

Summary report for the REDD workshop

Course for Community Leaders on Payments for Ecosystem Services and REDD

***(Curso para Elaboração de Projetos e
Atividades de REDD)***

August 16 – 20, 2009
Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil

Hosted by

Forest Trends and the Environmental Leadership and Training
Initiative



This workshop was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under the terms of the TransLinks Cooperative Agreement No.EPP-A-00-06-00014-00 to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). TransLinks is a partnership of WCS, The Earth Institute, Enterprise Works/VITA, Forest Trends and the Land Tenure Center. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.



MAP Community Capacity Building Series

Course for Community Leaders on Payments for Ecosystem Services and REDD

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The first capacity building course of the MAP series (Madre de Dios, Acre, and Pando) took place in Rio Branco, Acre, from August 16th to the 20th. The course was designed and delivered by Forest Trends' Communities and Markets Program in partnership with a group of local and international institutions including the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (ELTI), the Amazon Working Group (GTA), the Secretariat of Environment in the State of Acre, Comissão Pró-Índio, and IDESAM. The 4-day long course increased the capacity of leaders from community-based organizations to understand and participate in payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, with a special focus on REDD programs.

Altogether, 67 people attended the course from the Brazilian Amazon, Madre de Dios in Peru, and the Pando region of Bolivia, including a significant representation of indigenous groups within Acre. Of the participants, 25 represent community based organizations and 18 represent NGOs that work directly with communities in the MAP region. A detailed list of participants is available upon request.

Prior to the course, focus groups carefully selected the content and designed the methodology paying special attention to adapt the content to this community audience; however, given the complexity of the theme instructors and organizers alike feel that further fine tuning and targeting of content should be developed for the next courses to better convey the information to community leaders. During the course, Forest Trends launched a community handbook in Portuguese about payments for environmental services, *Aprendendo sobre Serviços Ambientais*, which served as the main course material. The 35-page handbook reviews climate change, the UNFCCC process, basic concepts on forests and ecosystem cycles, environmental services and respective payments schemes, carbon markets and REDD, and key steps in PES project development, all in a simple and direct language full of illustrations. It was designed as a reference guide for building upon the presentations and discussions at the course and was very well received by the participants.

The course load was divided in 11 modules of training over 4 days. The modules were the following: climate change globally; climate change and its influence in the Amazon region;

introduction to environmental/ecosystem services; the role of environmental services in the Amazon region and specifically in the state of Acre; how PES works; carbon market; REDD; how to design PES projects and REDD specifically; public policy around REDD, focusing on the Acre government's plan; the MAP region and its strategic place in REDD schemes; PES case studies from Latin America; field component on how to measure tree carbon, and a PES community project clinic. The course was followed by a 1 day public seminar co-sponsored by Forest Trends and the Secretariat of Environment in the State of Acre aimed at discussing the primary themes of the course with a wider audience made up of scholars, government officials, NGOs, among others.

Overall, we feel this first capacity building course was successful. Most responses in our evaluation survey were enthusiastically positive, *"this course brought great clarification about the theme, before I had no knowledge related to PES,"* and *"(the course) was a unique opportunity, the privilege to be here, with all of these people who have so much wealth and diversity of knowledge."* We also received direct feedback from Mark Mitchell from USAID and Erick Fernandes from the World Bank, reinforcing that the course fulfilled its primary objective of increasing the knowledge of community leaders about PES and REDD schemes in particular. These leaders are now better positioned to represent their community's interests and concerns in discussion forums about PES and REDD, explain the basic concepts to their constituencies, and contemplate the viability of developing a PES/REDD project with their communities. A detailed course report is available upon request.

But this is clearly the first step in a long and important process of bridging the gap between communities, markets and regulators. While the course delivered key information, the overall knowledge base is very basic at best; there is overwhelming interest and demand for us to return and continue to build local capacities. The course reassured us of how complex the concepts and practice of REDD and other PES schemes can be for local communities. And yet, we left even more convinced this is a barrier we must overcome, for REDD cannot be successful without the active engagement of local communities. This challenge is echoed throughout the MAP region and beyond. Fortunately, we are well positioned to embrace it. The lessons learned in the Rio Branco course will increase the efficacy of upcoming courses in Bolivia and Peru, within the MAP series, and expanding to Central America, Africa and Asia.

Planning is underway for the next course of the MAP series to take place in the Pando region of Bolivia in early spring, followed by a concluding course in Madre de Dios, Peru. While we are still in the conception phase, potential partners in Pando include: Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza, Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB), Instituto para el Hambre, Agricultura y Ecología (IPHAE) and Universidad Amazónica de Pando. In Madre de Dios, we are planning to work with Asociación Inter-Etnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDSESP), Instituto del Bien Común, Servicio Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (SERNANP) and the Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonia Peruana (IIAP). ELTI will partner with us for both of these events as well.

Objectives for the courses include:

- Inform and better-equip community-based organizations to respond to REDD and other PES related opportunities as well as formulate and implement their own strategies;
- Train community-based organizations in the basic steps to develop credible baselines and deliver Project Design Documents (PDD) for REDD and carbon sequestration projects;
- Enhance the ability of community-based organizations to influence REDD and other PES policies affecting their interests, particularly safeguarding and strengthening their land tenure rights;
- Encourage movement towards the shift to a sustainable economy in the MAP region through increasing the interest and participation of local communities in PES schemes.

At the conclusion of the course in Madre de Dios, community leaders will participate in a 1 day seminar to address policy makers on their position regarding PES and REDD in the region based upon their experiences and knowledge base acquired in the course.

A training course is also being planned for Central America in partnership with ELTI and EcoLogic. Our goal is to expand the series of community capacity building courses to Africa and Asia, targeting key strategic regions, similar to the MAP approach.

Please visit the Katoomba site for a short summary of the course in Acre, view the presentations given during the course and see some pictures:

http://www.katoombagroup.org/~katoomba/event_details.php?id=33