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Agents, assumptions and motivations behind REDD+

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Citation for published version (APA):

Lovera-Bilderbeek, A. S. E. (2017). Agents, assumptions and motivations behind REDD+.

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9. Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

Deforestation and forest degradation cause many social, environmental and economic problems (see 1.1). The livelihoods of economically and politically marginalized communities, especially women and Indigenous Peoples, depend on access to forest resources (see 6.3). A lack of formal tenure and governance rights over forests prevents them from halting forest destruction by potential intruders (6.3). Deforestation and forest degradation are also among the main causes of terrestrial biodiversity loss, and contribute significantly to climate change; not just because of the greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted, but also because natural forests play an important role in stabilizing hydrological cycles (see 1.1).

This study examined the research question: Which actors are instrumental in shaping REDD+ policies and policy responses; what are their motivations; and how do they use their agency to pursue their interests? This question has been addressed through three subsidiary questions. The first question explored how the different actors expected that REDD+ would work out in comparison to existing international forest policy regimes in terms of environmental effectiveness, economic efficiency and equity. The response to this question has shed light on the motivations of the different actors to create a new forest policy regime and on how the REDD+ regime that has been created is both the cause and the result of certain power imbalances and inequities between different agents, and between agents and assumed beneficiaries. The second question explored which actors promoted the inclusion of REDD+ as a forest policy regime within the climate change policy regime, and how they used their agency to pursue their underlying interests and ideologies. The response to this question has provided insights into the role and tactics of State and non-State actors in international policy processes and especially the role of economic incentives in regime development. Finally, the third research question explored how a more balanced agency by rightsholders, developing countries and industrialized countries in the design of global environmental governance and international climate and forest policy regimes could be promoted.

This chapter integrates the main conclusions on the assumptions of key actors regarding the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the REDD+ regime (9.2) and provides some suggestions for further research (9.4). It concludes with recommendations for more effective, efficient and especially equitable forest conservation and restoration policies, and more balanced agency of rightsholders and stakeholders in Earth System Governance (9.5).

9.2 The Assumed Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity of REDD+

9.2.1 Assumed Opportunities and Benefits of REDD+

I have argued that the proposal for the REDD+ regime was partly accepted because negotiators assumed that a results-based payment regime for forest conservation and tree planting would generate billions of dollars in support for the forestry and conservation sector (see 3.5). While legally in line with the forest-related clauses in the original

UNFCCC, the REDD+ regime emphasized results-based payments for reducing deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks. Table 9.1 shows that the assumed effectiveness of the REDD+ regime was based on the neoliberal assumption that such economic incentives would be a strong motivation for countries and actors on the ground to conserve and restore forests (see 4.5). Many lead agents promoting REDD+ were economists or business administrators (see 7.2, 7.4), and the REDD+ regime resulted from the increasing influence of environmental economics in international environmental governance (see 7.7 and 8.10). Proponents expected that REDD+ would mitigate climate change and conserve forests as an ecosystem that provides many other environmental and social co-benefits, especially if the adopted REDD+ safeguards would be complied with (see 6.2). A key positive effect of the REDD+ regime is that it has drawn significant political attention to forests and has generated economic support for forest conservation (see 4.3). This has inspired many policy initiatives in almost 50 different countries in the form of REDD+ Readiness processes that aim to set up the necessary MRV systems (see 3.4, 5.4). REDD+ funding has been distributed over many countries (see 5.4)⁶⁹¹ and can be seen as enhancing equity, and building capacity, including in the field of analyzing the drivers of forest loss.

Proponents assumed that REDD+ was efficient as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and planting trees were seen as relatively inexpensive climate mitigation policies. They expected that including forest carbon offsets in a mandatory global emissions trading system (ETS) would generate billions of dollars for forest conservation (see 5.5). They assumed that the regime would be equitable as it was based on a beneficiary pays principle whereby the global community meets global environmental aims including GHG mitigation by paying presumably poor countries, and the communities within those countries, that conserve forests (see 6.5).

