



SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF REDD+: *SEEING THE PEOPLE FOR THE TREES*

ISSUES BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

International efforts to address climate change include major emphasis on the role of forests in mitigating climate change, through an approach known as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancements of forest carbon stocks (REDD+). While initial REDD+ efforts focused on carbon sequestration, over time the social and environmental issues and impacts have gained increasing attention.

As expressed in its REDD+ Strategy, the U.S. Government aims to contribute significantly to ensuring the **social and environmental soundness** (SES) of REDD+ design and implementation. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as a development agency, wants to ensure that any REDD+ and Sustainable Landscapes¹ support includes these soundness elements, which are crucial to ensure sustainability of interventions and achieving significant development outcomes.

USAID's **Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program** is providing technical assistance and training on REDD+ issues in three specific areas – Social and Environmental Soundness; Finance and Carbon Markets (FCM); and Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV). FCMC also is supporting work on a related issue, Low-Emissions Development Strategies (LEDS). In 2011, FCMC sponsored an experts consultation workshop and two other events to assess the social dimensions of REDD+, the status of ongoing efforts, and issues needing further support.² The experts workshop clarified the **key social issues** that need to be addressed as REDD+ is rolled out, **existing resources and initiatives** addressing these issues, **gaps and how to fill them**. The events have informed the ongoing social soundness work of FCMC and USAID. This brief highlights the key findings and recommendations.

Box 1. What is social and environmental soundness? How does it apply to REDD+?

Social and environmental soundness in development programs and projects refers to solid, comprehensive consideration and incorporation of social and environmental issues into program design and implementation, based on scientifically sound social and environmental processes and analyses. With respect to REDD+, social and environmental soundness includes attention to social and environmental safeguards and standards, stakeholders, multiple social and environmental benefits (REDD+ co-benefits), benefit sharing, social and environmental impact assessments and evaluations, governance, land and resource tenure, carbon rights and human rights, conserving natural capital, building social capital, and sustainability. Social and environmental soundness incorporates systems approaches to understanding complex human societies and ecosystems at various scales.

¹ The U.S. Agency for International Development's *Global Climate Change* Initiative supports work on three topics: Clean Energy, Adaptation, and Sustainable Landscapes. The latter encompasses USAID's work on climate change mitigation, initially focused on REDD+.

² A three-day international experts meeting on the *Social Dimensions of REDD+* was held from October 16 to 18, 2011 at the Airlie Center in Warrenton, Virginia, with 40 experts covering a range of key issues related to social soundness of REDD+. This workshop was followed by a [public forum](#) on the same topic, held on October 20, 2011, at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC. The results were further discussed at a U.S. State Department and USAID side event, *Seeing the People with the Trees*, during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP 17) in Durban, South Africa.

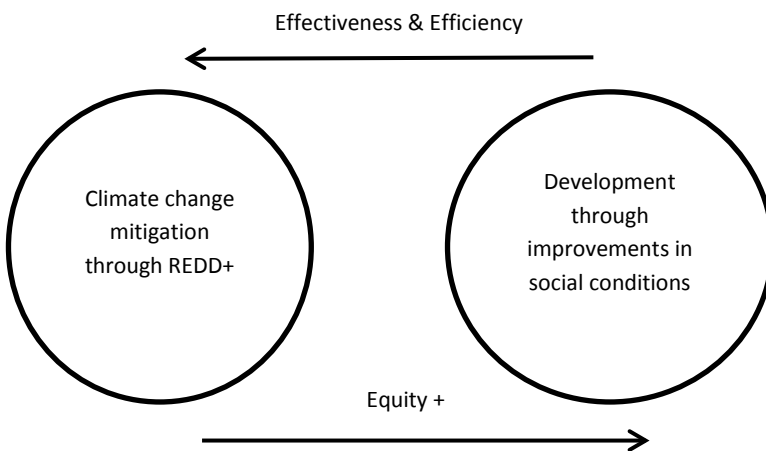
BACKGROUND

REDD+ was initiated with a focus on the need to better capture the economic value of standing forests as a way to contribute to mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration – by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Over time, REDD+ activities have **increasingly focused on social and environmental issues** implicit in reaching the objectives of carbon sequestration. In 2010, at the Cancun meeting of the UNFCCC, agreement was reached on seven safeguards for REDD+. Other work ongoing at that time included consideration of REDD+ co-benefits, or multiple benefits; stakeholder participation, including the roles of specific stakeholder groups, i.e., Indigenous Peoples and women; and strategic environmental and social assessments of proposed REDD+ programs.

