

REDD and Indigenous Peoples February 2012

More than 150 million indigenous people in Latin America, Africa and Asia are severely affected by the consequences of climate change due to their close relationship with nature and traditional production methods. Around the world, forests are home to more than 2,000 indigenous peoples, and their existence and culture is deeply connected with the forest. If it is destroyed, they lose their habitat, their basis of livelihood and their cultural identity. REDD provides an opportunity to considerably expand forest protection. In order for this to benefit indigenous populations, effective participation and benefit sharing are crucial.

Indigenous peoples are speaking out

Indigenous peoples regularly challenge REDD. They present a variety of arguments¹:

- We are not the ones causing emissions. Those who produce emissions (particularly the industrialised countries) should pay the ecological debt for it and not just buy a right to pollute;
- Forests are not empty spaces, people live in them. Forests are much more than carbon reservoirs;
- Indigenous rights are there to be respected (the right to land and to participation/consultation);
- REDD must not operate like a bank debt which harbours the danger that we will be dispossessed and expelled from our traditional lands;
- REDD needs an indigenous REDD that integrates with the "living plan" (plan de vida), the life ways and the economy of indigenous peoples.

REDD – Participation by indigenous groups is crucial

The REDD process thus far practised has shown that without effective participation by indigenous peoples, REDD as a political process is in danger. Involving indigenous groups, particularly in countries with a vast indigenous population, is already a compulsory element of the REDD readiness process.

However, informing and supporting indigenous peoples in a way that enables them to competently participate and share in decision-making at local, national and international levels is not an

However, the discussion among and with indigenous representatives often goes round in circles from consultation and participation rights to indigenous land rights and back. Crucial challenges that are connected with the consultation - such as methodological aspects, lack of funding for complex logistics, lack of didactic materials and use of appropriate media - so far have hardly been met.

National consultations and participation at project level

Some of the complaints over insufficient indigenous participation can be attributed to the fact that decision-making proc-



Juan Carlos Jintiach, Coordinator for international economic cooperation of COICA and official FCPF observer on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples of South America. Photo: Jan Zappner

easy task. Various actors such as national governments, the World Bank, the United Nations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and project developers manage this task with mixed results, and participation is not seldomly equated with a formal process involving "ritualised" transmission of information but excluding the possibility of influencing decisions.

esses at different levels also demand different levels of intensity. Consultation at the national level on the envisioned REDD strategy, the monitoring system or legal provisions on carbon rights is different from the consultation or participatory planning of a concrete REDD project, for instance for the voluntary carbon market.

¹ <http://www.coica.org.ec/cumbre2011/.../Espanol-Mandato.pdf>

While recommendations exist for national participatory processes (such as common consultation guidelines from UN-REDD and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility FCPF²), the specific design takes on different shapes in every country and strongly depends on how indigenous peoples are organised and what political relationship they have with the national government bodies. In some countries, selected indigenous representatives are represented in the national

indigenous peoples and other relevant actors. Guidance can be obtained from the *REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards*³ of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance and Care International, for example, whose criteria and indicators can be adapted to the relevant national context in a demanding multi-stakeholder process.

Free Prior and Informed Consent

The principle of Free, Prior and Informed

that even a refusal of consent must be respected and must result in a freeze or revision of the envisaged project.

Individual country initiatives – the example of Brazil

In Brazil, various NGOs⁵ and the national indigenous organisation FUNAI are addressing the issue. However, nationally recognised guidelines for operationalising REDD projects with the participation of indigenous groups do not exist yet.

Among other organisations, the Brazilian institute Imaflora has developed *REDD+ Social and Environmental Principles* in a multi-stakeholder process⁶. Nine of 27 criteria explicitly target at indigenous aspects. However, they, too, are merely principles and provide no instruction on how to operationalise them.

An example of concrete implementation is the *Suruí Carbon Project*, which is committed to indigenous planning, decision making and implementation processes. The project has conducted a multistage FPIC process with 14 villages, starting from first contact with clan representatives and leading to the participatory development of the concept. The methodological repertoire for involving the Pater-Suruí tribe included, among other things, participatory observations, community meetings and interviews with key representatives. A particularly significant element was that it gave the Pater-Suruí sufficient time for internal consultation and scope to develop their own decision-making mechanisms.

