the nested approach to REDD+ in Peru: readiness and implementation at the subnational level in the region of San Martin as a model

Ranking forth among high forest-cover tropical countries, Peru is well positioned to promote REDD+ as a national strategy to reduce deforestation levels and mitigate climate change. Nonetheless, technical capacity and legal instruments need to be further developed for the successful implementation of a REDD+ strategy in Peru. Additionally, while there is interest by indigenous groups and regional governments in promoting REDD+, there is still a need to strengthen local capacity for these groups to be effectively engaged in REDD+ development.

The government of Peru has indicated its interest in capturing the potential economic, social and environmental benefits associated with REDD+ through the submission of the national Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), which was approved in March 2011. In this context, the Government of Peru has decided to take a nested approach to REDD+ and to adopt a bottom-up implementation of REDD+ at multiple scales, starting at the local or site level, and continuing with the regional or subnational level and on to the national level. Consequently, REDD+ is being developed at different scales of planning and implementation and early initiatives are at different stages of development.

The Peruvian Ministry of Environment (MINAM) has begun the process of building political support for the development and integration of diverse instruments, including REDD+ that will help enforce forest governance. An innovative instrument of the Ministry of Environment is the National Forest Conservation Program to Mitigate Climate Change that will provide incentives to indigenous communities that conserve their forest.

Conservation International (CI) is providing assistance to the Peruvian government on policy, capacity-building and the development of necessary institutions in order to build a cohesive, transparent and equitable national REDD+ program focusing on the San Martin region as a model. CI and ÉcoRessources Carbone are supporting MINAM with analysis of institutional arrangements and capacity building required for Measuring, Monitoring, Reporting and Verifying (MMRV) emissions from deforestation and forest degradation at the national level. Technical support has also been provided through a workshop on land use and land use-change greenhouse gas inventories.
Working in San Martin

The region of San Martin is located in the northeast of Peru. Most of its original land cover consisted of tropical forests and wetlands. By the end of the 20th century, however, the region started to see a rapid increase in deforestation rates, caused mainly by government efforts to connect the region with the rest of the country through the construction of roads, as well as the implementation of agricultural development programs that encouraged cultivation of valuable commodities such as rice and, more recently, coffee. This process accelerated the influx of immigrants from economically depressed rural areas in the Andean highlands to San Martin. It is estimated that about 1.6 million hectares of primary forest (30 percent of the total area) have been cleared over the past fifty years. If this trend continues, San Martin could lose the majority of its forest by 2050 and along with it the natural foundation it needs to improve the human well-being of its people. In this context, the regional government of San Martin has set a goal to reverse this situation by adopting policies to manage its natural resources responsibly and take advantages of new markets, including carbon markets.

CI is working with the regional government of San Martin, local organizations and key partners to develop a regional framework for REDD+ that could eventually be scaled up to the rest of the country and used as a model to set national standards. To this end, regional reference scenarios for emissions from deforestation are being developed. Modern technology is being used to design a monitoring system of carbon stocks and deforestation levels that could serve as a model for the national Measuring, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (M/MRV) system. CI is also assisting in developing a regional REDD+ readiness plan that can serve as a model for the design of a national REDD+ readiness strategy, which include building capacities for prior informed consent processes with indigenous leaders, and their involvement in the development of strategies for pro poor and equitable distribution of financial benefits obtained through REDD+.

CI is conducting training workshops for decision-makers of the national and regional governments to learn how to use CI’s application Open Source Impacts of REDD+ Incentives Spreadsheet (OSIRIS), along with GIS decision tools that will be essential to develop economic assessments and land-use planning of national plans which will include REDD+ under different development scenarios.

The work being implemented in San Martin with financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, includes the following components:

Support the San Martin Regional REDD+ Roundtable

The San Martin Regional REDD+ Roundtable is an open and transparent dialogue space where REDD+ is being discussed and developed at the regional level. It is chaired by the Regional Government with the participation of civil society organizations and REDD+ experts from the National Government (MINAM). The REDD+ Roundtable has given great importance to the environmental integrity of the REDD+ framework that is being constructed for San Martin and created an Advisory Committee and a technical Working Group to analyze the drivers of deforestation, develop reference scenarios, and assess carbon stocks, among others. Participants have also identified the importance of the social aspects of REDD+ for discussion, including effective stakeholder engagement processes.
Historical Deforestation Levels
CI’s Science and Knowledge Division provided change detection training to four analysts at Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (UNALM). Twenty-five Landsat images were used to generate historical deforestation data for the periods 2000-2005 and 2005-2010. To test the accuracy of this analysis CI, in collaboration with local partners, is analyzing high-resolution aerial photography and conducting field surveys to acquire the necessary data for validation.

