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ENGAGE! EXPLORE! CHANGE!

Field Dialogue on REDD+ Benefit Sharing

02–05 June, 2014 | Quintana Roo, Mexico

Co-Chairs' Summary Report

By Sergio Humberto Graf Montero, Isilda Nhantumbo, Milagre Nuvunga, and Rosa Maria Vidal

1. INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The Forests Dialogue (TFD) has been organizing a series of international dialogues under its [initiative on REDD+ Benefit Sharing](#). The initiative is part of IUCN's project titled *REDD+ Benefits: Facilitating countries and communities in the design of pro-poor REDD+ benefit sharing schemes* funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), International Climate Initiative (ICI). The initiative aims to:

- Develop understanding of the current state of REDD+ Benefit Sharing in key REDD+ countries and identify the challenges for designing and implementing those mechanisms more broadly;
- Build a “community of practice” among locally-rooted, well-connected REDD+ practitioners to share experiences and develop practical tools that support effective, efficient and equitable benefit sharing for REDD+;
- Promote appropriate economic, policy and institutional arrangements at the local, national and international levels to facilitate equitable, effective and efficient delivery of REDD+ Benefit Sharing mechanisms.

Under this initiative, TFD organized a [scoping dialogue](#), hosted by the World Bank and PROFOR in March 2013, to identify key issues and challenges for designing REDD+ benefit sharing. In addition to identifying key issues and challenges, it was agreed to run a series of field dialogues to further explore the concept by linking on-the-ground experiences to policy making at national and international levels. [The first field dialogue](#) was organized in Vietnam, 24–27 September 2013. [A second field dialogue](#) was organized in Ghana, 2–5 December 2013 followed by [a third field dialogue](#) in Peru, 24–28 February, 2014.

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Co-chair Sergio Humberto
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A final field dialogue was organized in Chetumal, Mexico in partnership with the Mexican Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), Mexican Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and IUCN Regional Office for Mesoamerica and the Caribbean. 24 international participants from 13 countries and 33 experts from Mexico participated in the dialogue.

This report summarizes key observations and discussions from the dialogue. More details about the dialogue including field trip locations, presentations and group works can be found [here](#).



Co-chair Isilda Nhantumbo

2. OVERVIEW OF REDD+ BENEFIT SHARING IN MEXICO

Mexico's REDD+ strategy is intended to coordinate different sectors and stakeholders in rural areas and is expected to follow a territorial and landscape approach in which integrated and sustainable rural development acts as the foundation for REDD+ implementation. And REDD+ is only going to be one instrument among many others the Mexico government utilizes to seek a low-carbon growth path. The Strategy is expected to unfold in details at a subnational level under national guidance.



Co-chair Milagre Nuvunga

At national level, the participative process for the construction of the National Strategy on REDD+ (ENAREDD+) began in 2010 with the development of the Vision on REDD+. This document has been largely drawn up in a participatory process and provides general guidance on how benefit sharing might be designed. The strategy includes the mitigation of climate change in different land uses, not only in forest land, and promotes a rural sustainable development model with low carbon emission. The strategy also envisions a transparent, equitable and fair benefit sharing scheme to transfer resources at the local level in Mexico (BalderasTorres, A. and Skutsch, M., 2014).

Sub-nationally, priority areas for REDD+ early actions are located in the states of Jalisco, Chiapas and in the Yucatan Peninsula (in the States of Yucatan, Campeche, and Quintana Roo). The REDD+ Early Actions are institutionally coordinated efforts at the subnational level (regional and local) aimed at addressing the causes of forest and forest carbon loss through a variety of public policy instruments that create economic and social development opportunities for communities. These REDD+ early action areas represent areas that provide an opportunity for testing specific actions in the field and promoting sustainable rural development through the development



Co-chair Rosa Maria Vidal

Current productive activities performed in forested areas are developed by land owners or by “posesionarios legales” land (e.g., *ejidos*, communities, indigenous groups, individuals, firms) and distribute economic benefits from those activities according to the decisions made by themselves.

