina FasoCAR (1)Ghana | DRCMadagascar | Republic of the Congo | Cameroon CAR (2)Liberia  | Ethiopia KenyaMozambiqueTanzaniaUganda  |

**Figure 4:** *Mapping African countries approaches to benefit sharing[[4]](#footnote-4)*

***Concluding Observations:***

*1. The different elements of the implementation framework for REDD+ are strongly interrelated*

* The definition of carbon rightsshapes REDD+ fundamentally. It plays an important role in determining the scope of national REDD+ stakeholders, the forms of intervention, the disbursement of funding and the models for benefit sharing mechanisms.

*2. For many countries a certain degree of perplexity could be observed with regards to defining the different elements of the implementation framework in a precise manner [[5]](#footnote-5)*

* Countries seem to express a certain reluctance in the R-PPs to concretely define their implementation frameworks (in their R-PP only three countries have relatively definite and coherent propositions for carbon ownership, financial mechanism and benefit sharing)
* The mutual dependence between the definition of carbon rights, financial mechanism and benefit sharing is often not yet fully recognised and integrated into a coherent framework in the R-PPs
* Deciding on governance elements is ultimately (as in every other field) a choice between different policy models, with different implications
* The national and international dialogue around REDD+ must engage more clearly in this debate, assess options and decide

*3. When countries put a strong emphasis on addressing indirect drivers of deforestation in their strategy they often don’t propose an implementation framework, which would allow addressing these indirect drivers in a targeted manner beyond the readiness phase.*

* Possible reasons for this lack of concreteness
* Early stage of national evolution on REDD+ at which some R-PPs have been written
* Silence from international negotiations and authorities creating uncertainty
* A dominant general narrative on REDD+ that focuses on a project level approach

Moving ahead with REDD+ there seems to be a need for robust macro-level/governance-focused thinking, in order for countries to be able to construct models for REDD+ that are in line with their expressed strategy.

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1. IUFRO, 2011. Embracing Complexity: Meeting the Challenges of International Forest Governance, World Series, vol.28. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Kenya R-PP:** *“Many of the REDD+ strategies in our portfolio* ***will not involve developing new initiatives****, when for example they stem from existing policies or programs approve projects with a clear statement that the relevant project will be recognized once an international REDD+ mechanism is in place (provided the project is in line with international guidelines).”* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **Kenya’s R-PP on carbon rights**: *KFS has in some few cases offloaded all* ***carbon rights to communities*** *who have invested in management and conservation of specific forest blocks with climate change mitigation as an added benefit. Some communities expect that revenue for timber sales and payments for ecosystem services will be shared, but no agreement has been reached on this issue and it is not specifically covered in the new policy and law, and is a potential source of future conflict.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **Kenya’s R-PP on benefit sharing:** *“Benefit sharing arrangements are being discussed between KFS and communities but are not finalized. The benefits include access to firewood and other resources in forests and participation in taungya system planting in plantations“.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **Uncertainty with regards to the international negotiations as expressed in the Kenyan R-PP *“****The international REDD+ mechanism expected to be finalized in the coming months* [comment from the author: This was in 2010] *will likely clarify the modalities by which Kenya will be able to access funding for REDD+ strategies it may select. In the meantime, therefore, our priority is to elaborate on the institutional, legal, economic and policy designs that various REDD+ strategies will require (as described in component 2c Implementation Arrangements).”*

*[…] This approach also buys time while international REDD+ financial channels become better defined within the context of UNFCCC and other bilateral settings. Care must be taken to not raise expectations during the R-PP phase for activities that are still being tested and designed.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)