

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)

Forests in the battle against climate change

From melting glaciers to prolonged droughts, the effects of climate change are becoming clear. It is now one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats to the world. Although climate change is a global problem, the negative impacts disproportionately hit developing countries and poor people who depend on natural resources for their livelihood.

'Mitigation and adaptation to climate change provides opportunities and drives innovation leading to local development.'

Well-managed or conserved forests have the capacity to mitigate the effects of climate change. Because trees take up CO₂ and store carbon as biomass, these forests function as carbon sinks. But if they are poorly managed or subjected to unsustainable logging, or when trees die or are burned on a large scale, forests may actually become sources of carbon emissions. It is estimated that global deforestation accounts for approximately 20% of global CO₂ emissions.

Deforestation in Kalimantan, Indonesia.



Source: Aidenvironment.

Following the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, a collaborative initiative was launched on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). This UN program was later expanded to include the role of conservation of forests, the sustainable management and use of forests, and the enhancement of carbon storage (REDD+). A payment system is being developed to compensate developing countries for taking measures that reduce carbon emissions.

As the payment system has not yet been finalized, many uncertainties remain. What is clear is that countries wishing to be eligible for REDD+ will have to show that the management of their forests has improved, leading to more carbon storage in their forests. This additional carbon storage will then be translated into 'carbon credits', which form the basis for the REDD+ payments. These countries will therefore have to make forest management more sustainable and monitor forest biomass to prove that the new management regime is effective in reducing emissions.

'Making sustainable use of natural resources in a changing environment is an essential weapon in the battle against the effects of climate change and associated poverty.'

Traditionally, Aidenvironment has focused on mitigation. But experience has shown us, that adaptation is equally important. Mitigation strategies involve initiatives and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enlarge sinks. Adaptation involves initiatives and measures to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems to current and expected effects of climate change. We draw on both strategies in the advice and support we give to organizations on realizing their ambitions for sustainability.

What do we offer?

Aidenvironment currently works with governments, civil and the private sector to improve the technical capacity for REDD+. This will strengthen the position of developing countries at international climate negotiations.

Our services include:

- Baseline assessments, carbon stocks measurement, monitoring and analysis at national and local levels;
- Research into and analysis of the drivers of deforestation;
- Technical capacity enhancement for biomass assessment and monitoring;
- Building institutional capacity for strategy development and policy design;
- Stakeholder analysis and engagement, match making between carbon sellers and buyers;
- Support with legal issues, including the position of indigenous peoples, and mapping of indigenous and land rights.

Painting on sea wall in Guyana.



Source: Marijke van Kuijk.

Our experience

One of our most appealing assignments is in Suriname, an exceptional country with high forest cover, low deforestation rates and low population pressure. Suriname wishes to take part in a REDD+ program. The responsible government department asked us to develop a monitoring program, build capacity and carry out demonstration activities in preparation for a national carbon stock assessment. The project is funded by WWF Guianas and Tropenbos International. This project builds on our experiences in Guyana, where our consultants carried out similar work in 2009. Guyana is currently in the process of scaling up the monitoring system and has been very successful in obtaining

external funding through a bilateral agreement with the government of Norway.

Interested?

Contact Marijke van Kuijk to find out what we can do for you.

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