

REDD and REDD Plus, Objectives, Benefits, Features, Impact

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Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is a United Nations initiative introduced to help developing countries to reduce forest loss and degradation. By putting a measurable economic value on the carbon stored in forests, REDD aims to control greenhouse gas emissions while promoting sustainable forest management and development. Its expanded framework, REDD+, includes conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, highlighting its important role in climate change mitigation and sustainable development. In this article, we are going to cover REDD and REDD+, its history, objectives, mechanisms and impact along with its contribution in environmental sustainability, community livelihoods and global climate goals.

REDD and REDD Plus

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) was launched in 2008. It combines the technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The development goal of REDD is twofold: to reduce forest emissions and enhance carbon stocks in developing countries, while simultaneously contributing to national sustainable development objectives. REDD was created with the aim that deforestation and forest degradation contribute highly to global greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for approximately 10–15% of annual carbon emissions.

REDD Objectives

REDD was established to fulfill the following objectives:

1. **Reduce Deforestation and Degradation:** Lower the rates of deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, hence reducing carbon emissions.
2. **Enhance Carbon Stocks:** Promote sustainable management of forests, afforestation, reforestation, and improved forest management practices to increase carbon storage.
3. **Support Sustainable Development :** Integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations in forest management to align with national development goals.
4. **Financial Incentives:** Set up mechanisms that reward measurable emissions reductions, making forest conservation economically viable.
5. **Strengthen Institutional Capacity:** Improve the ability of developing countries to monitor, report, and govern forests effectively.

REDD Financial Mechanisms

REDD creates a system through which developing countries receive financial rewards for verified emissions reductions associated with reduced forest conversion and degradation. By assessing current or projected deforestation rates, countries that successfully implement remedial actions can earn results-based payments tied to the volume of emissions avoided.

This approach shows that forest conservation can compete with traditionally profitable land uses, such as agriculture or logging, by assigning monetary value to carbon sequestration. Through REDD, forests are recognized not merely as timber resources but as important carbon sinks that play a vital role in climate regulation. The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally led REDD+ processes and emphasizes the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, making sure that local stakeholders have a voice in decision-making and implementation.

Initial Focus of REDD

REDD initially focused solely on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, which together account for a big portion of global greenhouse gas emissions. The approach was primarily preventive, targeting the reduction of destructive activities while promoting long-term carbon stock management.

The Bali Action Plan (2007)

The Bali Action Plan, introduced at COP-13 of the UNFCCC in 2007, emphasized that mitigating climate change in developing countries should include “policy approaches and positive incentives” for reducing emissions from

deforestation and forest degradation. This plan laid the foundation for integrating REDD into the broader UN climate framework.

REDD+ Expansion

By 2008-2009, REDD's scope was expanded to REDD+, which recognizes the importance of a holistic approach to forest management. REDD+ incorporates:

1. **Forest Conservation:** Maintaining existing forests to protect carbon stocks and biodiversity.
2. **Sustainable Forest Management:** Implementing practices that balance forest utilization with ecological preservation.
3. **Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks:** Increasing carbon sequestration by afforestation, reforestation, and improved management.

The Cancun Agreements at COP-16 in 2010 formally recognized these expanded components, making REDD+ a comprehensive mechanism to support climate change mitigation while simultaneously promoting sustainable development and local livelihoods.

REDD+ Features

The important features of REDD+ include:

- **Results-Based Payments:** Developing countries receive financial incentives for verified emissions reductions.
- **Integration of Conservation Goals:** REDD+ not only focuses on emission reductions but also ecosystem preservation and biodiversity protection.
- **Community and Livelihood Benefits:** Emphasizes the co-benefits of REDD+ for local communities, such as food security, employment, and sustainable resource management.
- **Global Climate Contribution:** Supports international commitments under the UNFCCC and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

REDD+ Components

REDD+ includes five primary activities:

1. **Reducing Emissions from Deforestation:** Preventing the clearing of forests for agriculture, logging, or other land uses.
2. **Reducing Emissions from Forest Degradation:** Limits unsustainable logging or resource extraction practices.
3. **Conservation of Forest Carbon Stocks:** Maintaining existing carbon-rich forests and protecting ecosystems.
4. **Sustainable Management of Forests:** Balancing forest use with regeneration and ecological health.
5. **Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks:** Promoting afforestation, reforestation, and improved management techniques to increase carbon capture.

6. Through these activities, REDD+ contributes to climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development, creating a multi-faceted global environmental tool.

REDD+ Benefits

REDD+ provides many environmental, social, and economic benefits:

- **Climate Change Mitigation:** By preventing deforestation and promoting reforestation, REDD+ reduces greenhouse gas emissions and strengthens carbon sinks.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** Provides alternative livelihoods and financial incentives to forest-dependent communities.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Protects habitats, species, and ecosystem services.
- **Sustainable Resource Management:** Promotes long-term planning and responsible forest utilization.
- **Integration with Development Goals:** Supports national strategies for sustainable development, food security, and climate adaptation.

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) is a global partnership of governments, civil society, private sector actors, and indigenous peoples focused on REDD+ implementation.

Objectives of FCPF

1. **Capacity Building:** Provide financial and technical support to countries to prepare for REDD+ implementation.
2. **Performance-Based Payments:** Provides a system where results-based actions receive payments, ensuring equitable benefit sharing.
3. **Sustain Community Livelihoods:** Integrate conservation with local development needs.
4. **Knowledge Dissemination:** Share lessons from REDD+ readiness and implementation through Readiness Preparation Proposals (RPPs) and Emission Reduction Programs (ERPs).

Structure of FCPF

The FCPF operates through two complementary funding mechanisms:

- **Readiness Fund:** Supports countries in preparing for REDD+ implementation.
- **Carbon Fund:** Provides results-based payments for verified emissions reductions.

Participants in FCPF are categorized as:

1. **REDD+ Country Participants:** Tropical and subtropical countries implementing REDD+.
2. **Donor Participants:** Governments or organizations funding the Readiness Fund.
3. **Carbon Fund Participants:** Contributors to the Carbon Fund for results-based payments.
4. The Participants Assembly (PA) and Participants Committee (PC) oversee decisions and governance of the FCPF.

Role of the World Bank

The World Bank, along with the Inter-American Development Bank, UNDP, and FAO, acts as a delivery partner under the Readiness Fund, providing technical and capacity-building support to participating countries. These institutions facilitate REDD+ readiness, policy design, and implementation, making sure that REDD+ strategies are aligned with national priorities and local contexts.

REDD and REDD+ Impact

The combined initiatives of REDD and REDD+ have the following outcomes:

- **Reduced Deforestation Rates:** Many developing countries have slowed forest loss through incentives, monitoring, and enforcement.
- **Enhanced Carbon Sequestration:** Forest regeneration and sustainable management have increased carbon stocks.
- **Improved Livelihoods:** Local communities benefit economically through payments, employment, and sustainable resource use.
- **Biodiversity Protection:** Forest ecosystems have been preserved, safeguarding species and critical habitats.
- **Global Climate Contribution:** REDD+ contributes directly to the UNFCCC goals and indirectly to multiple SDGs, including climate action, life on land, and poverty reduction.

By creating a market value for carbon stored in forests, REDD+ demonstrates how environmental conservation can align with economic incentives, bridging the gap between development and sustainability.

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