FCMC convened an experts meeting to focus specifically on the social dimensions of REDD+, to look at the different issues in a broader context, and to discuss whether other important social issues were being overlooked. Although social and environmental soundness are integrally intertwined, social dimensions and soundness require a specific focus.

Social dimensions of REDD+ can be approached from numerous angles. Building on ideas in the 2006 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) (Angelsen 2008, 2009) had proposed that key REDD+ criteria could be summarized as the “3E+” – carbon **effectiveness**, cost **efficiency**, social **equity**, plus social and environmental co-benefits.

Figure 1. Linking Social Soundness to Improved REDD+ Outcomes



gender issues contributes to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of development programs.

For REDD+ success, it is vital to understand how effectiveness, efficiency, and equity issues are interlinked. Thus, the key issues addressed during the FCMC expert workshop and subsequent events related to how **social soundness processes and approaches** can contribute to REDD+ outcomes by:

- Improving the **effectiveness and efficiency of REDD+**
- Addressing **equity** outcomes of REDD+ and achieving other development goals
- Promoting **gender issues** and **women’s empowerment**



SEEING THE PEOPLE WITH THE TREES: SOCIAL DIMENSIONS IN REDD+

Friday, December 2, 2011 3:00 - 4:30 PM U.S. Center
17th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC
Durban, South Africa

U.S. CENTER 2011 DURBAN



The experts workshop began with broad overviews of how social soundness in REDD+ is a key issue for USAID and the U.S. Government's work on REDD+. As a development agency, USAID puts **people at the center of all development** work. Moreover, USAID strives to ensure the sustainability of its development work. Thus, the aim is for the development activities to be sustainable over the long-term, even after USAID support is phased out. Activities need to be well-integrated into the local socio-cultural, economic, and environmental context to ensure sustainability. Thus, social soundness in USAID program design and implementation is intended to lead to the social sustainability of these interventions.

Three **core principles** underlie all USAID work on the social dimensions of REDD+: “do no harm,” “do good,” and “no regrets.” USAID wants to ensure that REDD+ activities at a minimum, “do no harm” to people or the environment, and “do good” by bringing social and environmental benefits. Moreover, given the uncertainty regarding the future evolution of REDD+ negotiations, USAID supports activities that will yield positive social, environmental and development outcomes and impacts, irrespective of what happens with REDD+, i.e., the “no regrets” approach.

During the experts workshop, the first day was devoted to discussion of gender issues vis-à-vis REDD+, the second day to issues of effectiveness and efficiency, and the third day to equity and other issues. Following the experts workshop, the major points on these three themes were summarized for presentation and further discussion at the public forum. These themes were again used in the Durban side event.

The experts workshop participants included a wide range of experts on social, development, and REDD+ issues – USAID staff, social scientists, colleagues from the non-governmental community and private sector. Experts had experience in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as within Europe and the United States, including with Native Americans.

Box 2. USAID Expertise in Social Issues Relevant for REDD+

- Creation of enabling environments
- Capacity building
- Gender issues, i.e., mainstreaming gender analysis into all programming and implementation
- Community-based natural resource management and community forestry
- Sustainable forest management, forest certification and legality
- Landscape analysis, working on natural resource management issues at a landscape scale, such as watershed basis
- Applied research and mapping, including social mapping
- Research
- Legal literacy and advocacy
- Land tenure and property rights
- Nature, Wealth and Power (NWP) paradigm
- Program conceptualization, design, monitoring and evaluation

USAID's areas of comparative expertise were highlighted by workshop participants (see Box 2).