In this sense, FPIC is not a one-off act but an iterative process that is anchored in the overall project cycle.

Carbon rights and indigenous REDD

The frequent concern that REDD could become a lever for dispossessing in-

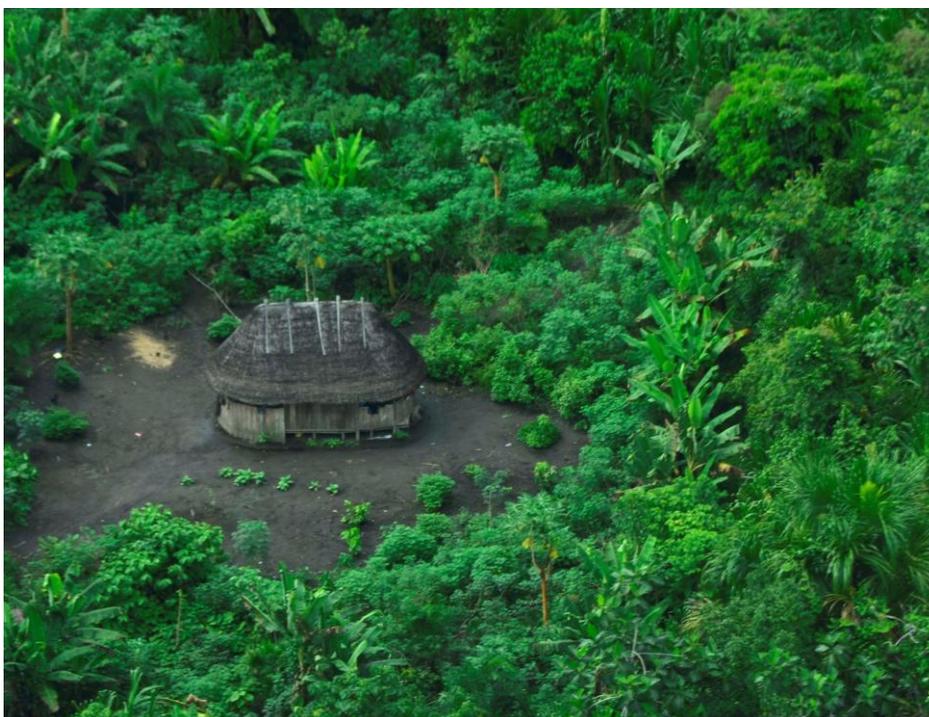


Photo: Alfredo Carrasco Valdivieso

readiness working group with voting rights (e.g. in Colombia) while other countries have roundtables in which indigenous umbrella organisations and other interested parties participate. In many cases, however, tension also occurs between umbrella organisations and individual indigenous communities that do not feel adequately "represented" or generally reject delegated decision-making.

The participatory development of country-specific safeguards and standards for REDD projects is one possible approach to establishing a consensus between

Consent (FPIC) is designed to guarantee that no activities impacting the local level take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the affected indigenous population⁴. However, no consolidated guidelines have yet been established for the operationalisation of FPIC, and both local REDD project developers and those countries which have committed to abiding by the FPIC rule are still experimenting with different approaches (see box). What is clear, nevertheless, is

³ http://www.climate-standards.org/redd+/docs/june2010/REDD_Social_Environmental_Standards_06_01_10_final.pdf

⁴ FPIC is recognised in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007) and the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989).

⁵ E.g. Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (IPAM) or Instituto de Conservação e Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Amazonas (IDESAM)

⁶ http://www.imaflora.org/upload/repositorio/PC_redd_imaflora_english.pdf

² <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/>

indigenous peoples of their lands must be taken seriously. Recently, a number of “indiscrete” proposals appear to have been brought forward by project developers – on more than 30 indigenous territories in Brazil alone. The proposals always amount to the long-term assignment of carbon rights. FUNAI, the Brazilian indigenous organisation, is advising indigenous peoples not to sign any agreements with private project developers, as long as no statutory regulations on carbon rights exist.

