

NEPAL
25th Session of SBSTA
Agenda item 5
(In Relation to FCCC/SBSTA/2006/L.25)
Reducing emission from deforestation in developing countries

Background

Reducing emission from avoided deforestation has not yet been recognized under the Kyoto Protocol. In Nepal, over 25% of the forested land is handed over to the local communities for its management and protection from the state. Although the process of devolution in forest resource management started since mid 1980s, Nepal started handing over of government-managed natural forests to local community user groups from mid-1990s based on the Forest Act, 1993 and Forest Regulation, 1995.

To date, over 1.1m ha of government-managed forest has been handed over to about 14000 user groups with an outreach to nearly 8 million population (almost 40% of the population). In field trials, such community managed forests have been reported to sequester anywhere around 2 - 4 t ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹ in above ground biomass only under normal management conditions which means after extracting forest products such as fuelwood, timber, fodder, grass/herbs, litter, non-timber products for supporting their sustenance needs. The local institutions, known as Community Forest User Groups, are faced with a dearth of financial resources as much of their products are sold at minimal price in the local market. There is tremendous scope to generate revenue from CER traded internationally to benefit the environmental and social aspects of managing such forests. Sale of carbon credits on the one hand would provide livelihood opportunities to poor marginalized communities thereby helping in poverty reduction and contribute to the sustainable development principles of the climate change regime on the other.

Policy recommendations

In order for rural people to be benefited, the policy under the UNFCCC for avoiding emission from deforestation should address the concerns highlighted below:

1. Baseline period should be more realistic taking into account the deforestation rate in the countries concerned in order to provide additional benefits to local and poor communities that dedicated themselves to conservation earlier.
2. Community managed forests are avoiding deforestation in natural forests. The CER from avoiding deforestation must be regarded at par with regular CER as real emission is reduced. This is real emissions reduction, and should not be rewarded therefore with tCERs or ICERs
3. Transaction cost to measure carbon pool in small patches of forest scattered over the mountainous terrain is expensive. Hence, a generalized baseline should be developed at the national level rather than at project levels. Research has shown that local communities can effectively and efficiently measure the changing carbon stock in their forests using standard forest inventory methods for example as suggested in the Good Practice Guide.
4. The definition of forest must be developed at country level taking into account geographic aspects such as mountain, mid hills and low land forests.
5. Capacity building and financial assistance are urgently needed in particular to mountainous and land-locked countries for maintaining reliable forestry database compatible with carbon assessments at national level and for training the local forest users to monitor their forest carbon stocks at local level.

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