Table 9.1 Assumed positive impacts and opportunities of REDD+

Effectiveness	Efficiency	Equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results-based payments lead to climate mitigation and other forest conservation benefits, if safeguards are complied with. - Significantly increased political attention for the need of forest conservation, leading to increased funding and action, and increased capacity to analyze the drivers of forest loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REDD+ is a cost-effective climate mitigation policy. - Inclusion of REDD+ in mandatory emission trading markets will generate significant funding. - Increased political attention has triggered significant amounts of funding for REDD+, which was divided over more than 40 recipient countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REDD+ will lead to a transfer of funds from global beneficiaries of forest values to local stewards of forests, primarily in the South. - Safeguards will ensure equitable implementation and effective participation. - PES mechanisms in a number of countries have provided income and other economic benefits to economically marginalized people.

⁶⁹¹ By June 2016, 38 countries had signed a grant agreement with the FCPF, see https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2016/May/PC21%20FCPF%20Readiness%20Progress_MASTERec.pdf (last visited 17 June 2016). A few additional countries receive funding from UN-REDD+ or bilaterally.

Proponents expected that safeguards would ensure that benefits would be equitably shared, negative social impacts would be prevented, and key stakeholders would participate fully and effectively in REDD+ design and implementation (see 6.8). Moreover, some PES mechanisms established under or incorporated into REDD+ schemes are assumed to have delivered concrete economic benefits to local communities that conserve forests. While the payments are often relatively modest, proponents point out that they can be quite significant for economically marginalized communities with low incomes (see 6.5). Lastly, in certain countries and forest-related international policy processes, REDD+ has created new participation opportunities for certain forest-dependent groups, in particular Indigenous Peoples (see 6.4).

9.2.2 Assumed Negative Impacts and Risks of REDD+

Both scholars and the interviewed REDD+ actors identified risks and potential negative impacts of REDD+ (see Table 9.2), although interviewees' responses were remarkably mixed. Not only interviewees from critical NGOs or rightsholder groups mentioned negative aspects, also others mentioned some risks, and even interviewees from governments or organizations that strongly promoted REDD+ mentioned potential pitfalls of the new regime. Most scholars mention the potential risks of REDD+, even though they embrace a reformist approach that assumes the risks can be satisfactorily addressed by improving regime design or implementation. Only a few scholars consider the flaws to be inherent in the REDD+ regime.

A key risk is that REDD+'s effectiveness in reducing forest loss would be limited as it cannot address many of the main drivers of forest loss including incoherent international policy, as REDD+ payments are destined for actors directly responsible for forest loss. While some attempt to address commodity-chain related drivers through REDD+, it is not designed to address demand-side drivers like overconsumption of meat and dairy which drives expansion of soy and cattle production in forest frontiers in South America, or the demand for palm oil which drives deforestation in Southeast Asia (see 4.4). Furthermore, there are problems in paying countries or other actors for complying with their own laws. REDD+ neither can deal with corruption or the lack of good governance, but is already being implemented in over 40 countries with questionable governance (see 4.4, 6.3). Moreover, REDD+ may not be able to reduce GHG emissions as carbon sinks are not permanent, as there may be leakage, as baselines and reference levels are difficult to identify, and MRV mechanisms are complex and expensive (see 4.2, 4.5). The effectiveness of REDD+ as a climate change mitigation mechanism would be further compromised if most funding would be generated through carbon offsets, as permanent emissions would be offset through non-permanent sequestration (see 4.5).

Scholars and interviewees have questioned the efficiency of REDD+ as it would require billions of dollars annually while there is little statistical evidence that increased forest funding is related to decreased deforestation (see 5.5). Another risk is that REDD+ funding will remain primarily public and thus relatively modest, while the same public financial resources could also have been spent on other climate change mitigation or adaptation policies, or poverty reduction (see 5.4). As REDD+ has not been included in a mandatory ETS, the amount of private finance for REDD+ has remained marginal and the Paris Agreement will not change this in the short run, even though there is still a chance that land-use activities might be included in the as yet to be defined offsetting mechanism that is indicated in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, or in a potential mechanism to offset

the emissions of a specific sector like aviation. However, for now the overwhelming majority of REDD+ funding is and will remain public. This implies that the quantity of funding will remain far more modest than the 17 to 33 billion USD per year that was originally assumed to be available (Eliasch, 2008). It also means that every dollar spent on REDD+ is a dollar that cannot be spent on climate change adaptation, or development aid in general. Meanwhile, covering the full opportunity costs of REDD+ through results-based payments would require permanent annual investments that might be similar to or higher than the entire existing global ODA budget (see 5.3.2). For many intermediaries there is a clear economic incentive to inflate the transaction and other costs of REDD+, so that these funds can sustain their organizational costs (see 6.6).

