

Focali Brief: 2010:04

High hopes and fast pace in the REDD+ arena

Global efforts are being made to prepare tropical forest countries for REDD+. The work is advancing rapidly with new funding pledges being added and new countries joining. As REDD+ work proceeds it will be crucial to maintain awareness of the obstacles to be faced. The risk that REDD+ steals the limelight from other issues should also be kept in mind.

THE UN-REDD, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) are all working to help countries develop REDD+ strategies and providing support to technical development of systems for monitoring and verification, capacity building and stakeholder consultations. The REDD+ pilot initiatives are working with the dual role of trying to feed into the REDD+ negotiations whilst also awaiting the outcome of them. The current status of the REDD+ financing arena is shown in the figure below, which is included in the report "Getting ready for REDD+" (Westholm, 2010). Since our first report (Westholm et al., 2009) was published, a year and a half ago, a number of changes have been made:

- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has launched new SFM/REDD+ funding, but it has not yet initiated activities.
- The GEF Tropical Forest Account is no longer a player in the REDD arena.
- The Forest Investment Program has chosen eight pilot countries.
- Denmark has entered as a donor to the UN-REDD and the FIP.
- Spain has announced new donations to the UN-REDD Programme.
- The FIP has received new funding from the Netherlands, the UK and the US and has grown from 50 million USD to 558 million USD.
- The Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) has



The large sums of money channelled to tropical countries through various REDD+ initiatives are not fully additional and attention must be brought to the potential funding trade-offs between REDD+ and other causes. Photo: Sam Beebe

- reached a decision on support to a number of projects working in five countries.
- The UN-REDD has expanded support to three additional countries.

Proceeding with REDD+

Speculations before the Cancún meeting were pessimistic about the possibility of reaching a legally binding agreement on climate change. Some foresaw agreements on specific topics, among others REDD+, as a possible outcome of the Cancún meeting (La Viña & Ang, 2010). However, the apparent consensus on REDD+ in Copenhagen may be starting to fall apart, and new differences in opinion have emerged regarding the wording of the agreement. Notwithstanding this, REDD+ pilot initiatives are advancing, independently of the negotiations, and it is likely that they will continue to do so, even without a binding agreement. Both donors and host countries are committed to launching REDD+. In the long run, if no agreement is reached, this may of course affect the amount of funding made available, and the efforts stakeholders are prepared to put into the process. There is also a fear that advancing the process outside of the UNFCCC framework may compromise the democratic process of the UNFCCC negotiations.

Mobilising funds

The members of the REDD+ Partnership have collectively pledged 4 billion USD for fast start REDD+ financing for the period 2010-2012 (REDD+ Partnership, 2010). However, it is difficult to know to what extent this funding is additional and new, and to what extent it consists of Official Development Assistance that has been redirected or just projects re-labelled. It is of course positive that there is a commitment to REDD+ and large sums of money will be needed to achieve the kind of institutional change and transformation necessary to succeed. However, there is an urgent need for a discussion of the trade-off between REDD+ and other issues that might be overlooked. The GEF has for example launched a funding mechanism for Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ that aims to steer funding for biodiversity, climate change and land degradation projects towards SFM/REDD+ projects.

Key findings

REDD+ preparations are conducted globally. Regardless of the outcome of the UNFCCC negotiations it seems REDD+ will become reality. The pilot initiatives are on the way to

About this brief

Focali provides knowledge to Swedish ministries, government agencies and other relevant actors for effective forest management to achieve climate-poverty targets. This brief summarizes the main findings, highlights challenges and provides recommendations within the focal area. This brief is based on the Focali report "Getting ready for REDD+" (Westholm, 2010) and can be downloaded from www.focali.se

preparing countries for REDD+ and taking the first steps towards building capacity and institutions. The preparatory process is advancing rapidly and additional funding pledges continue to be issued. The key findings from the study are summarised in the following points:

- REDD+ work will proceed regardless of the outcomes of the UNFCCC negotiations. It is conducted by the existing global initiatives and urged on by the members of the REDD+ Partnership. There is however a fear that the accelerated process might come to suffer a democratic deficit.
- To succeed it is important that cooperation between REDD+ initiatives continues and is further developed in order to avoid duplication of efforts.
- It is important to make sure that the accelerating REDD+ process does not steal the limelight entirely and steer funding away from other important issues. The large

Overview of REDD+ initiatives

sums of money channelled to tropical countries through various REDD+ initiatives are not fully additional and attention must be brought to the potential funding trade-offs between REDD+ and other causes.

- It is important keep a level head and not put too much faith in countries that may not be able to live up to them. The rapid advancement on the REDD+ arena may have led to investors overlooking obstacles and risks in pilot countries. As an example, several big donors are investing in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country with substantial forest resources, but also marked by internal conflicts and a severe lack of infrastructure.
- Finally, there is a risk that while some countries participate in REDD+ preparations others are left behind. This increases the risk of international leakage of deforestation and forest degradation, from well prepared countries to less prepared countries.