In Mexico the legal framework establishes that as vegetation and soils in forests capture carbon, the property rights relating to that carbon lie with the legal owners of land (e.g., *ejidos*, communities, indigenous groups, individuals, firms). The Vision aims to promote an *equitable distribution of benefits based on social agreements*, the guiding principles for this include gender equity, grassroots participation and certainty and respect for property rights of landholders, among others. It also indicates that the purpose of finance to be obtained for results based activities should be integrated within a *fair* system for benefit sharing. In the third phase of REDD+ implementation, Mexico should have a *fair* and equitable system for benefit sharing (BalderasTorres, A. and Skutsch, M., 2014).

The strategy states that for REDD+, Mexico should design a *transparent, equitable and fair* benefit sharing scheme to transfer resources at the local level (CONAFOR, 2012). The implementation of REDD+ will identify those activities that generate *more social benefits and support rural sustainable development* (BalderasTorres, A. and Skutsch, M., 2014).

A plan to implement REDD+ has already been proposed by the Mexico government through an Emissions Reductions Project Idea Note (ER-PIN) to Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). In order to accommodate different local context in designing REDD+ Benefit Sharing, local implementing agencies will propose Investment Plans. Multi-stakeholder committees at state level will be tasked to evaluate those plans. The approved Investment Plans will receive initially up-front financing by the federal government through current subsidy and non-subsidy programmes. Specific benefit sharing schemes will be made at the regional and local levels between government, implementing agencies and relevant stakeholders given the local context (BalderasTorres, A. and Skutsch, M., 2014).

The Mexico government has committed to finance capacity building at the local level and continue its public programs that can create enabling conditions for REDD+ activities with domestic resources. Any payments received for results from reduced emissions would be channelled to local rights holders (BalderasTorres, A. and Skutsch, M., 2014.)

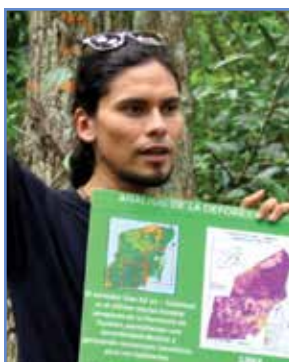
3. FIELD TRIP OBSERVATIONS

During the first 2 days of the dialogue, participants had the opportunity to discuss with local stakeholders lessons learnt from the integrated conservation and development approach in Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. This integrated approach also lies at the heart of Mexico's REDD+ Strategy: integration of public land use policies, beyond forest land, that promotes integrated and sustainable rural development while strengthening community management of forest and conservation of its biodiversity. Some of the key observations include:

- ➔ **Secure rights over land and natural resources enable flow of benefits to local level:** Under the 1917 Mexican Constitution, the Mexico government broke up large farms to enable the distribution of most of its land (estimates range between 53–80 percent) to rural village collectives (*ejidos*) and indigenous communities. (USAID, 2012) 56 percent of the land in Yucatan Peninsula



Participants at the Ejido de Felipe Carrillo Puerto



EFCP community member explains deforestation trends



Field participants learn about Ejido Noh Bec forestry



ENB community member explains sustainable timber production

is owned by ejidos and indigenous communities. Ejido members own individual parcels and communal land. The secure property rights over land and forests by locals have set the foundation for strong local enterprises that manage and benefit directly from natural resources including forests.

