

Participatory Forest Monitoring

Agriculture

Benefit Distribution Systems

Renewable Energy

Low Emission Development Plans

Multiple Benefits

REDD+ offers an opportunity to capitalise on communities' experience of forest monitoring while presenting new technical challenges on how data can be generated for a national REDD+ programme. Participatory forest monitoring presents a multifaceted approach to engage local people in REDD+ and contribute to the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

Participatory forest monitoring for national REDD+ programmes

Increasingly, forest monitoring functions are being shared among stakeholders, and local people have begun working together with forestry professionals to develop and implement monitoring systems. There are now documented cases of participatory forest monitoring (PFM) throughout the world's tropical forests¹. Full and effective participation of stakeholders, particularly local communities, in national REDD+ programme development and implementation is now promoted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).²

Engaging local stakeholders in monitoring has the potential to offer national REDD+ programmes a cost-effective³ contribution to both carbon and non-carbon aspects of national forest monitoring systems. At the same time, REDD+ could incentivise improved PFM practices, generating data to inform adaptive management and better governance of forests.

PFM is not a specific methodology or monitoring protocol, but a multifaceted approach that encompasses a range of forest monitoring activities, from carbon stock changes to biodiversity and social impacts (positive and negative) of REDD+. Some of the defining characteristics of PFM are summarised in *Box 1*.

Box 1 Defining participatory forest monitoring⁴

1. Engages different stakeholders, performing different functions based on complementary mandates and skills, from national government to the grassroots level.
2. Recognises the rights and knowledge of local stakeholders, particularly indigenous people and local communities, in managing and monitoring forests.
3. Applies local knowledge and capitalises on the different capacities and competencies of other local stakeholders, particularly forest managers and local government officers.
4. Is not restricted to any particular forest tenure arrangement or management and governance system; PFM application can range from public- or private-owned management boards contracting local people to perform certain monitoring functions through to community forest management.
5. Is likely to be more cost-effective and sustainable than monitoring conducted solely by (non-local) technical experts, yet, at the same time still producing reliable data for use by national monitoring systems.
6. Employs a variety of data collection, management and analysis protocols, including forest carbon stocks, other ecosystem service indicators, biodiversity and social impacts of REDD+ implementation.





SNV's approach to participatory forest monitoring

SNV identifies five possible applications (or end users) of PFM data in national REDD+ programmes, which are summarised in *Box 2*.

Box 2 Potential participatory forest monitoring applications for national REDD+ programmes

National level

1. Safeguard information system (SIS) - PFM data on environmental and social processes and impacts could be used to demonstrate compliance with certain safeguards, prerequisite for accessing results-based financing under the UNFCCC and other evolving instruments such as the FCPF Carbon Fund.
2. Measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) GHG emission reductions/enhanced removals - participatory carbon monitoring (PCM) could ground-truth certain activity data generated using remote sensing techniques and possibly contribute forest biomass measurements in certain forest carbon pools (primarily above ground biomass).

Sub-national level

3. Sub-national planning for REDD+ - through PFM, local stakeholders can generate information on carbon and non-carbon parameters, which can inform land use, socio-economic, forestry and other planning processes used to operationalise REDD+ at the sub-national level.

Local level

4. Benefit Distribution Systems (BDS) - PFM could be applied as a direct participation payment mechanism as well as a means for local stakeholders to self-check levels of in-coin or in-kind benefits awarded under national REDD+ programmes.
5. Adaptive management - PFM data should be used to inform refined design and implementation of REDD+ activities at the forest management unit level; for example PFM could be used to monitor unplanned drivers of deforestation and degradation (such as swidden agriculture and domestic firewood collection).

1. Evans, K. & M.R. Guariguata (2008) *Participatory monitoring in tropical forest management: a review of tools, concepts and lessons learned*. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor.
2. UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Paragraph 72 and Annex I

As a key intervention area in SNV's approach to 'pro-poor REDD+', PFM is promoted as a means to realise multiple benefits for local communities. Some of the most important potential benefits from PFM to local people are summarised in *Box 3*.

Box 3 Possible benefits to local people from participatory forest monitoring for national REDD+ programmes

Direct

1. Income from REDD+ 'participation payments' compensating for time spent on monitoring activities, primarily labour days spent for data collection in and around the forest.
2. Information on REDD+ carbon and non-carbon performance in the locality that could be used by local stakeholders to substantiate and check against (in-coin/in-kind) benefits awarded under a national programme.
3. Information on changes in forest resources and resource use that could be used to inform better, adaptive, management practices; particularly of value if villagers or communities hold forestland tenure.

