

# **ESSENTIALS OF REDD+**

A Handbook for Rural Women and Community  
Leaders in Cameroon

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# PREFACE

## INTRODUCTION

Climate change has been on the global agenda of most global forest related dialogues and policy debates during the past few years. Despite these efforts, decision makers are still far from getting conclusive responses to the problems identified by climate changes. Also, it has been noted that developing countries are amongst the most vulnerable as far as climate change is concerned, even though their responsibility for causing the problem is minimal. The UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) has been playing a lead role in formulating policies for the adaptation to the changes as well as mitigating them. One of the efforts made is through REDD+ (Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Forest Degradation) initiatives. Discussions on climate change eventually heightened with the recognition of the role of tropical forests in mitigating the effects of GHG emissions through this very popular mechanism.

Considering the fact that women are key stakeholders in forest and natural resource management, it is important for them to participate in dialogues so that their concerns can be taken into consideration. Policies or programmes to address climate change adaptation and mitigation with regards to forests should be gender responsive – considering the significant impacts on women that result from various climate change policies and implementation processes. Women currently have very limited access to information on climate change policies and implementation processes .

Most dialogues have continued to turn a blind eye to the possible negative implications of climate change and its subsequent policies on women. However, policy makers are becoming conscious of the fact that women and men experience climate change differently; therefore all strategies and policies that address these issues should be gender sensitive. It should be noted that gender inequalities further marginalise women and make them even more affected by climate change than men.

It is therefore important for women leaders, especially those in forest dependent communities, to be aware of discussions and decisions on

climate change, especially REDD+, and participate in the discussions and decision making processes. This, in Cameroon, is most timely as the REDD+ initiative is still in its conceptual stage. Cameroonian women are called upon to acquaint themselves with the REDD+ programme so as to benefit from this initiative.

This guide is therefore intended to inform, sensitize and educate community leaders - especially women- on REDD+ and related initiatives as well as address women's concerns and assure they reap benefits from REDD+. This guide is divided into four sections, namely:

- ❖ Understanding Climate Change
- ❖ The concept of REDD+
- ❖ REDD+ in Cameroon
- ❖ Gender and REDD+

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## Abbreviations

A/R	Afforestation and Reforestation
CC	Climate Change
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
GHG	Green House Gases
NTFPs	Non Timber Forest Products
PNG	Papua New Guinea
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of Forests
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## A) **UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE**

### i) **What is Climate Change?**

Climate change can be defined as a change in the average weather conditions in a particular time and place attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere.

Some Cameroonian farmers and forest dwellers have described climate change as having the following characteristics:

- Prolonged and hotter dry seasons
- Shorter rainy seasons
- Change and confusion in seasons.
- Heavy rainfall and wild winds even in the dry season
- Dry streams
- Degradation of soil (Erosion)

These are understood to result in poor harvests and low levels of agricultural production.

### ii) **Causes of Climate Change**

Some of the main causes of climate change are:

- Uncontrolled logging, mining, forest fires, and expansion of agricultural land in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Over-industrialization in the western countries, thus releasing high levels of carbon gases.
- Thinning of the forests through deforestation and degradation
- Excess carbon and nitrogen in the atmosphere,
- Increased temperatures due to uncontrolled greenhouse gases such as water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

### iii) **The link between Forests and Climate Change**

The link between forests and climate change can be summarised as follows:

- Trees and other vegetation play an important role in the global carbon cycle.
- Growing forests actively trap carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and through the process of photosynthesis, convert some into biomass (organic plant material). The result of this cycle is that mature forests store large amounts of carbon, locking it up in the trees and other vegetation as biomass, both above and below ground.
- Carbon content in the soils of forest ecosystems is also an important store, particularly in the case of peat forests. As whole trees or parts of it dies and falls to the forest floor, much of the biomass is incorporated into the soil as organic soil carbon.
- Although all vegetation actively sequesters and stores carbon, forests represent the most significant store of carbon.
- The total volume of carbon locked up in forests is currently greater than that held in the atmosphere. As much as 77% of the global terrestrial carbon is contained in the world's forest ecosystems.

Tropical forests in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia play an important role in moderating the global climate and preventing the release of large quantities of the greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. However, the rate of deforestation and degradation of tropical forests is increasing. The demand for land for agriculture, infrastructural development and the rising demand for timber are placing increasing pressure on the remaining forest areas.