How does development cooperation respond to indigenous participation?

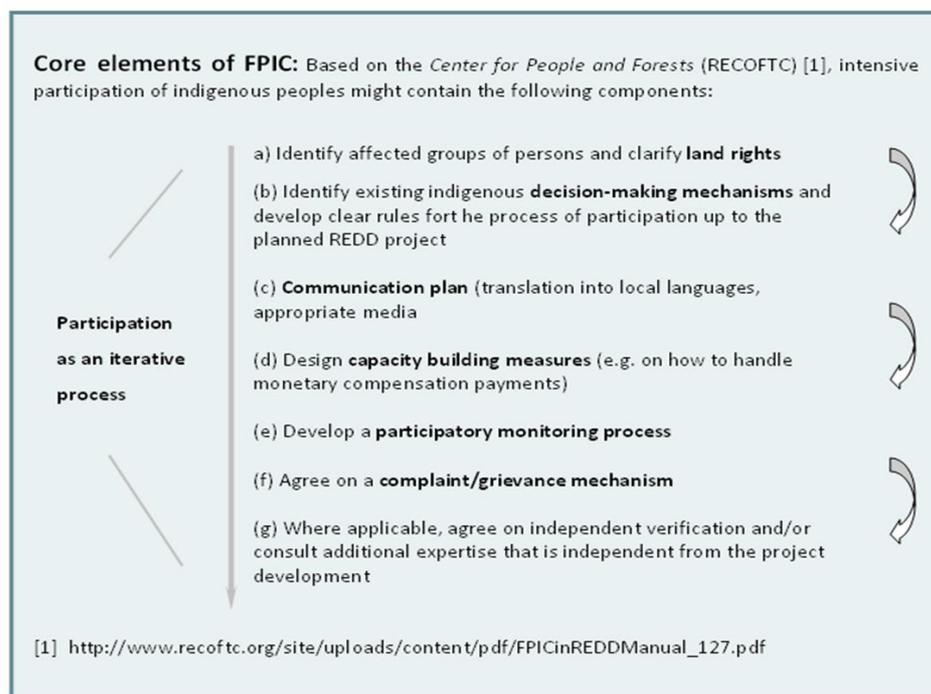
The activities of the three big multilateral REDD initiatives (FCPF, UN-REDD and the Forest Investment Programme FIP) are confronted particularly with protests from indigenous groups and NGOs. This has led to considerable delays in the implementation of REDD pilot activities in several countries. FCPF, UN-REDD and the FIP are attempting to facilitate a constructive dialogue by including indigenous representatives as observers in their governance structures and establishing specific capacity building programmes under which indigenous and civil society organisations may apply for financial and technical assistance.

The consultation guidelines jointly adopted by the FCPF and UN-REDD provide the countries with orientation and seek to apply the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent. The establishment of complaint/grievance and conflict resolution mechanisms, the representation of indigenous counterparts in the national decision-making bodies, the clarification of land and carbon rights as well as safeguards are integral parts of the readiness process.

The World Bank's *Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples* (OP4.10) outlines strict conditions for interaction with indigenous peoples, against which all measures supported by the FCPF both

in the readiness phase and in the purchase of carbon credits by the FCPF Carbon Fund must render account. Since the adoption of the *Common Approach*, these standards have also applied to the implementation of FCPF resources by the Inter-American Development Bank and UNDP. Their focus is placed on the implementation of these conditions by the relevant recipient country government, which is reviewed and monitored before financing is granted. Among other criteria, this includes a social impact assessment in project regions, the documentation of culturally adapted consultation processes and their

implementation of *Free Prior Informed Consent*. Guiding principles are also outlined in the concept for *Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2006). Among other elements, it includes participation and empowerment, the do-no-harm principle, FPIC, concrete improvements in living conditions, safeguarding traditional land rights, employment of indigenous professionals, culturally adapted communication media, legal advice and conflict resolution, conflict-sensitive monitoring and cooperation with ethnologists.



results (consent). The policy also covers action plans on land rights and benefit sharing, which it also requires to be monitored.