As the price of REDD+ is likely to be set through negotiations involving the intermediaries and not the beneficiaries, rather than a proper calculation of the transaction and opportunity costs, local communities and other potential beneficiaries may not be fully compensated for their costs (see 5.3, 6.5, 6.6). This means that the costs and benefits of REDD+ are likely to be distributed in an inequitable manner between the providers, intermediaries and buyers of REDD+ credits, between women and men, and between industrialized and developing countries (see 6.5, 6.6).

The need for adequate MRV systems and related transaction costs have created significant dependencies of forest-dependent communities on intermediaries such as conservation NGOs, private companies and government agencies (see 6.6). These dependencies have led to power imbalances that have resulted in both an inequitable distribution of costs and benefits between these intermediaries and forest-dependent communities, and misrepresentation of the latter in the international policy debate (see 6.8). Indigenous Peoples, women and forest-dependent communities have not been able to participate fully and effectively in the design and implementation of the REDD+ regime (see 6.4).

It is also more efficient to pay large landowners who have been responsible for significant deforestation for conserving forests than forest-dependent actors like women and Indigenous Peoples, who often even lack the formal tenure rights regarding the forests on which they depend (see 6.5). Forest-dependent communities, in particular Indigenous Peoples and women, are economically and politically marginalized (see 6.3), and inherent power imbalances mean that it will always be difficult for them to participate fully and effectively in regime design (see 6.4). As the REDD+ safeguards are essentially voluntary and their implementation is subject to self-reporting by countries, there is a risk of elite resource capture, green land grabbing (see 6.3.4), involuntary resettlements, and human rights violations in general (see 6.2, 6.8). Some of these problems could be addressed by securing land tenure rights for forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women, but it will take decades before land tenure conflicts are resolved in most REDD+ countries, while REDD+ is already implemented (6.3).

Table 9.2 Assumed risks and potential negative impacts of REDD+

Effectiveness	Efficiency	Equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a trade-off between REDD+ effectiveness, efficiency and equity, e.g. in the field of MRV, establishing reference levels and project scale. - Most REDD+ activities have focused on REDD+ Readiness rather than reducing forest loss, and some successes are claimed for projects and policies are not REDD+. - Problems with addressing permanence, leakage and establishing proper baselines, reference levels and MRV systems will undermine REDD+ and the climate mitigation regime. - There will not be universal participation in REDD+ so leakage cannot be satisfactorily addressed. - REDD+ does not necessarily contribute to forest ecosystem conservation as it is carbon-focused. - REDD+ cannot address demand-side drivers of forest loss or drivers related to bad governance, including corruption and illegality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a trade-off between REDD+ effectiveness, efficiency and equity. - Most REDD+ funding has been spent on Readiness rather than action. - Most PES mechanisms lack additionality. - Adequate MRV implies high transaction costs - REDD+ intermediaries have an economic incentive to inflate REDD+ costs. - The full transaction and opportunity costs of REDD+ providers might not be compensated for. - Covering the full opportunity costs of REDD+ is excessively expensive and requires an amount similar to the entire existing global ODA budget, on a permanent basis. - There is no clear relationship between existing REDD+ funding and decreased deforestation. - Most REDD+ funding is public, and thus modest, while replacing other climate and development funding, and the Paris Agreement is unlikely to change this in the short term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a trade-off between REDD+ effectiveness, efficiency and equity. - Contextual inequities in the forest sector lead to procedural and distributive inequities in REDD+, including gender inequities. - Indigenous Peoples, women and forest-dependent communities have not participated effectively in the design and implementation of REDD+. - REDD+ safeguards might not prevent elite resource capture, land grabbing and human rights violations triggered by REDD+ dynamics. - Large landowners benefit more than forest-dependent actors without land tenure rights. - Significant benefits are accruing to intermediaries rather than forest-dependent communities. - MRV and other transaction costs create dependencies of forest-dependent actors on intermediaries, leading to power imbalances.