- ➔ **Integrated conservation and development approach at landscape level ensures livelihood improvements for local communities while delivering environmental benefits including carbon benefits:** The integrated conservation and development approach adopted by the Mexico government focuses on livelihood improvements to motivate local stakeholders to manage natural resources sustainably. In Yucatan Peninsula, under REDD+, CONABIO and CONAFOR have been focusing on supporting communities in land use planning; conservation; sustainable forest management; and agro-forestry and silvo-pastoral management. They promote multipurpose uses of forests including eco-tourism in order to diversify and improve incomes for local producers and communities while ensuring conservation of forests and their biodiversity, and promote certifications schemes for community producers to increase their access to better/niche markets. In this context, potential carbon payments are being discussed as an additional benefit that land owners committed to managing their land sustainably and in keeping with REDD+ principles would receive. This approach was implemented as a way of enabling the adoption of carbon enhancing forest management strategies while effectively managing people's expectations of large payouts by the government or by industrialized countries.
- ➔ **Profitability of the various activities is the key to providing the necessary incentives for changing land use practices:** As noted in the field activities, some productive activities are compatible with forest conservation for example non-timber forest products such as honey production and cosmetics production from bee-keeping. But some of those activities will need enabling investments to become profitable. REDD+ funds are potential sources for those enabling investments required. Another important aspect is that planning for investment plans and activities needs to consider potential negative impacts of natural disasters. As observed in the field trip, an otherwise profitable and sustainable (FSC certified) timber enterprise suffered devastating effects of hurricane. Insurance against such events will need to be integrated into planning REDD+ related investments to ensure permanence.
- ➔ **Capacity building over sustained time period enables local communities to manage benefits collectively and sustainably:** It took more than 20 years for different ejidos and cooperatives visited by participants to reach the current strong collective organization structure and manage the profits from the business strategically. The success of the ejidos and cooperatives visited builds

upon the following enabling conditions: participatory decision-making process; transparency; conflict resolution mechanism; value additions to their products by vertical integration of supply chain. The example of the Chicza enterprise demonstrates that this ultimately creates opportunity for larger benefits to be shared with local people involved in harvesting and value addition. To achieve all of the above requires strong partnerships among communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government and private sector including small medium local enterprises. It also requires continued investments in research and capacity building by government and NGOs as well as by communities themselves. It was noted that rural Mexico is populated by aging populations. Special efforts are being made to build capacity and interests for the young generation to engage and participate, and ensure sustainability of REDD+ related activities.

- **More proactive and affirmative actions are needed to ensure equitable sharing of benefits among women and men:** As a direct result of the patriarchal nature of local communities, the rights of women over land and natural resources are weak and sometimes unclear. This has translated into difficulties for women to control resources and derive benefits from them including potential benefits from REDD+ activities. Gender sensitive policies alone won't be able to address the issue. Proactive and affirmative actions need to happen on the ground to address gender participation in decision making, economic activities, and benefit sharing. For example, the participants discussed that a gender transformative agenda can be achieved through gender screening of investment plans including integration in national and subnational plans and budgets, capacity development of institutions at different level as well as monitoring the achievements of the targets set in this regard.
- **Rewarding previous good forest stewardship:** There are existing programs and community activities that have been sustainably using forests resources. The challenge remains: how REDD+ can be designed to avoid creating perverse incentives for those stakeholders who won't be able to demonstrate "additionality"? Ensuing discussions suggested that besides the "Stock and Flow" proposal, REDD+ should invest in enabling conditions to benefit those who have been conserving the forests while incentivizing others to improve their land use activities: e.g., providing micro-finance for sustainable forests products. It was also noted that in Mexico, there are a variety of programs that are supporting sustainable rural development and the government can bundle those programs to provide different incentives for different groups: if REDD+ is only designed to target drivers of deforestation and degradation; other programs can be put in place or be maintained/strengthened to reward good forest stewardship.

4. KEY WAYS FORWARD IN MEXICO ON REDD+ BENEFIT SHARING

Based on the field trip experiences as well as information shared by experts from Mexico, dialogue participants had two-days of facilitated discussions in both plenary and small groups in Chetumal around four questions.



Jaime Severino

How can gender considerations be more integrated in REDD+ Benefit Sharing strategy?

