Climate Funding and Forests

Carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced to near zero by 2080 and atmospheric carbon levels (already at 400 parts per million) must not exceed about 450 ppm to ensure a greater than 50% chance of limiting warming 2 °C. As challenging a goal as this is, more recent science emphasizes that a 1.5 °C target is necessary to avoid major deleterious consequences, requiring an even tighter reduction schedule[1].

Unfortunately, fossil fuel emissions continue to rise and mitigation plans put forward by major polluters in their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions do not make sufficiently deep reductions pledges to place aggregate emissions on a reduction trajectory that would meet the 2 °C, let alone the 1.5 °C, target[2].

Avoiding emissions through forest protection and enhancing sequestration through ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems provides a vital and much needed short term strategy for enabling a timely transition from fossil fuels and decarbonizing the global economy, while staying within the 2 °C degree target and keeping options open for the more ambitious 1.5 °C[3].

This approach raises the question of how to support a rapid step-change reduction in deforestation and degradation in developing countries, and in particular those holding significant areas of primary forest where the potential for avoiding forest emissions is therefore highest[4].

A number of bilateral and multilateral climate finance options are available for forest protection. Whichever approach is used, IntAct recommends that the following guidelines should apply[5]:

- REDD+ funding should prioritize actions that avoid emissions through forest protection and must be part of a comprehensive approach to mitigation based on the deep cuts in fossil fuel emissions needed to limit global warming to less than 2 degrees. Avoiding emissions from forest protection and accelerating sequestration through forest restoration are critical complementary actions because they could stabilize the atmospheric concentration of CO2 while countries decarbonize over the next few decades, providing a real opportunity to achieve the 1.5 degree target.
- Ensure social safeguards are recognized and given full effect, including protecting, upholding and strengthening the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, and providing funding to Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities that choose to prioritize forest protection and ecological restoration.

- Also ensure safeguards are recognized and given full effect for biodiversity, and that mitigation actions support the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Targets[6].
- Recognize the following prioritization of forest management actions in order to maximize climate mitigation, biodiversity and social outcomes: *Priority 1* - protection of primary forests; *Priority 2* – ecological restoration of degraded natural forests; *Priority 3* – reduced impact logging of production forests.
- Adopt full land-based carbon accounting of natural forest stocks and flows at the national level.
- Avoid perverse outcomes in forest mitigation action, such as the conversion of natural forests to plantations or displacement of activities in forests to other biologically important areas such as grasslands.

---

[1] J. Hansen et al. (2013) Assessing Dangerous Climate Change: Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature. *PLOS One* December 2013, Volume 8, Issue 12; e81648

[2] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015) *Synthesis report on the aggregate effect of the intended nationally determined contributions - Note by the secretariat*. FCCC/CP/2015/; file:///C:/Brendans%20Work/IUCN_current/ClimateChange/Paris/INDC-SynthesisReport.pdf

[3] A forest protect and ecological restoration strategy is also a vital component of a long term and comprehensive mitigation strategy; see IntAct *Fact Sheet #1 Forest Carbon*; http://primaryforest.org/blog/forest-carbon-fact-sheet-1/

[4] Mackey B., DellaSala, D.A., Kormos, C., Lindenmayer, D., Kumpel, N., Zimmerman, B., Hugh, S., Young, V., Foley, S., Arsenis, K. and Watson, J.E.M (2015) Policy options for the world's primary forests in multilateral environmental agreements. *Conservation Letters* 8, 139–147.

[5] For further details, see the IntAct *Statement of Principles*; http://primaryforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IntAct-Statement-of-Principles-FINAL.pdf

[6] *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets "Living in Harmony with Nature"*, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/2011-2020/Aichi-Targets-EN.pdf