INDIA

Submission on SBSTA Agenda item 4

"Robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems"

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SBSTA Agenda item 4: Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (UNFCCC Document: FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.25 dated 3 Dec 2011)

In the conclusions proposed by the Chair on the above SBSTA Agenda item 4, the SBSTA 35 at Durban invited Parties and accredited observers to submit to the secretariat, their views on issues identified in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 72 and appendix II, in particular on *"Robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems"*. The submission from India on the subject follows:

Essential elements of a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system imply application at each stage of the processes and procedures, a transparent, independent and open systematic approach covering, inter alia, the three pillars of successive progression of the measurement, reporting and verification of forest carbon stocks for compiling national level accounting. Salient elements of robustness and transparency of the three pillars of accounting are described below:

Measurement

1. The activity data will be the area change in the forest and trees outside forests (ToF) for estimating impact of deforestation, and the changes in forest carbon stocks for estimating forest degradation.
2. This data will be collected through application of the satellite remote sensing, and actual measurements in the sample plots laid following a suitable sample design.
3. Data relating to the forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock change will be computed for the agreed time interval as submitted at agreed periodicity.
4. The forest carbon stocks, and carbon stock change data will be compiled into a national level forest inventory.
5. The responsible organisation including the nodal organization should be decided based on the capability of the organization to handle the volume and complexcity of the data, and to coordinate and liaise with the States and Provinces of the country.
6. Information collected above will form the component of forest carbon stocks in the national GHG inventory.

Reporting

7. Reporting units for forest carbon stocks will be million tonnes CO_2eq.
8. Emissions and removals will be estimated at the national level.

9. Other relevant information, such as forest area, area under different density classes, forest canopy cover, and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation will also be included in the national accounting.

10. The unit of the measurement for the area of forest and ToF will be hectare.

Verification

11. The processes, procedures and methodologies for generating the information will be evaluated by independent experts having subject knowledge.

12. The accuracy of inventory will also be reviewed by independent experts not involved in any of the processes of preparing the forest carbon stocks inventory.

13. The calculations/reports of analysis will also be rechecked by independent evaluators before being submitted to the UNFCCC.

General

14. Definition of 'forest' for national level accounting of forest carbon stocks should be flexible to allow the developing countries to elect ToF area and/or other tree resources outside the traditional forests to be included in the national accounts.

15. Stratification of forests and other tree resources including ToF as part of a robust sample design will be in accordance with the developing country's administrative capability, and agro-ecological and physiographic variations.

16. Processes, procedures and methodologies for measurement will be finalized in an open and transparent manner including peer review of the same by independent internal and external experts, and display of the same on the website for comments and review by others.

17. Same dispensation will be applicable to reporting and verification also.

18. Stratification of forest areas, ToF and other tree resources, crown density classes, sampling design, precision of estimates, protocol for collecting sample data, models and equations used in computing forest carbon stocks will form essential part of accounting report submitted to the UNFCCC, and will also be put on the website for public reference.

19. All equations, growth and biomass yield models used in computation of forest carbon stocks will be based on published records, and freely and readily accessible to all for evaluation.

20. Developing countries will have the option to choose all or any of the pools of forest carbon stocks.

21. Indigenous peoples, local communities, civil societies and other interested entities will be fully involved and informed about the technological, methodological, policy, and financial aspects of the Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) processes and procedures.

22. All process for quality assurance and quality control (QAQC) will be applicable to all processes, procedures and methodologies used in generating the information.

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