For decades, women’s inclusion in natural resource management has been an extremely difficult challenge: social-cultural factors underlie women’s exclusion in forest management; historically women have had little or no rights over land and natural resources. This has resulted in a continued inability to share from benefits accruing from most forms of land and resource use. REDD+ may not be the silver bullet that could solve this problem but it is an opportunity to further the debate both at the policy level and through specific actions.



Timber from Ejido Noh Bec



Participants observe packaging of locally produced gum, Chicza



Ejido Noh Bec community member

FIGURE 1 INTEGRATING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INTO REDD+ BENEFIT SHARING STRATEGY



Participants suggested the following key ways forward to integrate the gender aspect in Mexico’s existing REDD+ Benefit Sharing Strategy:

Research:

- Building on existing studies, develop deeper understanding of both women and men's contributions and roles in sustainable forest management and other REDD + activities;
- Document best practices of REDD+ or other relevant activities or programs that adequately address the gender issue.

Capacity building:

- Design targeted activities to support young women's groups to be involved in natural resource management;
- Build capacity for women to work directly with leaders in communities, engage in decision making including the preparation of Investment Plans, and participate in daily activities such as resource monitoring;
- Build capacity of key policy and decision makers including parliamentarians, civil servants, civil society organizations and local people on gender transformative options including tools for planning, budgeting and monitoring changes.

Policies and regulations:

- Develop practical guidelines and plans to promote gender sensitive REDD+ activities;
- Prioritize support for activities that empowers women's capacity while contributing to REDD+ objectives;
- Explicitly require Investment Plans to address women's participation: e.g., how women have been involved in preparation; how women will benefit; how women will participate in the implementation.

Communication:

- Develop a communication strategy to educate the public about gender issues (for example, toolkits, material for illiterate individuals);
- Organize public events that acknowledge gender champions.

Compliance and accountability:

- Develop a multi-sector independent platform that can monitor compliance on gender related indicators and report to political and decision making bodies;
- Review performance of administrators regarding gender mainstreaming targets;
- Establish gender sensitive indicators;
- Include financial resources to monitor and audit gender related issues for REDD+ activities.