Many anticipated potential negative impacts during the negotiations phase of REDD+ (2007-2015)⁶⁹² have become a reality with the Paris Agreement in December 2015. The REDD+ regime as it was finally incorporated in the Paris Agreement may trigger a significant trade-off between effectiveness, efficiency and equity (see 6.8). Adequate MRV mechanisms are essential to avoid the risk that the REDD+ regime undermines the climate regime, but these mechanisms are far too expensive (see 5.3, 6.6). As a result, methodologies are being used that cannot guarantee accuracy (see 4.2), while forest-dependent communities have become dependent upon intermediaries for setting up REDD+ project and programs, as they are unable to invest in such MRV systems themselves, although participatory monitoring methodologies can contribute important data to MRV systems (see 6.6). As adequate baselines and reference levels would have excluded many countries from participating in REDD+ (see 5.3), questionable rules have been adopted by the Parties to the UNFCCC that significantly compromise the effectiveness of REDD+ as a climate mitigation regime.

I conclude that the way in which the final REDD+ regime is designed implies that it cannot address demand-side drivers like international commodity chains and other key drivers like bad governance. While many national REDD+ strategies analyze the drivers of forest loss, few include measures that would address them effectively (see 4.4). Rather, there has been a tendency to blame forest-dependent communities for forest loss, and many REDD+ policies and projects focus on hampering their use of forest resources and forest lands. This is also due to the fact that REDD+ is, paradoxically, most effective in the countries and areas with the lowest deforestation rates, as it pretends to compensate for the opportunity costs of not using forest resources and land, which has turned out to be an economically infeasible approach for forest areas that are threatened by the main driver of forest loss, commercial commodity production (4.5, 5.10).

As there will not be universal, mandatory participation in the REDD+ mechanism, leakage will remain a significant problem, while its lack of permanence compromises REDD+ effectiveness as a climate change mitigation regime (see 4.2).

9.3 Theoretical reflections

This study has shown that most elements of agency and regime theories, and within the latter the power-based, interest-based and knowledge-based theories, are relevant for analyzing the REDD+ regime. In the sub-sections below I position the findings within the respective theories.

9.3.1 Agency in REDD+ and its Relevance to Regime Theories

In light of the identified potential negative impacts of REDD+, including by many key actors in the negotiations, it is remarkable that so many actors became active agents behind the REDD+ regime (see 7.8, 8.10). An agent in international law is an authoritative actor who is able to prescribe behavior and successfully influence regime development (see 2.5). Actors can be seen as agents in a regime if they are considered legitimate, if their authority is respected, if they succeed in influencing policy processes in line with their objectives and if they are an agent in the eyes of other actors in the regime. Legitimacy can be indicated by the assumed representativeness and accountability of actors, and, in the case of non-State

⁶⁹² As explained in Chapter 1, the interviews took place between December 2011 and May 2015.

actors, their utility, embeddedness and education. Authority is indicated by the assumed expertise, moral authority and influence of actors (see 2.10).

Applying a conceptual framework using these indicators, the following lead agents behind the REDD+ regime were identified: PNG, Costa Rica and their CfrN, Norway, the US, Brazil, conservation NGOs, the World Bank, FAO, UN-REDD+, CIFOR and ITTO (see Chapters 7 and 8). While this list excludes actors that corresponded to one or two indicators only, not all the actors mentioned met all four indicators. The legitimacy and authority of some actors with the highest assumed agency, which were relatively successful in achieving their original objectives, was questioned (see 7.8, 8.10). Especially regarding Kevin Conrad's role as coordinator of the CfrN, there was a gradual de-legitimization, defined as "a process whereby framing by various actors lead to the perceived decline in the legitimacy of an institution or arrangements" (Backstrand and Kylsater, 2014: 332). This was due to questions that were raised about his representativeness of and accountability to the PNG administration, and the CfrN in general (see 7.2). Yet this de-legitimization hardly seems to have affected his agency in REDD+.