- When trees are cut down, the carbon stored within them and or the soil below them is released into the atmosphere, directly contributing to climate change.



The extent of this release of greenhouse gas from land use change is the second largest source of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contributing 20-25% of global emissions.

#### iv) **Mitigation/Adaptation to Climate Change**

The following ways can be used to mitigate, or lessen, climate change or adapt to it:

- ❖ Introduce REDD+ Programme
- ❖ Advocate for polluters to minimize activities that produce GHG
- ❖ Promote and practice eco agriculture
- ❖ Conserve biodiversity
- ❖ Identify and build the capacities of farmers, fishermen and pastoralists to adapt to changes in climate
- ❖ Lobby and advocate for environmentally friendly policies.

## **B. THE CONCEPT OF REDD+**

### **i) What is REDD+?**

REDD+ is Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. It is a concept currently being developed and negotiated as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

REDD+ negotiations are centered on the provision of incentives to developing countries to reduce the level of their forest losses, and at the same time to promote environmental, economic and social benefits, while protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.

It started with RED with a single D for deforestation; the second D for forest degradation was added later. During the climate talks in Ghana in August 2008, the term REDD++ was coined, and validated at the Poznan COP 14. This includes ‘conservation, sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks; aspects which are already contained in the Bali REDD+ decision. Therefore, throughout this document, all references to REDD+ and REDD+ mechanisms include carbon trading, or paying for sustainable forest management.

### **ii) The core idea of REDD+**

A proposal by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, represented by PNG and Costa Rica, in 2005 to address deforestation as part of

the international climate regime was welcomed by a large number of countries. Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries would not only address a major source of greenhouse gas emissions but would also pave the way for developing countries to play an active part in emission reduction efforts under the international climate regime. The idea of promoting incentives for forest conservation in the climate regime is almost universally praised as an important and substantial contribution to international climate policy.

The real challenge, however, is to find credible ways of implementing the concept. This is made difficult on the one hand by the complexity of the underlying causes of worldwide forest destruction and on the other by the methodological challenges associated with it.

At the 2007 climate conference in Bali, countries were encouraged to carry out pilot activities in the field of REDD+.

### **iii) A Brief History of REDD+**

Below is a summary of the advent and evolution of REDD+:

- 1992: UNFCCC: from Rio summit, with objectives of preserving existing GHG sinks, including forests
- 1997: Kyoto Protocol: industrialized countries (except USA) committed themselves to respect certain emission quotas. 2008 – 2012 first commitment period
  - CDM: projects to reduce GHGs while promoting sustainable development.
  - more focused on afforestation and reforestation (A/R)
- 2005: PNG and Costa Rica proposed RED
- 2006: The Stern Report economic analysis of cost puts forest as a cheap solution to the problem of CC
- 2007: Bali Action Plan

- 2008: COP 14 Poznan, Poland, introduction of REDD+ plus/REDD++, including sustainable forest management, conservation, and there after more discussions on the potential of REDD+++ to include agriculture
- 2009: Copenhagen Accord recognizes the role of REDD+
- 2010: Cancun Agreement - REDD++ decision

#### **iv) Objectives of REDD+**

REDD+ has as main objective the mitigation of climate change through the following:

- Emission reduction, conservation, and enhancement of carbon stocks
- Provide financial rewards for avoiding deforestation and forest degradation.
- Provide incentive for sustainable forest management.

#### **v. Key Issues on REDD+**

There are some key issues that still need clarification by REDD+. These include:

- a) The Scope: i.e. what should be included in the framework (activities, the carbon pools to be measured, and the countries eligible for participation in the mechanism.)
- b) Reference Level: i.e. determining the indicators of emissions reduction.
- c) Distribution of incentives: This means that once emissions have been reduced, who will benefit from the potential revenue flows, and what capacity is required to ensure that emission reductions are long term and that they will generate additional environmental and social benefits. How issues such as equity, poverty alleviation and socio-economic factors will be addressed.
- d) Financing: There are three main options for the source of Financing for a REDD+ mechanism:

- ❖ a direct market approach,
- ❖ the creation of a voluntary fund,
- ❖ a hybrid approach.

With regard to a direct market approach, a key issue is how the REDD+ created credits will be paid for. Is it through;

- ❖ a funding mechanism; where REDD+ is fully integrated into existing and future carbon markets,
- ❖ through separate markets for REDD+ and non REDD+ credits, or
- ❖ through national or sub-national system of accounting and implementation?