Ejido Noh Bec community member explains forest use plan



Juan Manuel Mauricio Leguizamo



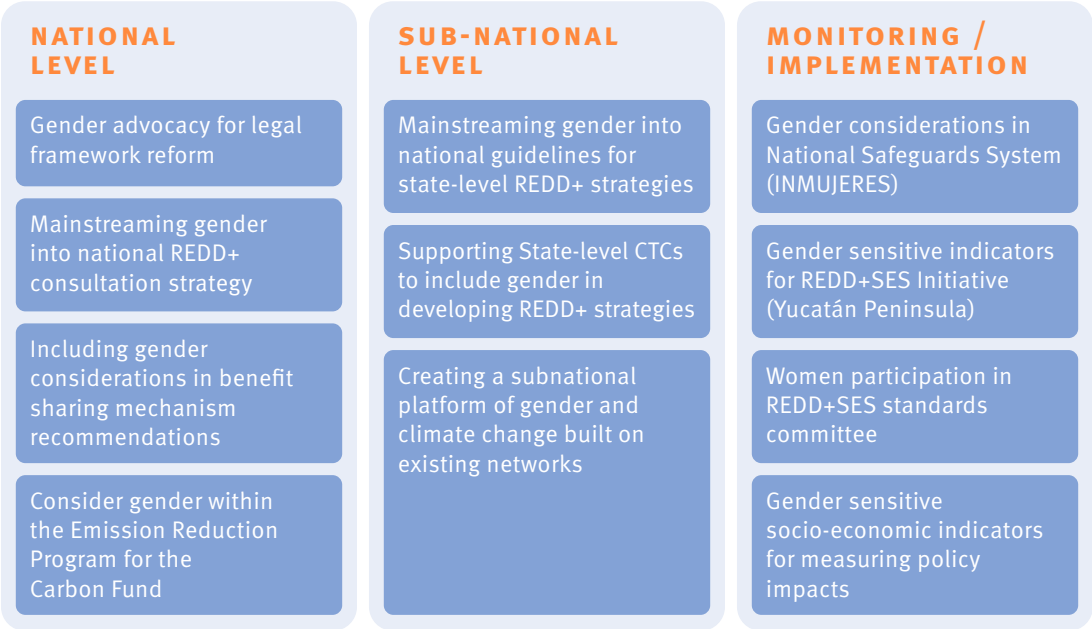
Victoria J. Santos Jiménez



Dominic Walubengo

Participants also proposed a road map for gender inclusion in REDD+ Benefit Sharing in Mexico and many components of this road map have been embedded in a gender strategy developed by the Mexico government and IUCN:

FIGURE 2 ROAD MAP FOR GENDER INCLUSION IN REDD+ BENEFIT SHARING IN MEXICO



How to identify the beneficiaries of REDD+ to support the development and implementation of Mexico’s REDD+ strategy?

The Mexico government has committed to using domestic resources to invest in enabling conditions and initial activities to reduce pressure on forests and although not relying on it, can pave the way for eventual result-based payments. Challenge lies in how to identify who are the local beneficiaries. Given that there are big regional differences (environmental, social, economic), it is better to determine the beneficiaries based on local contexts through the Investment Plans with guidance from central government.

At the national level, there can be general principles and guidelines designed to guide the identification of beneficiaries at sub-national levels. For example, a principle that allows not only stakeholders with land rights but also stakeholders who take actions to address drivers of deforestation and degradation to access benefits from REDD+. Safeguards will be one of those guidelines at the national level to ensure the equitable distribution of benefits as well as the rights of women, young people and indigenous people.

At the sub-national level, identification of beneficiaries will need to be done in a participatory manner, involving all stakeholder groups from different land use sectors. It is important to note that there are different levels of local governance as well (from

regional government, local governments, to local ejido and community authorities). All levels will need to be involved in the planning phase in order to ensure specific local contexts are taken into consideration. Negotiated and signed contracts can be utilized as a tool to involve those who do not have formal land titles and to ensure accountability among beneficiaries.

How to select which activities would receive benefits given the current Mexico REDD+ strategy when resources are limited?

The criteria used to select activities could be based on Mexico's Low Carbon Development Plan. Previous processes that contribute to low carbon development should be recognized. Some overarching criteria would include activities that:

- ➔ Tackle drivers of deforestation and degradation with a focus on rural sustainable development;
- ➔ Include vulnerable group indicators (young/women/elderly);
- ➔ Prioritize areas where communities desire enabling investments to establish local collective enterprises;
- ➔ Include clear assessment and accountability mechanisms.

There is a need to include different sectors both in and outside forests. Some of the activities should be designed to create enabling conditions including education, capacity building, information sharing and governance strengthening. Point-based systems can be established for select activities: activities that score most of the points (meet most of the criteria) would be prioritized to receive funding.

With regards to productive land-use activities that are drivers of deforestation and degradation (e.g., agriculture activities), those that fit the following criteria could be activities that receive benefits:

- ➔ Positively affect the change of land use to be climate smart;
- ➔ Contribute to stabilizing the agricultural frontier against forests;
- ➔ Promote sustainable agricultural practices;
- ➔ Diversify the use of agriculture land: e.g., agroforestry; silvo-pasture;
- ➔ Sustainably manage and conserve natural resources as part of its productive system.

With regards to forestry and conservation activities, those that could be considered include:

- ➔ Good management of forest areas (received forest-certification and adhere to social and environmental safeguards);
- ➔ Activities that strengthen local and regional governance towards forest landscape management;
- ➔ Management of fire and restoration of hurricane affected areas;



Adolfo Mezúa

- ➔ Activities that demonstrate greater number of co-benefits (water, biodiversity, reduction in carbon emission, etc.);
- ➔ Activities that help maintain and increase stocks of carbon;
- ➔ Promotion of collaborative agreements and actions to optimize the outcome of upfront investments.