USAID has over 50 years of experience in supporting development on forestry, natural resource management, and other issues related to REDD+. A key issue that emerged was that much of this rich experience is not well-known by colleagues working on REDD+ issues, especially as much of the older and grey literature on these topics is not easily accessible on the internet.



Nepali women's community forestry users' group discussing their participation in pilot REDD+ project.
Photo: Paula J. Williams

Gender

*Gender is taken to be a key social construct, interwoven into all other social dimensions. How can **gender issues** and **women's empowerment** be better promoted through REDD+ and contribute to enhanced REDD+ outcomes?*

A USAID study³ assessed how gender issues had been addressed in Southeast Asia and found that these issues had received scant attention, and women's participation in REDD+ activities was very limited. A United Nations Collaborative Programme on REDD (UN-REDD) study⁴ argued that it was important to "make the business case" that promoting women's engagement in REDD+ and addressing

gender issues would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of REDD+, making REDD+ programs and strategies more successful and sustainable. Since 2011, gender issues and women's engagement in REDD+ have received more attention, but remain a challenging area to address.

All too often, gender issues, or women's engagement and empowerment, are seen as another set of issues to "add on" at the end of a discussion, rather than core elements to be addressed throughout. Given that USAID takes gender issues seriously – and sees gender as an entry point for many other social issues – the workshop began with a focus on gender and aimed to interweave gender into the discussions of other topics. Among key issues discussed were women's inclusion in REDD+ stakeholder engagement processes, representation, and negotiations and decision-making.

The expert participants were challenged to understand the distinctions between gender issues and women's empowerment, so those distinctions were clarified before moving into the substantive discussions. For adequate gender analysis, attention needs to be paid to the issue of how women and men's roles, knowledge, access to information and resources differ in any given society, and what are the relations, including power relations, between women and men. As the day progressed, however, important issues surfaced – such as the need not only to have women and gender advocates at the table, and to understand that they may not be the same persons, but also to enhance their capacity to speak out and be heard.

In the post-workshop forum discussion, gender issues were forcefully addressed by the then USAID Deputy Administrator, Donald Steinberg. He noted that gender issues are a top priority for USAID, and his personal top development priority. As he put it, the aim is to weave gender into all USAID activities, into the "DNA" of the agency. Therefore, assessing gender equity and women's empowerment is an important issue for REDD+ and climate change.

At the experts workshop, several key gender issues were highlighted. Despite decades of work on women in development, and gender issues, including specific work on women and forestry and gender and forestry, in the REDD+ sphere **women are rarely recognized as key stakeholders**. Moreover,

³ Gurung, Jeannette, Giri, Kalpana, Setyowati, Abidah Billah, and Lebow, Elizabeth. 2011. *Getting REDD+ Right for Women: An analysis of the barriers and opportunities for women's participation in the REDD+ sector in Asia*. Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) and U.S. Forest Service. Washington, DC.

⁴ UN-REDD Programme. 2011. *The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+*. Geneva, Switzerland: UN-REDD.

women and men's differentiated roles, rights, responsibilities, and knowledge, vis-à-vis use and management of trees, forests and the forest sector, are seldom acknowledged. **Unclear tenure regimes** lead to uncertain access for women to land, trees, carbon, and other forest resources. Limited capacity and opportunities to participate in REDD+ consultations has restricted women's decision-making roles in REDD+.

This "**gender blindness**" and **lack of effective gender integration** into REDD+ strategies, program designs, and policies has numerous causes and needs to be tackled on a number of fronts. Donors play important roles in shaping the REDD+ agenda – early in the development of REDD+, donors had focused primarily on other REDD+ issues. Without **donor champions for gender equality** in REDD+, and limited donor capacity to develop and implement gender-responsive frameworks, little progress was made on these issues initially.

On the other hand, **women's groups and women's networks** at all levels, and even government **ministries responsible for women's affairs**, lack awareness about REDD+ and its potential social, economic, and environmental impacts. It is vital to build their knowledge and capacity on REDD+ issues.