The legitimacy in terms of representativeness and accountability of several of the non-State actors who were identified as agents behind REDD+ was questioned (see 8.10). This could trigger the question whether legitimacy is an important criterion for agency in practice. While more research is needed, findings of this research suggest that actors can obtain remarkable agency in international regime building even if their legitimacy and authority are questioned. Lastly, it is worth noting that while the final REDD+ regime is broadly in line with the original proposal developed by Columbia University and PNG, the latter has received little or no financial benefits from REDD+ (see 7.2). The strong individual agency of actors does not necessarily lead to economic benefits for the organizations they represent, if the representativeness and accountability of the agent is questionable.

There were many links between the agents mentioned, indicating chains of agency. The first proposals for financing tropical forest conservation through carbon offset markets were designed by mainly US conservation organizations and the World Bank, and implemented on an experimental basis since the 1980s (see 8.3, 8.4). The REDD+ proposal was further developed at Columbia University in the US, and supported by influential people like Joseph Stiglitz with strong links with both the US Government and the World Bank (see 7.2, 7.5, 8.4). Columbia University subsequently convinced two developing countries, PNG and Costa Rica, to establish a CfrN that formally put the REDD+ proposal on the UNFCCC agenda and moved it forward (see 7.2). The link between US actors and PNG was partly incidental, as the personal relationship between Conrad and Prime Minister Somare played a key role in convincing the PNG Government to support the REDD+ proposal, and to provide a mandate to Conrad to represent PNG in the negotiations (see 7.2). This reflects the importance of policy entrepreneurs exploiting windows of opportunity. In general, the policy entrepreneurship of Conrad responds well to the criteria that were mentioned as success factors by Huitema and Meijerink (2010, see also Chapter 2): he developed a new idea, built a coalition, managed and orchestrated a policy network, recognized and exploited windows of opportunity and, as such, provided clear leadership in international regime development (see 2.3).⁶⁹³ He also meets some of the

⁶⁹³ When Somare's term ended, Conrad's relationship with the PNG Government deteriorated and he finally left the delegation to become a lead negotiator on REDD+ for Panama, which

characteristics mentioned by Gsottbauer and van den Bergh (2012), namely ideology, expertise, economic interests, enthusiasm and negotiation skills (see 2.5).

Costa Rica traditionally had strong links with US conservation organizations and has a positive track record in forest conservation. It has been advocating for carbon offset credits to support forest conservation since 1996. Costa Rica provided the legitimacy and authority to the CfRN that PNG itself was partly lacking due to its dubious forest record and the rather thin links between Conrad and the PNG administration as a whole (see 7.3). Former Norwegian Minister of Environment Eric Solheim played a strong role in the agency of Norway, while the individual policy entrepreneurship of former Minister of Environment Carlos Manuel Rodriguez played a role in Costa Rica's agency. Rodriguez and other Costa Rican negotiators deployed directional and intellectual leadership by using the example of their own domestic PES mechanism to influence the positions of other actors (see 7.3, 2.3). The CfRN itself is a coalition with variable membership of often small non-English speaking countries that depended on the strategic leadership of especially Conrad as a knowledge-shaper for their participation in the REDD+ negotiations (see 2.3, 7.2). Both the CfRN and people like Solheim and Rodriguez show how individual policy entrepreneurship played a central role in REDD+ agency. The experience of the REDD+ regime also demonstrates the importance of the nature and quality of networks in agency and regime development, and how such networks can form the cornerstone to the agency of relatively small and politically marginal countries like PNG and Costa Rica. In fact, the development of the REDD+ regime is an example of how the different actors with originally quite distinct agenda's work through strategic networks that trigger chains of agency around reformist policy approaches that serve their hegemonic interests and can lead to a regime that does not necessarily serve its original purpose in the most effective, efficient and equitable manner.

The development of the REDD+ regime corresponds to some extent to the factors mentioned by Weible et al. (2012, see 2.3) as triggers of a new regime or subsystem: there were external events (climate change, deforestation) and internal events (adoption of the Marrakesh rules, see 3.2) that motivated negotiations. Other internal factors include the exclusion of forest conservation from the CDM (that was seen as a hurting stalemate); adequate funding; commitment to negotiate; a focus on empirical issues; a consensus decision rule (although this rule was formally never adopted⁶⁹⁴ and ignored by the UNFCCC COP in 2010, see 3.2, 3.3); and to some extent a representative composition of countries from different regions and trust amongst key negotiators (see 2.3, 3.3, 3.4).

