



FACTSHEET

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# Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and REDD+

## Protecting Community Rights and Livelihoods in REDD+ Initiatives



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### Forest & Climate Initiative

The emergence of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and conserving, sustainably managing and enhancing forest carbon stocks (collectively referred to as REDD+) has generated great interest as a possible means of increasing support for the forest stewardship activities of indigenous peoples and local communities. If done well, REDD+ initiatives could strengthen community land and resource rights, empower community institutions and increase income through benefit sharing. Yet, REDD+ has also sparked concerns about possible adverse impacts on indigenous and community rights and livelihoods, such as restrictions on land and resource rights, increased centralization of forest management and inequitable benefit-sharing.

WWF believes that REDD+ is a key to effective climate change mitigation but needs to integrate strong social and environmental safeguards. WWF's Guiding Principles for REDD+ emphasize respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and contributions to community livelihoods. Effective REDD+ programmes must ensure that risks are reduced and incentives for community stewardship are strengthened.

### Guiding Principles for REDD+

WWF has adopted the following guiding principles for REDD+:

- **Climate** - REDD+ demonstrably contributes to greenhouse gas emission reductions with national goals working toward a global objective.
- **Biodiversity** - REDD+ maintains and/or enhances forest biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- **Livelihoods** - REDD+ contributes to sustainable and equitable development by strengthening the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.
- **Rights** - REDD+ recognizes and respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Fair & Effective Funding** - REDD+ mobilizes immediate, adequate and predictable resources for action in priority forest areas in an equitable, transparent, participatory and coordinated manner.

Safeguards enacted in 2010 under the United Nations Climate Convention provide an important framework for reducing risks and ensuring benefits to indigenous peoples and other forest communities from REDD+, including with reference to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Governments and other REDD+ actors must now ensure that these provisions are implemented in national programmes and projects.

WWF believes the following are key to equitable and effective REDD+ initiatives:

### Full and effective participation

Full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in developing, implementing and monitoring REDD+ programmes at multiple levels (local, sub-national, national, international) depends both on capacity-building to ensure that communities are well informed about potential benefits and risks, and on processes that enable involvement of relevant rights-holders and stakeholders.

### Secure community forest tenure

Recognizing and respecting customary rights to lands, territories and resources can support more effective stewardship of forests and safeguard against potential displacement risks. Clear rights to lands and resources will also significantly influence who ultimately receives any future benefits from REDD+. Therefore, securing community forest tenure is fundamental to ensuring REDD+ benefits reach communities.

### Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)

FPIC refers to the right of indigenous peoples to give or withhold consent – in accordance with their customary decision-making processes – to actions and measures that impact their customary lands, territories and resources. FPIC enables communities to assess the potential benefits and risks of REDD+ initiatives, influence their design, and decide whether or not to participate in them. This enables community rights and interests to be taken into account, which is vital to increasing the effectiveness of REDD+ initiatives.

### Equitable sharing of REDD+ benefits

REDD+ initiatives could provide additional streams of income to communities, which could help make the conservation and sustainable use of forests more valuable to communities than other land uses. Realization of these benefits will depend upon funding strategies that prioritize incentives for forest communities, many of whom are the historic stewards of natural resources, as well as on good governance of financial mechanisms to ensure that benefit-sharing is equitable and transparent.

**WWF: REDD+ for people and nature.** To address these issues, WWF is:

- **Promoting effective approaches to social safeguards and benefits in demonstration programmes.** WWF programmes in Peru, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere are promoting measures to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in REDD+ sub-national initiatives. This work includes support for community capacity building and participation in REDD+ fora, as well as work with partners to develop locally-appropriate approaches to FPIC. WWF is also supporting more formal recognition of community tenure at local levels as well as the development and testing of mechanisms for equitable benefit sharing.
- **Building knowledge and generating policy-relevant lessons.** WWF is promoting knowledge sharing and the development of principles and best practices for equitable benefit-sharing, community tenure, participation and FPIC in REDD+ initiatives. In addition to drawing on comparative experience to inform place-based work, WWF is working with partners to document and share practical field-based experience to further inform and influence policies and initiatives on these critical dimensions of REDD+.
- **Advocating with partners for high standards in REDD+ policy frameworks.** WWF is working with broader civil society coalitions to promote the establishment of policy frameworks for REDD+ – at the global, national and sub-national level – that protect the rights and well-being of forest dwelling communities. This work includes drawing on experience from pilot initiatives to inform REDD+ policies, supporting indigenous organizations to develop and communicate their positions, and collaborating with other civil society groups to advocate for rights and livelihoods as key considerations in REDD+.



#### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[www.panda.org/forestclimate](http://www.panda.org/forestclimate)

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