Another challenge is the perceived, or actual, competition among REDD+ stakeholders, both government and non-government, for **access to and control over resources and related REDD+ benefits**. For example, as forest land becomes potentially more valuable, women risk losing access to forest resources, which could negatively impact their livelihoods. Benefit sharing and distribution from sequestering of forest carbon needs to be gender-sensitive and ensure that women, as well as men, receive a fair share. Given that REDD+ provides an opportunity to take a landscape approach to natural resource management issues, this approach may provide a new, broader lens through which to view and address these gender issues.

Engaging women in REDD+ activities at all levels can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of REDD+. The experts workshop participants agreed that **USAID is showing leadership in leveraging commitment to gender equality** in development programming in general, as well as within REDD+. This area is one in which USAID could be a leader among the REDD+ donors.

Other key actions to support gender issues and women's empowerment vis-à-vis REDD+ include the following recommendations for donors, countries participating in REDD+, and other REDD+ partners to:

- Draw on lessons learned from **years of experience on gender integration** in natural resources and agriculture
- Support the development of **pilot activities** to strengthen women's engagement in REDD+
- Develop and monitor **indicators** related to gender equality in REDD+ strategies and programming
- Design **holistic, gender-sensitive approaches to REDD+** that address the causal factors contributing to deforestation
- Recognize and strengthen **women's role in community organizing**
- **Leverage corporate support** to help women's networks benefit from the carbon market
- Help REDD+ actors develop **flexible, long-term funding to facilitate learning** (including targeted training for women)
- **Build capacity** on gender issues and REDD+

Enhancing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of REDD+ Initiatives

Does, or can, addressing the social dimensions of REDD+ initiatives enhance their effectiveness and efficiency?

The experts workshop participants agreed that the involvement of stakeholders and consideration of social dimensions of REDD+ is **essential for achieving effective, cost-efficient, and sustainable approaches** to achieving the goals of REDD+, i.e., reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation. Reaching forest carbon objectives depends on social sustainability of the interventions. Whether REDD+ works will depend on the *de facto* resource users, including about 1.6 billion poor people who depend on forests. One workshop participant cited Agrawal and Angelsen's observation that local communities need to be "active and willing partners to ensure the success of REDD+ activities."⁵



Villagers discussing a forest map in Cambodia.
Photo: Paula J. Williams

Moreover, expert participants agreed that, to make REDD+ more effective and efficient, it is vital to build upon what we know and existing practices. Decades of **participatory resource management** are relevant for REDD+. Such experience includes community forestry, community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), integrated conservation and development programs (ICDPs), payment for environmental (ecosystem) services (PES), sustainable forest management, forest certification, and forest law enforcement, governance, and trade (FLEGT). The experts agreed that we already know a lot, and we do not need to reinvent the wheel.

Nonetheless, people and organizations working on REDD+ development experience or not effectively coordinating with ongoing work in this area. **Community forestry**, for example, has over 35 years of experience to draw upon. Thus, it is useful to re-examine lessons learned from community forestry and other natural resource management experience, and to explain their relevance to REDD+.

The **failure to adequately address social issues** leads to reduced effectiveness and efficiency in achieving REDD+ climate change objectives, i.e., emissions reductions and carbon sequestration in forests. Considerable experience and evidence from participatory resource management, however, shows that working with local communities and stakeholders improves the effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes. Reducing carbon emissions through efforts to reduce deforestation and degradation can only be achieved with active engagement, support, and ownership by key stakeholders, especially indigenous groups and other forest-dependent local communities. Many other stakeholders, such as a range of different government agencies, private sector, and other non-governmental and civil society actors, also need to be engaged. In terms of **cost efficiency**, it also makes sense to involve stakeholders and address social issues from the beginning of REDD+ preparations, rather than come back later to deal with issues that arose because social aspects had been overlooked.

Policy and governance failures that drive deforestation and forest degradation have strong socio-political dimensions. The experts agreed that the REDD+ design and implementation plans need to address the socio-political dimensions as well.