#### vi) REDD+ Standards

To be effective as a mitigation measure, REDD+ must meet a number of stringent criteria:

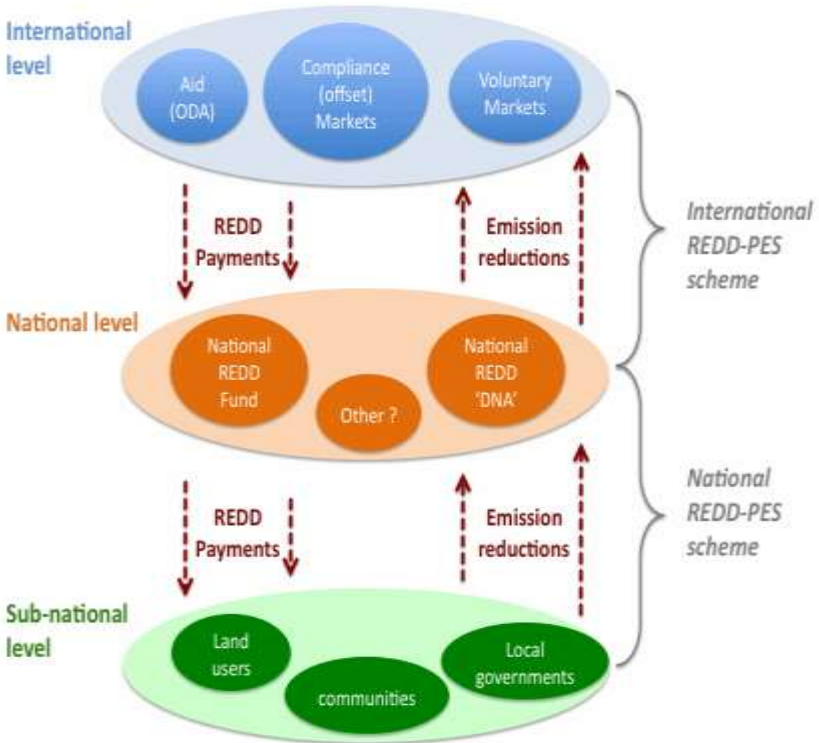
- a) **Avoid 'leakage:** i.e. where conservation in one area simply shifts deforestation to another.
- b) **Additionality:** REDD+ projects and programmes also need to be additional, i.e. action or measure taken must lead directly to reductions in deforestation and degradation that would not have happened simply as a result of wider changes in the economy.
- c) The **project baseline** needs to be established to measure progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### vii) Organization and Functioning of REDD+

REDD+ is a United Nations Programme under the UNFCCC (United Nations Convention on Climate Change). The REDD+ programme is organized as indicated in the diagramme below:

(Source: *Moving Ahead with REDD+: issues, options and implications*, edited by Arid Angelsen, CIFOR-2008):

The programme is expected to operate from the international level down to the national and sub-national level.



The REDD+ approach consists of three phases as indicated on the table below:

## Phased approach: flexible progression

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<b>Activities</b>	National REDD strategy development, including, <i>inter alia</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional strengthening</li> <li>• Demonstration activities</li> </ul>	National REDD strategy implementation, including, <i>inter alia</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land tenure reforms</li> <li>• Forest law enforcement</li> <li>• PES</li> </ul>	Consolidation of REDD strategy implementation, including, <i>inter alia</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved forest management</li> <li>• Supply chain modernization</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment completed</li> <li>• Consultations conducted</li> <li>• Strategy adopted</li> <li>• Capacities in place for implementation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies enacted</li> <li>• Measures enforced</li> <li>• Proxies monitored for changes in emissions and/or removals</li> <li>• GHG reductions from demonstration activities</li> </ul>	Quantified emission reductions and/or stock Enhancements (tCO <sub>2</sub> -e)
<b>Financing</b>	Immediately available	Predictable amounts over a defined period	Large-scale funding

\*Note: Slide taken from Meridian (2009) – available at: [www.redd-oar.org](http://www.redd-oar.org)

### C. REDD+ IN CAMEROON

Cameroon is part of the Coalition for Rainforest nations that put forward the REDD+ proposal at the UNFCCC COP 11 in Montreal, 2005, through PNG and Costa Rica. Presently, Cameroon is part of the COMIFAC block negotiating REDD+ at the UNFCCC. Cameroon is also one of the FCPF countries receiving support from the World Bank to prepare its REDD+ programme. So far, the Readiness Preparation Idea Note (R-PIN) was accepted in 2008 and the government is currently preparing the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP).