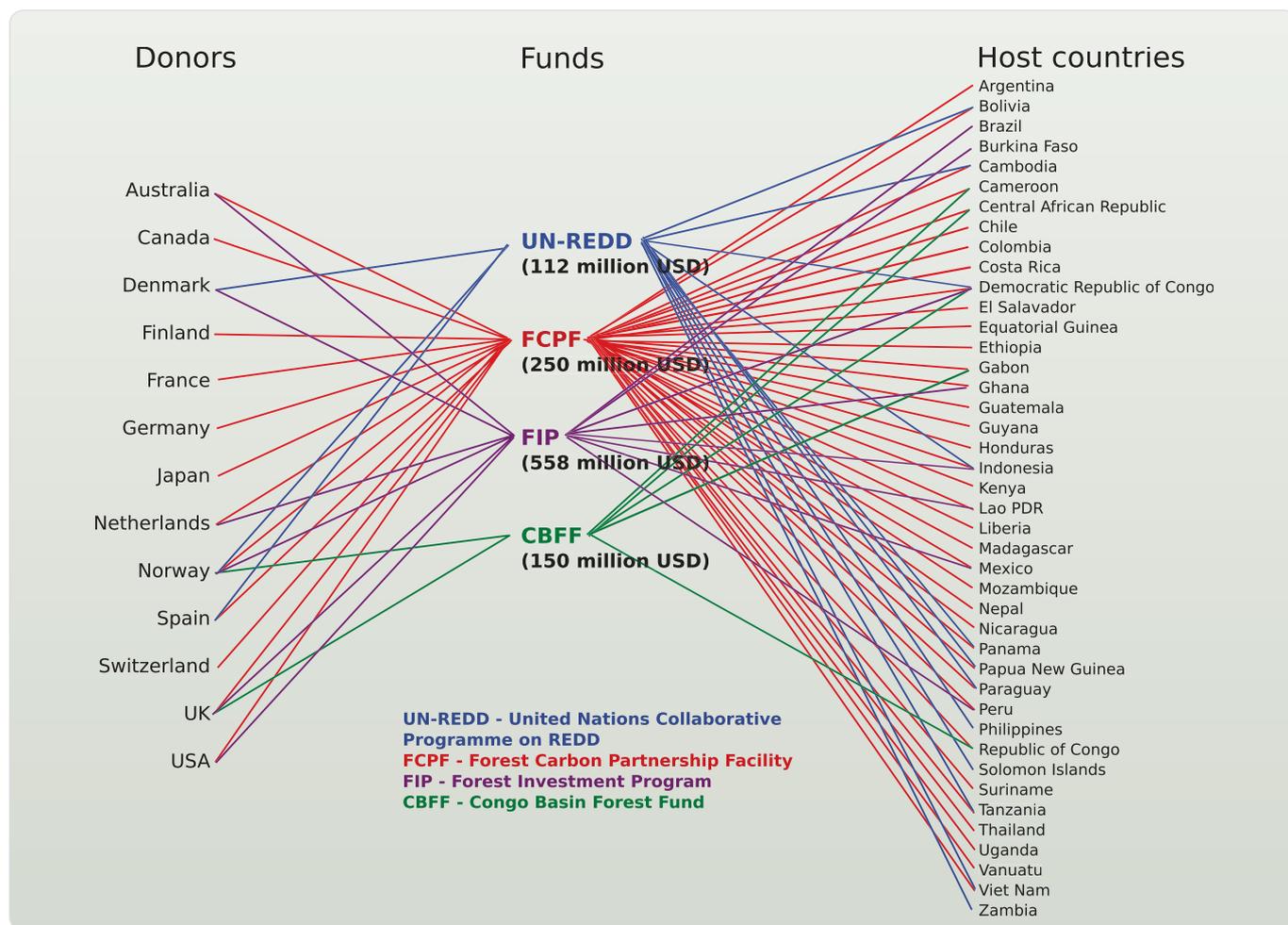
Full report

This brief is based on the report "Getting ready for REDD+" by Lisa Westholm (2010) and can be downloaded from www.focali.se

La Viña, A. G. M., & Ang, L. G. (2010). From Copenhagen to Cancun: Challenges and Propsects for the UNFCCC Negotiations. Retrieved from http://www.field.org.uk/files/lavinaang_from_copenhagen_to_cancun.pdf

REDD+ Partnership (2010). REDD+ Partnership Retrieved 2010-10-27, from <http://redd-pluspartnership.org/en/>

Westholm, L., Henders, S., Ostwald, M., & Mattsson, E. (2009). Assessment of existing global financial initiatives and monitoring aspects of carbon sinks in forest ecosystems - The issue of REDD. Gothenburg: Focali Report 2009:01.



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