In 2011, the international REDD+ community was beginning to recognize problems with initial approaches to REDD+, and the need to improve them. Many engaged in REDD+ activities questioned the initial

⁵ Agarwal, Arun and Angelsen, Arild. 2009. *Using community forest management to achieve REDD+ goals*. Angelsen, Arild, Ed. *Realising REDD+: National strategy and policy options*. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR, pp. 201-211.

approaches in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. Thus, workshop experts agreed that ongoing work on **further development of REDD+ approaches** offered opportunities to better **incorporate more comprehensive social soundness elements** into REDD+.

The aim of REDD+ proponents has been to increase funding for the forest sector, yet in some cases it seems that donor or other **funding** that was previously going to other areas within the forest sector, such as **community forestry, have been shifted to REDD+** with no net increase in sector funding.

Concern was expressed at the experts workshop that the social dimensions of REDD+ were all too often seen as issues of **secondary importance** to carbon sequestration, establishment of carbon stock baselines (reference levels), and development of related measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification systems. The need to establish these systems is crucial for a “pay-for-performance” approach to REDD+ to work. As a result, social issues have often been seen as issues to be addressed later on. But the experts agreed that **early investment** to improve social baselines, enhance local capacity, develop appropriate methods, and strengthen implementation of agreed standards and safeguards in order to improve the social conditions associated with deforestation would **reduce longer-term transaction costs and increase effectiveness**.

It was acknowledged that **mainstreaming social issues takes time, money, and expertise**. REDD+ proponents need better social data and analysis, such as mapping of social systems (social mapping), capacity building of local stakeholders, cost assessments, and effective monitoring. Focus on improving the **enabling environment for effective stakeholder engagement** is also crucial.

Substantial differences may exist between what the international community would like to see happen in areas such as safeguards and standards, and what governments may choose or be able to do. The expert participants also noted that it was **unclear how social criteria would shape the definition of when countries are deemed to be “REDD+ Ready,”** and thus, able to proceed to implementation of REDD+ projects, programs, and strategies, moving towards verifiable forest carbon emissions reductions and associated financial payments. Workshop participants discussed whether a future REDD+ financing mechanism(s) would respond to a gold standard type approach, wherein higher prices could be paid for REDD+ programs meeting higher social (and environmental) standards. The experts also asked whether evidence exists to demonstrate that having safeguards and standards makes a difference.

The experts agreed that many key actions could strengthen the consideration of social dimensions of REDD+, and thereby improve its effectiveness and efficiency. **Syntheses of the long experience with participatory natural resource management (NRM) and payment for environmental (ecosystem) services (PES)** could identify key lessons for REDD+, building on what is known and not reinventing the wheel. A crucial element from the participatory NRM experience is the importance of promoting participatory and landscape level approaches via integrated land use plans at provincial and district levels. **A significant area for research** would be to look at whether REDD+ is more successful in areas where previous NRM interventions have been ongoing. If, for example, REDD+ pilots are developed in areas that already have functioning community forestry systems, are they more successful than in areas where everything is started from scratch?

With reference specifically to REDD+ effectiveness and efficiency, other key recommendations for donors, participating countries and other REDD+ partners are:

- **Support multi-stakeholder processes** around the development of national social standards
- **Raise the quality of social standards and safeguards**, promoting harmonization and best practice implementation, including quality of social auditing
- **Promote participatory carbon and social monitoring methods**, also improving the quality of social data, and look at the nexus of social, carbon, and greenhouse gas reporting
- Tackle the **communications and awareness gaps** and **shape the REDD+ discourse**

Enhancing Equity, Governance, and Democracy

How does REDD+ offer opportunities to address social (and environmental) equity issues, and improve governance, democracy, and achieve other development goals?

While many see the inclusion of social and environmental co-benefits, safeguards, standards, impact assessments, and stakeholder engagement as necessary to achieve the REDD+ objectives, others see these issues as far more **transformative**, as they also contribute to the foundation for sustainable development.