### **i) How to access REDD+ funds**

This will depend on the national strategies developed by the ministries or competent services developing or implementing REDD+ programmes. So far, initiatives are going on around forest reserves and parks promoted by conservation organizations like WWF around the Ngoyla Mintom forest block and WCS, around Takamanda. There is also a pilot project called Community Payments for Ecosystem Services, testing the implementation of REDD+ in two community forests. (*see CED and BR&D project*)

### **ii) Who Can Access REDD+ Funds?**

It is not clear yet who can access REDD+ funds. This will depend on the strategy developed by the government in their REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposals and the different policy reforms put in place. Presently, since all lands and forests belong to the State, it would mean that all REDD+ funds have to go to the government. With the experiences of other existing benefit sharing arrangements like the forest or petroleum royalties that hardly get to neighbouring communities, it is not likely that REDD+ funds will go directly to communities. Therefore, it is important for women and communities to make sure that they are represented and participate effectively in the different processes to elaborate and implement the REDD+ strategy in Cameroon.

### **iii) Potential Challenges in the implementation of REDD+**

The implementation of REDD+ may have the following implications:

- ❖ There are concerns about the negative impacts that REDD+ payments might have on forest-dependent communities, primarily through further weakening of their land and



resource rights, where these communities have a heavy dependency on forests for livelihood and economic development.

- ❖ There are also potential and complex links with agriculture. Limiting the expansion of agriculture could have an impact on the supply of food and other agricultural products.
- ❖ Overlapping policies and poor law enforcement may cause hardship to the communities, e.g. preventing illegal forest harvesting.
- ❖ REDD+ funds may cause more conflicts between and within communities. Increased value of forests and the expected benefits from REDD+ programmes will undoubtedly generate more conflicts over boundaries between communities.
- ❖ Poor forest governance and land tenure systems may affect the implementation of REDD+.
- ❖ Lack of clear and coordinated institutional framework governing forest resources would increase conflicts between communities over forest ownership and related access to REDD+ funds.
- ❖ Risks of women being left out in the sharing of REDD+ funds given that they don't own land in most communities and are weakly represented in forest management committees.

#### **iv) Potential Advantages of REDD+**

If appropriate policies and strategies are developed and implemented, REDD+ could:

- Contribute to national income
- Promote rural development and contribute to efforts to reduce poverty
- Mitigate climate change
- Contribute to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem stability
- Support sustainable forest management
- Contribute in the conservation of water resources
- Prevent deforestation and forest degradation.

## C. **REDD+ AND GENDER**

### **Why include gender in REDD+?**

Gender has to be included in REDD+ for the following reasons:

Men and women have different roles with regards to forest resource management:

- ❖ Men and women play different roles in planting, protecting or caring for seedlings and small trees, as well as practicing different methods of agriculture.
- ❖ Men are more likely to be involved in extracting timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for commercial purposes.
- ❖ Women typically gather forest products for fuel, fencing, food for the family, fodder for livestock and raw materials to produce natural medicines, all of which help to increase family income.

The incorporation of gender considerations into the REDD+ framework brings about increased efficiency and sustainability as

it contributes to women's involvement and commitment. Women play a crucial role in local forest management.

- ❖ A gender perspective in REDD+ initiatives also ensures the integration of a wealth of unique knowledge, skills and experiences of women which are vital to the success of REDD+.
- ❖ Women are main actors both in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The depletion of forest resources often significantly increases women's labour, given their productive role in their households and communities. This is problematic for the Cameroonian women because most of them have access to land but not control over decisions related to its use.
- ❖ Women have less access to market mechanisms, because they lack skills, resources and mobility. They also have less access to formal education than men and thus fewer formally acquired skills (e.g. languages, negotiating skills), making it much harder for women to engage in technical and legal negotiations. All of the above are major challenges to women getting access to REDD+ and its benefits.
- ❖ Women are the backbone of the African family economy as custodian of livelihoods.
- ❖ Climate change does not affect women and men in the same way.
- ❖ Women's greater responsibilities for crop and food production in Africa render them more susceptible to the impacts of climate change, such as those of declining water supplies and increasing pest outbreaks.

