

Guidelines and eligibility criteria for REDD on biodiversity and on Indigenous Peoples and local communities

(please note that this position is in addition to existing FoEI positions on REDD¹ – see Accra briefing and REDD Myths report for more details)

Forests are not just carbon sinks, but undoubtedly of major importance for the diversity of life on earth. If REDD is to serve not only climate change mitigation, but also the conservation of biological diversity, the below preconditions should be considered in the design of REDD:

- **A fund-based, emissions-or income-linked approach that includes steering possibilities should be chosen**

The financing of REDD by a fund allows the opportunity to steer the finances and prioritize especially important forest areas, including those with high biodiversity conservation value. This would increase the efficiency of REDD by rewarding both biodiversity and carbon reduction outcomes. The funds could be supplied by Annex I countries in relation to CO₂ emissions or income per capita, thus making financing predictable and also providing long-term incentives for Annex I to reduce domestic emissions.

- **REDD must recognize, respect and promote indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights to their lands, territories and resources, and the right to their traditional uses of the forest**

Traditional practices in Indigenous Peoples and forest communities, e.g. many forms of shifting agriculture, often have very little impact on forest carbon stocks and biodiversity, and contribute to protecting the forest from disease, pests and fires. The traditional, sustainable practices of Indigenous Peoples and forest dependent communities are protected under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Targeting such practices in REDD strategies would increase the risk of displacement and eviction of these vulnerable groups, risk the loss of valuable local traditional knowledge, and ultimately fail to address the real drivers of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

- **When distributing REDD funding and preserving forests, biodiversity-rich habitats as well as areas with a high potential as carbon sink should have priority (ie. a biodiversity criteria). The conservation of existing forests should have priority over reforestation and afforestation**

If it is not possible to stop all deforestation activities within a country all at once, we suggest to develop a priority list for these based on their role for biodiversity. For this reason, it is important that the areas which have a high importance for Biodiversity and/or as carbon sink profit first from REDD. The Carbon and Biodiversity Atlas of UNEP/WCMC or the High Conservation Value Area (HCV-) Concept could provide a basis for the site selection.

- **Monoculture plantations and afforestation should be excluded: the definition for forest considered under REDD should be adjusted accordingly**

Monocultures and plantations have little or no contribution to biodiversity compared to natural forests, especially if they substitute the latter and are composed of exotic tree species. Due to their complex structure, natural forests store more carbon than plantations. Plantations are economically

¹ Most notably, FOEI opposing a carbon trading based mechanism for financing REDD; and collective rights and the free prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples as enshrined in the UNDRIP must be guaranteed in any REDD mechanism.

so attractive anyway that REDD funding should not be wasted on them. The forest definition as set out in the Marrakesh Accord includes plantations and allows clear-cutting and should not be used; We suggest to assess progress on the basis of primary, modified natural forests and semi-natural forests with assisted natural regeneration only.

- **The basis for allocation of REDD funding should be the actual reduction of gross deforestation and degradation**

In order to avoid leakage, the actual reduction of deforestation and degradation should be measured worldwide and on a national basis by ex-post evaluation. This should provide the basis for calculating the amount of money to be allocated to the countries. While it is clear that a certain amount of money must be paid up front to enable for measures to be taken, a substantial part should be distributed after evaluation and used according to the above mentioned priority list. To ensure that clear-cutting of primary forests cannot be compensated by reforestation, Pro Natura agrees with the CBD AHTEG that it is necessary to look at gross deforestation and degradation.

- **The contribution of countries that have conserved their forests so far has to be rewarded in order to discourage future forest deforestation**

It is existing natural forests that we want to protect. For this reason, countries who have substantially contributed to this and left their forests untouched must profit from any mechanism to save the forests under UNFCCC as well.

- **Full Funding should be supplied only for actions already successfully undertaken and depend on compliance with the biodiversity criteria mentioned above**

This guarantees that there really is a reduction of deforestation and degradation.

- **For peatlands, Pro Natura suggest a similar mechanism**

Peatlands are crucial for climate change mitigation as well as for biodiversity. More than twice as much CO₂ is stored in them than in the rest of the world's forests. 2-3 Gt of CO₂ are emitted annually from peatlands, which accounts for about 8% of the global total of CO₂ emissions. Roughly half of these emissions are emitted by Non-Annex I countries so that any broadened LULUCF regulations are not applicable. In order to provide incentives for developing countries to preserve or rewet their peatlands, they should be either integrated into REDD or a separate analogous mechanism should be created.

- **Grasp the problem by its root: address the underlying causes**

While a REDD mechanism can – under the precondition that the above mentioned criteria are met – help to reduce the deterioration of carbon stocks and biodiversity, it is necessary to address the underlying causes first. This means to reduce the demand of forest-consuming products like timber, paper, soy and palm oil, especially by changing consumption patterns in the industrialized countries. A REDD mechanism should require all Annex I countries to undertake specific policies and measures to reduce the demand for products that contribute to deforestation and forest degradation, and report on these policies and measures to the UNFCCC.