REDD+ is being utilized as an opportunity to engage in more substantive discussions and work on the **overall social sustainability** foundation for development by improving governance, democracy, and social equity. For example, REDD+ has refocused attention on topics such as land, forest, and tree tenure rights, as well as the emerging topic of forest carbon rights. REDD+ debates have highlighted human rights issues, such as the right for meaningful participation in REDD+ design and implementation by different stakeholders and rights holders. The substantial funding available for REDD+ Readiness activities has supported renewed emphasis on promoting good governance and transparency in the forest sector, and addressing problems such as illegal logging and land use conversion, corruption, elite capture of resources and benefits, and poor land use planning.

Key equity issues for REDD+ include **human rights, democracy and governance** with accountability, and recourse mechanisms at multiple levels. Democracy and governance issues cross from local to international levels. Different groups have different capacities that need strengthening, such as community organizations, transparency, and governance. Equity issues also have important temporal dimensions, such as issues of intergenerational equity.

Representation in political discourse and competing stakeholder interests are central to ensuring the effectiveness of addressing equity issues and equitable benefit distribution mechanisms. Opportunities exist to develop creative **public-private-civil society partnerships** to work on some of these issues. Information sharing, communication and networking, and information technology – as well as strengthening of social capital and local institutions – are key to building good governance and transparency, and enhancing stakeholder capacities to meaningfully engage in REDD+.

REDD+ programs can increase **opportunities for improved livelihoods and rights** of vulnerable groups, including indigenous and local communities, women, and the poor. Human rights protections in national and international conventions and law form a platform from which REDD+ programs can encourage human rights-based approaches in REDD+. A considerable body of experience, knowledge and best practices exists already and offers a foundation upon which REDD+ can build.

It is vital to consider the distinction between **stakeholders and rights holders**, which is central to the human-rights based approach that many now seek to apply to REDD+. The rights of Indigenous Peoples to their own lands and resources are well-recognized in international law and in the laws and policies of many nations. Climate change, however, may pose particular challenges for the exercise of their rights. If a group has a recognized right to a specific territory, what happens when climate change induces changes in their environments and resource base, thereby potentially affecting their traditional culture and way of life? The issue of indigenous rights was also highlighted in the Durban side event, which was



Villagers and foresters discussing forest co-management in Lao PDR. Photo: Paula J. Williams.

attended by several regional and national representatives of federations of Indigenous Peoples who participated in the UNFCCC COP 17.

The issue of “**Free, Prior and Informed Consent**” (**FPIC**) for Indigenous Peoples has been particularly emphasized in the REDD+ discussions, both at international and national levels. While some governments, donors, and multilateral REDD+ financing mechanisms agree that Indigenous Peoples have rights to give or withhold consent to activities to take place on their territories, others interpret FPIC as an issue of consultation with these Indigenous Peoples. Workshop experts discussed whether FPIC should also apply to other local forest-dependent communities, i.e., whether people living in or near a forest should have a say in any development that takes place where they live.

The private voluntary market may prove to be a valuable partner in addressing social equity issues in REDD+, given the interest of many investors to demonstrate **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** and to **mitigate any social risks** to their investments. Technology development promoting rapid information sharing and networking can also bolster accountability for addressing social equity issues.

Nonetheless, **enormous challenges** exist to implementing REDD+ in a socially equitable manner. Social conflict can be increased by inappropriately **raising expectations** and failing to examine social dimensions and stakeholder differences. Efforts may be needed to mitigate possible misunderstandings and conflict. **Corruption** is a key challenge for addressing deforestation, access to land and resources, and overall improvement of governance. Another key set of challenges relate to the **existence, quality and access to relevant information**. REDD+ proponents may lack an understanding of whom, how and when to engage when working with local stakeholders, marginalized groups, and culturally-diverse Indigenous Peoples. Many challenging questions are faced by REDD+ implementers and donors in this regard. For example, although UN-REDD guidelines on FPIC include Indigenous Peoples and local communities, further efforts will be required to operationalize these guidelines and decide who should monitor and ensure accountability.

