

CARBON MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA

EMERGING ISSUES WITHIN AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES

UN REDD +

- REDD+ : Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. Includes conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks.
- Developing under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Some countries have received funding to help support the development and implementation of national REDD+ strategies.

Guyana

- 75% of interior comprises tropical rainforest.
- This area is occupied by an estimated 69,000 indigenous people living traditionally.
- 14% of inland region is under indigenous land tenure (pursuant to the *Amerindian Act 2006*).
- National land rights scheme under the *Amerindian Act 2006* criticised by the APA and UN CERD Committee.
- Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) – groundroots representative body.

Guyana

- April, 2010 – Guyana submitted a revised Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) outlining planned strategy to prepare for REDD mechanism.
- R-PP required for financial support from the World Bank.
- Norwegian Government funds the Low Carbon Development Strategy

Consultation

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Article 19
 - States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
- Article 23
 - Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development.

Consultation

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Article 32
 - Provides, among other things, for States to consult and operate in good faith with indigenous peoples to obtain free and informed consent prior to approval of projects affecting their lands, territories and resources.

Consultation

- Concerns:
 - Independent monitors of consultation meetings engaged in discussions and encouraged support of government proposals.
 - Vague information provided to participants.
 - Commitments made to apply UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples but there are no practical implementation measures identified.
 - Readiness proposal of April 2010 failed to recognise Free Prior Informed Consent over customary lands which remain unsecured and untitled.

Initiatives

- APA is working with the Rainforest Foundation US to develop a free, prior and informed consent protocol.

Tenure

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Article 26
 - Provides for the right of Indigenous peoples to the lands, territories and resources traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
 - Provides for the right to own, use, develop and control these lands, territories and resources.

Tenure

- Article 26
 - Also provides that States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources with due respect to traditions, customs and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Tenure

- Amerindian Act 2006 criticised as titles under the Act are inadequate and many communities who live traditionally still lack title.
 - Does not recognise inherent right to traditional land.
 - Rights are ‘granted’ by the State – unrestrained Ministerial discretion.
- Up-to-date information on land tenure and territorial claims not available.
- Land disputes slowing down the process.

Strategy

- Communities say resolution of tenure must occur.
- It has been identified in several countries that tenure resolution should be fortified with regulation of REDD related transactions.
- For example, in Papua New Guinea, the Constitution provides for Indigenous Peoples to own 97% of the land. However, indigenous landowners are pressured to sign away rights in carbon agreements.

Environmental and Social Concerns

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Article 20
 - Right to just and fair redress if deprived of means of subsistence and development.
- Article 23
 - Right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising right to development.

Environmental and Social Concerns

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Article 24
 - Right to traditional medicines and to maintain health practices, including conservation of vital medicinal plants.
- Article 29
 - Right to conservation and protection of the environment and productive capacity of lands or territories and resources.

Environmental and Social Concerns

- Mutually agreed benefit sharing mechanisms and measures to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples should be a core part of REDD+ Readiness.
- Concern about entering agreements and “signing away rights”.
- Mixed messages on rotational farming and the potential REDD+ impacts on indigenous livelihoods and way of life.

Environmental and Social Concerns

- REDD₊ plans have not recognised the multiple values of forests (such as biodiversity) important to Indigenous peoples living in forest communities, but rather have only recognised the carbon value.
- Carbon offset projects do not reduce emissions, they stabilise them. Concern this could justify the expanded extraction of oil and coal with all its human rights, social and environmental consequences within forest communities.

Environmental and Social Concerns

- Women's group in Guyana questioned the commercialisation of life and environment against traditional principles of respecting the sacred.
- The increasing commercial value in forests and land may promote forced evictions and deny free access to biodiversity that Indigenous peoples already rely on.

Suggested Initiatives

- Currently, work is being undertaken to ensure compliance with uniform environmental and social safeguards as countries develop national policies in preparation for future REDD+ activities or projects.
- Identify, reduce and mitigate risk to Indigenous peoples.

Suggested Initiatives

- Internationally, suggestions have been made for the establishment and increased value of an Indigenous specific carbon unit which incorporates the value of other benefits such as sustainable poverty alleviation and biodiversity protection and enhancement.
- Awareness of carbon assets so landowners can be aware of the impacts of any agreements they sign.

Suggested Initiatives

- Representative institutions in communities to carry out FPIC and manage benefits.
- Promote carbon offset projects which are consistent with practices and skills of Indigenous peoples.
 - In Australia, at this stage it appears that ocean offset projects are not eligible under the CFI. This excludes many coastal communities.

Suggested Initiatives

- Stakeholder engagement and dispute resolution to ensure ongoing communication and good faith consideration of concerns.

Acknowledgments

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