## **ii) Advantages of REDD+ to Cameroonian Women**

REDD+ could be used to:

- Promote progressive reforms of land, forest and protected area laws and policies so that they fully respect community rights, as well as the rights of women to own land and enjoy related benefits;
- Enable women obtain leadership training on the sustainable use and management of forest in particular and on environmental management in general;
- Provide national level recognition that the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, especially women, is critical to forest conservation.

**ii) Potential Negative Impacts of the Implementation of REDD+ on Women in Cameroon**

- REDD+ mechanisms have paid very little attention to the vulnerability of women to the negative consequences of the implementation of REDD+.
- As fuel collectors, conservation measures may bar entrance into forests protected as part of the REDD+ programme.
- As main food crop producers for the subsistence of their families and small income generation, women may be further impoverished by the loss of farmland through conservation.
- Given the general absence of women in decision-making forums in local committees, their interests may not be represented when decisions are taken on implementation of REDD+ and access to REDD+ funds. This may go a long way to further marginalise them.

**vi. Mainstreaming gender into REDD+**

Gender could be mainstreamed in REDD+ as follows:

- ❖ Recognising that women are key agents in forest related climate change processes and systematically including them in the management of forests.
- ❖ Recognising and respecting the rights of women to their traditional uses of the forest.
- ❖ Training and empowering women on the fabrication and use of alternative fuels.
- ❖ Training women on the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products.
- ❖ Taking action to ensure that women have clear ownership rights to forest and consequently to carbon credits and other benefits.
- ❖ Promoting participation of women in forest management committees and climate mitigation strategies.
- ❖ Ensuring compliance with international and national commitments on gender equality and equity, including the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and women's rights to natural resources.
- ❖ Gender auditing should be part of a UNFCCC monitoring and reporting mechanism.
- ❖ Supporting effective social mobilisation processes that empower women and raises their awareness and capacities to engage in decision making processes that affect them. REDD+ must therefore contribute to transparent, inclusive, and accountable forest governance and bring about changes in forestry institutions to enable them be accountable and responsive to women's needs.

- ❖ It is equally important that REDD+ creates mechanisms to support the meaningful participation of women of forest-dependent communities in the formulation, execution, and monitoring of policies and measures emerging from national REDD+ strategies and seeks to integrate gender into all REDD+ programmes, from inception through implementation, benefit sharing, monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ As primary forest managers and farmers with responsibility for managing food security and a group with special needs to deal with natural calamities, including those of climate change, women must be involved in developing and implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies, and accessing benefits from their management of carbon.
- ❖ Specific funding targets should be set to ensure sufficient funds are earmarked for activities that address women's empowerment and gender equality.
- ❖ Revenues from REDD+ should be equitably shared and managed in a transparent and participatory manner by all stakeholders including representatives from women's groups at local and national levels.

Adherence to these principles can best be achieved through a systematic process to promote gender mainstreaming at all stages relevant to the REDD+ process (including dialogues on property rights, participation in decision making, determination of benefit sharing mechanisms, etc). This is understood to include capacity building and inclusion of men in the process as well as a focus on women's empowerment and leadership. A framework for gender mainstreaming includes four elements:

- ❖ Generating political commitment based on both the effectiveness of including a gender perspective, and a rights based approach for women's access to natural resources
- ❖ Developing technical expertise for gender
- ❖ Developing mechanisms for accountability
- ❖ Addressing organizational cultures to ensure against institutional gender blindness.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, REDD+ standards and implementation should support the inclusion of a gender mainstreaming strategy based on a recognition of the rights of women and their role in sustainable forest and forest carbon management in order to achieve an effective and just mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation.

### Some important definitions:

Word	definition
Emission	-The act of emitting; causing to flow forth , - discharge: a substance that is released -the occurrence of a flow e.g of water (as from a pipe)
Deforestation	-The removal of a forest or stand of trees where the land is thereafter converted to a non-forest use.
Degradation	- It is a process through which the natural environment is

	compromised in some way, reducing biological diversity and the general health of the environment. This process can be entirely natural in origin, or it can be accelerated or caused by human activities
Adaptation	- It is the evolutionary process whereby a population becomes better suited to its habitat.
Mitigation	- The action of lessening in severity or intensity
aforestation	-The conversion of bare or cultivated land into forest
reforestation	- The restoration (replanting) of a forest that had been reduced by fire or cutting
Forest	-The trees and other plants in a large densely wooded area.



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