Many REDD+ actions can improve equity, good governance, and democracy. During the expert discussions of equity, rights were discussed in terms of **human rights, tenure rights to land and natural resources, and the emerging field of carbon rights**. Collaboration among stakeholders may yield creative approaches to develop and negotiate equitable **benefit-sharing systems**. Many working on REDD+ issues stress the importance of ensuring that forest-dependent communities have rights to the forests that are vital for their livelihoods and that they receive a share of any future REDD+ financial benefits. The experts also noted that many people already have considerable rights, at least on paper – through their own countries’ constitutions, policy and legal frameworks, and through international conventions that their countries have signed and pledged to uphold. Often, however, at the grassroots level, people may not be fully aware of their rights and how they might apply to REDD+, or these rights may not be well respected. It is important to support **legal literacy, awareness-raising and advocacy** on rights and implications of REDD+ options.

It is vital to enhance **existing multi-stakeholder platforms** and to link REDD+ initiatives with other development objectives. More targeted research is needed to provide specific data and information to support this work and to integrate desired social, equity, and governance outcomes and indicators into REDD+ design, implementation and monitoring. For example, it is important to:

- Map the **value chain of drivers of deforestation and degradation** (including the demand side) to identify the power dynamics and the entry points
- Generate **better information** through quantitative studies on decentralization and livelihood outcomes, and reinterpretation of information from data sets
- Develop **social baseline data and methodological tools and guidelines**, including for the private voluntary market

Conclusions

In summary, the development of viable REDD+ initiatives calls on REDD+ donors and implementors to understand the **multiplicity of human uses of – and values attached to – forests**, among the wide diversity of stakeholders. Social differences –in culture, ethnicity, social class and wealth, and gender among different Indigenous Peoples and other local communities –affect how people interact with forests and how forests can serve human needs. Thus, there is growing recognition that we must fully **address and incorporate the social dimensions of REDD+ if REDD+ is to succeed**.

The workshop experts noted the **need for considerable research** on these topics, as many topics have limited data. Moreover, it is important to build on past lessons learned and their relevance for REDD+. At the same time, many REDD+ proponents face an overload of information and need to focus on the big picture and key REDD+ priorities.

At the post-workshop forum, specific suggestions were developed regarding actions that can be taken by donors, non-governmental organizations, and/or research institutions to address social dimensions of REDD+. In the side event at the Durban UNFCCC, participants urged strong support for actions addressing these social issues, particularly in relation to the **enhanced participation of women and Indigenous Peoples** in REDD+.

FCMC's Social and Environmental Soundness workplan is based on the outcomes of these meetings. (Box 3 provides an overview of some key FCMC activities.)



Villagers and foresters conducting a forest inventory in Lao PDR.
Photo: Paula J. Williams

We need to see the forest for the trees—
but also to see the people with the trees.

At the World Forestry Congress in Mexico City in 1985, when the Tropical Forestry Action Plan was introduced, an Indian colleague working with the Chipko Movement noted that:

***“If we take care of the people,
the people will take care of the trees.”***

This brief was developed by the Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities Program (FCMC), not by USAID. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of USAID or of the United States Government.

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Box 3. FCMC Work Program on Social and Environmental Soundness

Since these workshops, FCMC has followed up with work on key issues related to the social dimensions and social and environmental soundness of REDD+.

Promoting a Broad Social and Environmental Soundness Approach to REDD+ Programs The broad social and environmental soundness approach encompasses promotion of a participatory and sustainable systems approach – at multiple scales – to the social and environmental issues relevant to REDD+. FCMC has developed training materials related to social and environmental soundness of REDD+, including design and delivery of a regional training workshop for participants from eight countries in Southeast Asia. This five-day [regional workshop was held in Bangkok](#), Thailand in November 2012. Workshop materials are available on the FCMC website. Two more regional workshops, one for Amazonian countries, and another for participants from countries in West and Central Africa, are under preparation. They are planned for early 2014. These workshops will be adapted to the needs and priorities of stakeholders in their respective regions.