Deforestation Scenarios
CI’s partner Carbon Decision International (CDI) in collaboration with the technical Working Group of the REDD+ roundtable, produced a report on agents and drivers of deforestation for the San Martin Region that was presented and discussed in a meeting of the REDD+ Roundtable for validation. The results of this analysis were used to develop preliminary deforestation projections for the San Martin Region. The projections are spatially explicit so that they can also be used to determine the baseline of local REDD+ initiatives. The underlying database of geographic driver variables was created, reviewed for accuracy and, when necessary, improved by the technical Working Group. The projections are calibrated using the data on historic levels and locations of deforestation produced by UNALM and are reviewed by the Advisory Committee prior to their presentation to the REDD+ Roundtable, where local experts provide inputs and suggestions for improvement. The aim of this iterative process is to produce a credible final deforestation projection.

Carbon Stock Inventory
In collaboration with the technical Working Group of the REDD+ Roundtable, CDI has produced a carbon stock inventory report for San Martin. This report describes the compilation and analysis of carbon measurement data collected from several institutions. The data compiled contain carbon measurements from 466 field plots, as well as geographic information that was used for the stratification in carbon density classes. This information will be used
in combination with the deforestation projections to develop a 30-year projection of GHG emissions from deforestation in San Martin.

Compensation Levels
In collaboration with MINAM, CI-Peru and its partner Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), conducted a study to establish appropriate compensation levels for forest conservation through cost-benefit analysis (opportunity costs) of land use change of the main economic activities in native community lands and other spaces in the region of San Martin.

Capacity Building
Together with the REDD+ roundtable, CI is supporting capacity building activities to facilitate the understanding of the methodologies used in developing deforestation analysis and carbon stock inventory. The preliminary results of the deforestation analysis will be presented to various stakeholder groups, including several governmental offices of the Government of San Martin, all members of the San Martin REDD+ roundtable, representatives of indigenous federations and the Peruvian National Park Service. This has been done through on-the-job training, working sessions conducted with the REDD+ roundtable, as well as in three workshops covering specific topics. As part of the capacity building efforts, CI is also funding a geospatial technician to work exclusively within the Government of San Martin. CI and CDI have also conducted two workshops to address technical and regulatory issues of the nested approach to REDD+, including how to build a reliable, effective and multi-purpose M/MRV system.

Development of a regional REDD+ readiness plan
The development of a strategy to identify necessary steps for a regional REDD+ readiness plan has been identified as essential for the process in San Martin. This plan could serve as a model for the design of a national REDD+ readiness strategy including a prior informed consent process with indigenous leaders, their involvement in all levels of the process and strategies for REDD+ benefits. A first step towards effective engagement is the dissemination of information. To this end, CI Peru implemented the training of trainers’ on climate change and the role of forest with the participation of representatives of San Martin’s indigenous regional federations. The goal is to build a team of skilled local trainers to deliver trainings to communities or other local stakeholder groups on issues related to climate change and environmental services. Through this process, CI will assist the Regional Government in the development of a local stakeholder consultation program that translates indigenous peoples’ and local communities’ needs into a nested framework of incentives for REDD+.

CI has also committed to providing continuous support for the Regional Environmental Authority (ARA) and the Indigenous Peoples Regional Development Office (ORDEPISAM) efforts to effectively involve indigenous people in the regional development process. For this purpose, CI Peru is working with partners to engage and empower indigenous groups in ecosystem services schemes through two feasibility studies. Coordination is under way between the Government of San Martin and the National Forest Conservation Program to Mitigate Climate Change to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the program with communities in San Martin.

Partners
CI implements this project in coordination with the Ministry of Environment (MINAM) and the regional government of San Martin. Our main partners are: Amazónicos por la Amazonía (AMPA), Asociación Peruana para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (APECO), Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), and Carbon Decisions International (CDI).