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The Potential Benefits of REDD + for Communities in Nepal

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Forests play a major role as a carbon sink and as a means to store carbon, yet deforestation and degradation are rife. Deforestation contributes more than 18% of global CO₂ emissions. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in Developing countries (REDD+) is a new mechanism that aims to address climate change. Although it is widely believed that stopping deforestation and forest degradation will reduce overall global carbon emissions, the benefits brought about by REDD+ to local communities and indigenous people have received little attention. There are currently no effective mechanisms to distribute the benefits to communities. It is still not clear what the benefits will be, nor what systems could be used to share them, or how to make sure they reach down to local people.

This study will look for effective mechanisms to distribute REDD+ benefits to collaborative forest management groups (CFMGs) in Nepal. It will define the potential benefits that communities might expect from REDD+ projects and will analyze the opportunity costs of REDD+ for CFMGs. Based on the hypothesis that an equitable distribution of REDD+ benefits can be achieved by measuring the performance of local groups towards REDD+, the research will develop an effective means to evaluate the performance of CFMGs in achieving the aims of REDD+.

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