Indirect

4. Better forest management should confer improved forest ecosystem service provision, which would benefit local people in terms of regulating water supply and quality, reducing soil erosion, improved crop pollination, etc.
5. Engaging locals in monitoring should confer improved forest governance in areas such as a strengthened voice in decision-making processes and greater accountability through more transparent flow of information.
6. Monitoring activities and the data they yield can serve as a crucial mechanism for enforcing compliance with important rules of forest management, such as resource and access, use, prohibition and distribution of benefits.

3. Danielsen, F., M. Skutsch, N.D. Burgess, P. Moestrup Jensen, H. Andrianandrasana, B. Karky, R. Lewis, J. C. Lovett, J. Massao, Y. Ngaga, P. Phartiyal, M. Køie Poulsen, S. P. Singh, S. Solis, M. Sørensen, A. Tewari, R. Young & E. Zahabu. (2011). At the heart of REDD+: a role for local people in monitoring forests? *Conservation Letters* 4 (2011) 158–167.
4. Walker, S., T. Pearson, F. Casarim, N. Harris, A. Grais & S. Brown (2011) *Standard Operating Procedures for Terrestrial Carbon Measurement Version 1.0*. Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) programme, Bangkok.





SNV's current activities in participatory forest monitoring

1. Producing operational guidance

SNV strategically intervenes in PFM through the provision of generic, globally applicable operational guidance, complementing technical assistance on monitoring methodologies and protocols produced in collaboration with SNV knowledge partners, Winrock International and WCMC UNEP. At the international level, a range of generic PFM guidance documents are being produced, including:

- **Standard operating procedures for terrestrial carbon measurement⁴:** which can be applied to participatory approaches engaging local stakeholders in monitoring forest carbon stocks.
- **Participatory carbon monitoring:** operational guidance for national REDD+ programmes, indicating division of functional tasks among participating stakeholders, from national government to local villagers, and complementing SOPs for field measurements.
- **Participatory biodiversity monitoring:** considerations for national REDD+ programmes as an integral component of national safeguard information systems (SIS).

2. Embedding through operational frameworks and training

SNV ensures PFM is embedded in existing national and sub-national forest monitoring systems through development of:

- **Developing operational frameworks** – identifying entry points where PFM could strengthen existing systems of forest monitoring, together with allocation of the functional tasks to operate PFM to the key stakeholders who would perform them.
- **Sub-national PFM piloting** - assisting local government agencies in developing PFM pilot projects, which meet the specific requirements of their jurisdiction, and engaging local villagers in the field testing of monitoring protocols. Training is provided in data collection, management and local-level analysis.
- **Country context-specific data collection and management manuals and associated training materials**, for local stakeholder use, particularly forest managers and local communities. Initial focus is on participatory carbon monitoring with a view to expansion to include participatory biodiversity and social impact monitoring in the near future.
- **Provision of iterative technical training** inputs for local stakeholders on PFM data collection, management, verification and reporting protocols; delivered through long-term investments in pilot sites and direct links to national policy-making fora and processes.

To demonstrate these benefits, SNV and partners are designing, field testing, and capturing lessons learnt from PFM models to inform national policy reform and improve practices on the ground.

Case study: Piloting participatory forest monitoring - initial experiences from Vietnam

Vietnam's National REDD+ Action Programme indicates participation as the key principle in monitoring the impacts of REDD+ activity implementation. With technical assistance provided by SNV and the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), together with local government and community stakeholders in the southern province of Lam Dong are currently piloting a model of participatory forest monitoring.



The initial focus is on participatory carbon monitoring (PCM), building on preliminary field tests by SNV in 2010. Participatory biodiversity monitoring (PBM) is scheduled for introduction in 2013 and plans are being developed to expand the model further to include participatory monitoring of social impacts (PSM) of REDD+ activity implementation from 2014 onwards.

PFM piloting in Vietnam comprises: development of operational and methodological guidance; field testing of operational systems and data collection/management protocols; and national policy dialogue. Although in the very initial stages of development, PFM in Vietnam presents a working example of exploring the technical and institutional aspects of designing and operating an inclusive monitoring system that has multiple applications, such as REDD+ and other payment for ecosystem service schemes.

Supported by:



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety



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