REDD and indigenous groups in German Development Cooperation (DC)

German DC bases its cooperation with indigenous groups on international agreements such as the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The strategic concept *Human Rights in German Development Policy* (2011) supports the

KfW Entwicklungsbank has enshrined the respect for the social and cultural rights of indigenous populations in its Sustainability Guideline, which also follows the safeguard policies of the World Bank, among other principles. In addition, as part of project appraisal, the product design is adapted to the social context of the target group and a comprehensive risk analysis is performed. Social scientists are consulted where needed. Concrete project activities cover, for example, land use entitlements, legal advice, conflict resolu-

tion/mediation and management advice on handling REDD benefits. Care is also taken to employ culturally adapted communication media and recruit indigenous professionals. The project monitoring also captures specific improvements in living conditions and the social acceptance of the project. Besides, agreeing on corresponding budgetary items with the project executing agencies can stimulate cooperation with ethnological research institutes.

An example from German Financial Cooperation: Sociobosque, Ecuador

KfW is learning important lessons on the participation of indigenous groups in concrete forest conservation programmes such as *Sociobosque* in Ecuador (PSB).

Sociobosque remunerates smallholders and indigenous communities for verified and sustainable forest conservation. The contractual parties commit to protecting the forest for 20 years, to refrain from timber cutting and to apply strict conditions to forest use (only non-timber products such as bamboo, fruits or similar products may be extracted in a controlled manner). For this purpose, they agree on a management plan with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment that defines the areas contemplated and the concrete protection measures and comprises an investment plan that follows the development plan (*plan de vida*) of the indigenous communities. It also presupposes a completed process of entitlement to forest land areas. The most important indigenous groups in the selected regions are the Chachi, Awá, Kichwa, Achuar, Shuar and Zápara. Although the response thus far has been mostly positive, some groups, such as the Achuar in the Morona Pastaza region, reject *Sociobosque*. This attitude is mainly due to distrust towards the government, which is being suspected of wanting to use *Sociobosque* to secure long-term access to indigenous lands.

Moreover, some indigenous groups do not feel confident to enter into a long-term contractual obligation of 20 years. Assuming absolutely voluntary participation and, through a detailed multi-stage information and preparation process in which the indigenous groups take responsibility for designing the investment plans, the government is attempting to address their reservations and specific needs.

Conclusion

The participation of indigenous groups plays a crucial role for the implementation of REDD. Both the World Bank and the German DC follow international standards and apply guidelines or conceptual principles of their own in order to ensure effective participation. Nevertheless, participatory mechanisms may be too formal, not bringing about the adequate effectiveness. However, REDD is on no account a systematic or disguised strategy for displacing indigenous groups from their traditional lands. Quite the opposite is true: large scale forest protection has a positive impact on preserving indigenous peoples' habitats. Effective participation by indigenous populations through FPIC and conceptual arrangements for REDD benefit-sharing between national governments and local groups crucially enhances the legitimacy of REDD. Moreover, investing REDD benefits in self-determined development plans of indigenous communities by preserving traditional, resource-conserving management methods and through active involvement of indigenous groups in REDD monitoring (both carbon and biodiversity monitoring) can ensure that indigenous groups proactively engineer REDD.

Overall, incorporating indigenous planning and decision-making processes requires additional time and resources,

which is, nevertheless, fully rewarded in case conflicts are prevented and long-term sustainability of REDD can be secured.

It is still unclear to what extent direct payments generated out of REDD may alter the dynamic in indigenous communities. Where funds going into the millions could be mobilised through REDD for indigenous populations, it must be asked what social transformation processes this may trigger. Critical voices are concerned that the traditional communion with nature will be eroded, generating a counter-productive impact. This underscores the need for indigenous peoples to actively shape REDD in order to apply traditional knowledge right from the outset.

Further links:

- Coordination Office for Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean (KIVLAK) (<http://www.gtz.de/de/praxis/7346.htm>)
- Working aids on indicators and training material on climate change, REDD+ and indigenous peoples: (<http://tebtebba.org/index.php/all-resources/category/7-training-manuals-and-resource-books>)

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