In line with interest-based theories, REDD+ forms a good example of a negotiated regime that was developed through institutional bargaining with the objective of maximizing the interests of all actors on a rational basis for the common good. In line with the theory on regime development by Hasenclever et al. (1997), actors operated in a situation where there was a consensual conflict, as deforestation was, at least in theory, broadly rejected, and the distribution of costs and benefits of the new regime was uncertain, which created an interest to cooperate (see 2.3). The importance of economic interests for both PNG and Costa Rica as a motivation of their agency corresponds with

became the spokesperson for the CFRN in 2014 (see 7.2). This shows the individual policy entrepreneurship of Conrad that formed the basis for PNG's REDD+ agency.

⁶⁹⁴ The Parties to the UNFCCC never adopted the rules of procedure due to different positions about the consensus rule, although in practice consensus is strived for. See FCCC/CP/1996/2, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop2/02.pdf> (last visited 28 December 2016).

interest-based regime theories. Interest-based regime theories put emphasis on the agency of individuals, which often depends on their behavioral features, preferences, ideology, expertise, economic interests, enthusiasm and negotiation skills (see 2.5). It is clear that these factors played an important role in the agency of Conrad, Rodriguez, Solheim and other REDD+ agents.

Norway's involvement as a REDD+ agent had its origin in a successful advocacy campaign by Norwegian conservation organizations. This shows the powerful role of environmental discourse, and it suggests the relevance of knowledge-based regime theories (see 2.7). The behavior of the Norwegian conservation groups that advocated for the REDD+ regime seems to have been based at least partly on a logic of appropriateness and a sincere belief in the need for tropical forest conservation. For the Norwegian public, the main political constituency to which the Norwegian government responded, altruistic values probably played an important role in supporting the contribution to tropical rainforest conservation (see 7.4, 8.3). More in general, knowledge-based regime development theories seem to be quite applicable to the strong agency of non-State actors in REDD+, notably conservation NGOs. Their motivations were at least in part based on their nature conservation ideologies, while an environmental problem-solving discourse (see 2.4), based on their expertise, formed one of their main strategies (see 8.3).

Yet, this is not the full story, as both conservation NGOs and the Norwegian government also had an economic interest in REDD+ (see 7.4, 8.3). The two NGOs that proposed the REDD+ regime saw their own budgets increase significantly since the adoption of the REDD+ regime, although it should be highlighted that according to their own annual reports their administration fees are as low as 8.9%⁶⁹⁵ so they re-granted most of that contribution. For the Norwegian government REDD+ formed a potentially strategic and cost-efficient way to offset its carbon emissions and thus retain its international environmental credibility in the climate talks despite being reliant on the production of fossil fuels for its economy (see 7.4). The agency of Norway was not isolated from other agents either. At least two of the interviewees⁶⁹⁶ independently suggested that the US had put pressure on Norway to support the REDD+ proposal, and provide substantial financial support for it and, until January 2017, the US and Norway were collaborating closely on REDD+ (see 7.5).

Table 9.3 shows that Norway has played a strategic role in providing financial support to the secretariat of the CfRN, which forms quite a remarkable example of an Industrialized country government openly financing a 'developing country' negotiation coalition (see 7.2). Norway played an even more strategic role by committing approximately USD 3 billion of partly additional international aid⁶⁹⁷ to the REDD+ process at the moment the proposal just started to be debated by UNFCCC Parties. It subsequently ensured that this funding was distributed over a large number of potentially influential countries and non-State actors like research organizations, NGOs and at least one

⁶⁹⁵ See <http://d5i6is0eze552.cloudfront.net/documents/Publikasjoner/Aarsmeldinger/Annual-Report-2013.pdf?mtime=20150905162504> (last visited 21 July 2016).

⁶⁹⁶ Interview 62, May 2015; interview 63, June 2015.