With regards to other supporting social and economic activities, the following aspects could be taken into consideration:



Dialogue participants hike into EFCP forest

- ➔ Websites that indicate the locations of forests and poverty stricken areas (linking with the National Crusade Against Hunger);
- ➔ Communities with forest landscapes, indigenous population and a higher proportion of vulnerable groups (women, youth, etc.);
- ➔ Public campaigns/education on the social, environmental and economic benefits of sustainably managed forest products to cultivate domestic and regional markets;
- ➔ Activities related to groups who do not own land but are actively interacting with forest landscapes;
- ➔ Training and extension services for sustainable rural development;
- ➔ Loans and guarantees to promote sustainable rural development (to create enabling conditions and eliminate barriers to access);
- ➔ Activities that create new market opportunities such as local demand for Non Timber Forests Products, eco-tourism;
- ➔ Activities that support local enterprises (e.g., encourage entrepreneurship; improve profitability and competitiveness).



Field dialogue participants

What should be the principles/guidelines at the federal government level to guide the design of the Investment Plans at sub-national levels?

As discussed earlier, in Mexico, local implementing agencies will design the details of REDD+ Benefit Sharing based on the local contexts under the guidance of federal government. Besides the guidelines on selection of beneficiaries and activities, participants also discussed other key principles/guidelines that can help facilitate the design of equitable, effective and efficient benefit sharing at sub-national levels.

Participants suggested some pre-conditions to establish Investment Plans and some general principles for Investment Plans to adhere to:



Dawn Rodriguez-Ward

Pre-conditions:

- Analyze land use dynamics and identify drivers of deforestation and degradation to set the foundation for evidence-based plans;
- Engage stakeholders from different land use sectors, especially those identified as drivers of deforestation and degradation;
- Demonstrate the institutional capacity or the strategy to improve institutional capacity to implement Investment Plans;

General principles:

- Harmonize policies, subsidies and investments among different land uses to optimize incentives towards low carbon development;
- Engage both those who have land rights and those who work the land;
- Demonstrate financial viability: how the initial funding can generate sustained incomes for rural population and leverage private investments (including assessment of potential markets locally and internationally);
- Ensure full and effective participation in the design of investment plans by Indigenous communities and rural population;
- Design mechanisms to ensure environmental and social safeguards;
- Include plans to build on existing structures and experiences;
- Uphold the principle of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) and establish criteria and process to guarantee it;
- Include conflict resolution mechanisms;
- Ensure transparency of management of public resources;
- Establish plans for how benefit will be shared once result-based payments are received.

The following stakeholder groups should be involved in design and assessing the Investment Plans to ensure transparency and participatory approach:

- Public agents of territorial development that manage public resources;
- NGOs that work on rural development;
- Communities that may receive benefits, but need to avoid creating false expectations;
- Private Sector including asset investors, philanthropic investors as well as small medium enterprises and local entrepreneurs.

Participants also note that there will be different levels of flexibility given to local implementing agencies in designing the Investment Plans through different phases of REDD+: In the early phases of operation (until 2017), there will be more detailed rules for operation to optimize upfront investments by domestic resources; when activities start to transition into result-based payments, there could be more flexibility in the guidelines to accommodate different mechanisms adopted locally to deliver on emission reduction; the flexibility can increase even more as activities mature to function and generate incomes on its own.

5. NEXT STEPS

Dialogue organizers including TFD, CONABIO, CONAFOR and IUCN will share the lessons learnt from Mexico Dialogue with their boarder networks. The key lessons from the dialogue will inform policy design and implementation of REDD+ Benefit Sharing in Mexico and be fed into international platforms including UNFCCC.

TFD will produce a review document which summarizes key lessons learnt through the initiative and key case studies including experiences from Mexico, Peru, Ghana and Vietnam. The Review document will be released during COP 20 in December, 2014.

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