Safeguards and Standards Safeguards and standards are key elements of a sound process, analysis, design and implementation of REDD+ programs and projects. The international community has agreed on the seven key Cancun safeguards for REDD+. A FCMC [review](#) of several different REDD+ social safeguard and standards systems, which was ongoing at the time of the Experts Workshop, has been completed in English and translated into [Spanish](#). This analysis compared contents of safeguards and standards and looked at variations among the systems in use by different multilateral REDD+ financing mechanisms, such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and UN-REDD, different bilateral donors, as well as civil society organizations. FCMC is supporting the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of Colombia to develop national REDD+ safeguards framework. In Peru, FCMC is supporting the regional government of San Martin to work with the national environment ministry to develop a nested approach to REDD+ standards, working with the international REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards initiative. FCMC has also supported a national workshop on the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards and Safeguards in Honduras. FCMC is now supporting a review of biodiversity standards.

Stakeholder Engagement While most REDD+ proponents understand the importance of stakeholder engagement in REDD+, very little comparative information exists on what is being done. FCMC commissioned a desk [review](#) of actual global experience with stakeholder engagement at the national, sub-national, and nested levels. This review concluded that a big challenge is to increase the level of power sharing between government and non-governmental actors, such that key stakeholders can participate more in technical analyses, negotiations, reaching consensus and agreements, and providing oversight and monitoring of implementation of REDD+ plans, strategies, programs, and projects. It also suggested that a wider range of methods can be used to engage stakeholders – and that requires skilled facilitators and support for capacity building. FCMC has also supported stakeholder engagement in a wide range of REDD+ initiatives, through its overall training programs and workshops, and support for individual stakeholders to travel to and participate in these events.

Social Assessment of REDD+ Social assessments are important in the REDD+ process, in terms of identifying key social issues and stakeholders, and designing a sound approach, as well as periodic assessments to monitor ongoing implementation and impacts. FCMC has worked closely with the Learning Initiative on Social Assessment for REDD+ (LISA-REDD) to advance understanding of key issues and approaches for undertaking social assessments of REDD+ programs and policies, both at the design (*ex ante*) stage and also during implementation. An [Experts Workshop](#) was conducted in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2012. A [review](#) of different methods suitable for social (impact) assessment of REDD+ has been released. FCMC plans to undertake country-level testing of this approach in West Africa. Other partners may also pilot different approaches to social assessment. After the pilots have been conducted, the aim is for FCMC to work with the LISA-REDD group to prepare a resource manual on the topic. Materials relate to FCMC work on this [initiative](#) are on the FCMC website.

Lessons Learned from Community Forestry and Their Relevance for REDD+ Over 35 years of global experience has been gathered on various approaches to community forestry, yet much of the important lessons learned have not been incorporated into REDD+ thinking and planning. FCMC commissioned a team of four consultants to conduct a meta-analysis of existing literature on lessons learned from community forestry, focusing on selected issues of particular relevance for REDD+. These issues include the empowerment of communities through devolution of rights to land and forests, governance and stakeholder engagement, benefits and incentives, scaling up pilots to broader (and in some cases national) systems, and questions of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Relatively little information was found on gender issues or women's participation in community forestry. Regional reviews for Africa, Latin America, and Asia, as well as a global synthesis, are being finalized. [Preliminary results](#) were shared at a USAID workshop on Community-Based Natural Resource Management, held in January 2013.

Shifting Cultivation, Deforestation, REDD+ and Gender Issues in Africa Many working on REDD+ issues have argued that in some areas, shifting cultivation is a major driver of deforestation, and thus REDD+ programs should seek to eradicate it. FCMC held an [initial workshop](#) and then has sponsored field research in central Africa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Cameroon, to examine these issues in closer detail, to assess the importance of this agricultural system and viable alternatives, as well as to consider the relevant gender issues, as women do much of the work in shifting cultivation systems, but are often overlooked in REDD+ planning. FCMC will be conducting further work to look at this issue also in West Africa.

Other ongoing FCMC work is looking at **building capacity** of USAID, its partners, and other stakeholders on a range of REDD+ issues. Support is being provided to the Alliance on Global REDD+ Capacity (AGRC), which aims to share information on REDD+ capacity building needs and collaborate to develop new training materials where needed.