⁶⁹⁷ Norwegian ODA indeed increased in both absolute terms and as percentage of GNI between 2007 and 2009, but it declined since, and in 2011 and 2012 it was almost back to the same level as in 2007, despite the fact that REDD+ investments continued, which indicates a replacement of existing ODA. After 2012 ODA increased again. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/norway.htm> (last visited 26 June 2016).

influential IPO through contributions to UN-REDD+, FCPF and the FIP that subsequently supported over 45 countries (see Table 9.3 and Sections 7.4, 8.4, 8.6).

Table 9.3 Direct or indirect contributions by Norway to REDD+ agents

State agents	Direct contribution by Norway (USD mln.)	Contribution by UN- REDD+, FCPF or FIP (USD mln.)
PNG and CfrN	3.58	
Costa Rica	0.13	18.15
Brazil	1,029.00	70.00
DRC	15.13	87.31
Mexico	29.83	111.62
Bolivia		1.18
Non-State agents		
NGOs (including IUCN)	261.39	12.60
FAO	1.77	50.16
UNDP	17.77	52.56
UNEP		44.38
UN-REDD+	450.17 ⁶⁹⁸	
CIFOR	41.14	
ITTO	16.40	
IPOs	6.64	

Source: REDD+ Voluntary Database, <http://www.fao.org/forestry/vrd/download/en/> (last visited 16 July 2016).

This strategic financial support influenced the positions of these actors, who often became enthusiastic REDD+ advocates themselves, or refrained from critiquing the inherent flaws in the REDD+ regime (see 7.8, 8.10).

The financial support of Norway to organizations like the FAO and its UN-REDD+ program, CIFOR and ITTO has unquestionably played an important role in motivating the agency of these IGOs (see 8.6, 8.7, 8.8). While especially CIFOR was quite critical about REDD+, its criticism was always framed within a discourse which suggested that problems and challenges to the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of REDD+ could be overcome if the right corrective measures were taken (see, for example, Angelsen, 2008b, FAO, 2011⁶⁹⁹). The challenges were never seen as inherent in the regime, and the regime itself was never rejected. As such the discourse was clearly reformist and prosaic (Dryzek, 2005) (see 8.7).

The World Bank was a beneficiary of Norwegian REDD+ funding, but while this support undoubtedly played a role, the agency of the World Bank was mainly inspired by its own neoliberal ideology (see 8.4). The World Bank started advocating for the inclusion of forest carbon offsets in global emission trading markets in the 1990s, long before the Norwegian government started supporting REDD+, and it established a Prototype Carbon Fund to experiment with such forest carbon offsets in 2000 (see 8.4). The creation of markets for environmental services not only fits well within the neoliberal ideological framework of the World Bank, but it also fits within its financial framework of providing

⁶⁹⁸ Please note that <http://mptf.undp.org> reports only USD 234.1 million (last visited 25 December 2016).

⁶⁹⁹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1960e/i1960e00.pdf> (last visited 23 July 2016).

mainly loans rather than grants, which implies that investments in forest conservation need to generate financial returns. On top of that, the World Bank received significant economic benefits as an intermediary in REDD+⁷⁰⁰ and for individual World Bank staff there is an economic incentive to ensure that this role as a carbon broker continues to grow (see 8.4). The World Bank thus had a strong economic and ideological motivation to become an agent behind REDD+. As host of the FCPF and the FIP it subsequently played an instrumental role in providing financial support to the REDD+ programs of more than 35 countries (see 8.4). Many of those countries were supporters of REDD+, for example, through their membership of the CfRN (see 7.2). This clearly reflects the relevance of interest-based regime development theories (see 2.3).

The position of the US Government itself was partly influenced by its own NGOs, including powerful conservation NGOs that had been advocating for the inclusion of forest carbon offsets in mandatory emission trading systems since the 1990s (see 7.5, 8.3). Similar to the role of Norwegian NGOs, the agency of US conservation NGOs would appear to reflect knowledge-based theories (see 2.3). In line with a cognitivist approach their strategy was to influence regime-building through a discourse that reflected a common perception of the problem at hand and what seemed like a rational response: results-based payments for reducing deforestation. Yet in line with the regime development theories of Hasenclever et al. (1997) and Okafor (2006), their norms were constructed by neoliberal ideologies that marginalized conceptualizations of alternatives that would threaten the hegemonic stability of industrialized country elites (see 2.3). The constituencies of US conservation NGOs consist primarily of US consumers, and both the objective of moderating US emission reductions and opening the option of cheap carbon offsets to compensate emissions are in line with the interest of the average US consumer. In the end their knowledge mainly benefited their interests as representatives of US consumers, and their own economic interests as REDD+ intermediaries. This shows the relevance of interest-based regime development theories (see 2.3).

At the same time, it should be recognized that the agency of the US and US NGOs in the REDD+ regime was mainly entrepreneurial in practice. Rather than engaging in tough negotiations they used their diplomatic skills and focused on building like-minded coalitions to presumably solve the problem of deforestation (see also Hajer, 2006). There is no reason not to assume a certain level of cognitivism as the basis for US and US NGO agency. In fact, most of the agents mentioned were, at least publicly, motivated by a strong concern about tropical deforestation. What can be questioned is the neoliberal ideology that formed the basis for embracing REDD+ as the main solution to the tropical deforestation problem. This demonstrates the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance due to professional biases and the tendency of actors to select, interpret and sometimes distort information in line with an ideology that serves their economic interests most (see 2.5), even though they are actually quite aware of the many risks and negative impacts of the new regime as far as its effectiveness, efficiency and equity are concerned (see 9.2.2).

In summary, while the experience of the establishment of the REDD+ regime reflects knowledge-based and interest-based regime theories, it is mainly the combination

⁷⁰⁰ As an example, according to its annual report over 2014 the World Bank FIP has received USD 667 million in cash or unencashed promissory notes, while it had taken funding decisions (net of cancellations) for USD 314 million only. See <http://www-cif.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/default/files/CIF%202014AR%20-%20Annex%20A%20Trust%20Fund%20Summaries%20and%20Contribution%20Status.pdf> (last visited 23 July 2016).

of political and especially economic power that played an instrumental role in the establishment of the REDD+ regime. This is in line with power-based theories that suggest that cooperation serves to institutionalize the interests of the powerful, who use new regimes to establish hegemonic stability. The leading role of a country like Norway indicates that economic power, and its strategic deployment plays a role that is at least as important as political power in constructing new regimes nowadays. This calls for a renewed analysis of the political power of ODA in international regime building and addressing the question of how ODA funding streams can facilitate economic hegemonies of relatively small donor countries like Norway, and non-State actors like the World Bank.

9.3.2 The Legitimacy of NGOs and the link to interest-based regime theories

Many scholars and policymakers assume that the involvement of non-State actors in international regime building will lead to more relevance, responsiveness, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency and equity in international regimes (see 2.6). Yet, global environmental governance theories do not necessarily address power imbalances between industrialized and developing countries or those between well-resourced, often industrialized country-based NGOs and under-resourced, often developing country-based social movements that represent economically and politically marginalized groups like peasants, Indigenous Peoples or women. The analysis in Chapter 6 has shown that liberal democracy and greater participation opportunities for all actors in forest policy will not necessarily lead to balanced participation of the rightsholders who depend on forests for their livelihoods, and stakeholders who merely have an economic stake in forest policy. Rather, there is a risk that more powerful actors like corporations, forestry agencies and large conservation NGOs will use the participation opportunities to more effectively pursue their economic interests (see also McCarthy and Tacconi, 2011). To cite a report on the 2016 meeting of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development:

“...many also struck a critical note; questioning to what extent civil society participation reflects real representation. One youth representative spurred delegates to ‘look around the room’ as ‘the most marginalized and vulnerable are not here today’.”⁷⁰¹

As described in 6.6, conservation NGOs and forest-dependent communities have distinct interests as far as REDD+ is concerned. While some NGOs claim to speak for constituencies they do not necessarily represent is a major concern (Bernauer and Betzold, 2012; see 2.7). The term ‘NGO’ can be applied to virtually any organization that is non-governmental, whether it is an organization legitimately representing a constituency of thousands of supporters or a so-called “NGI”, an organization that basically represents one ‘non-governmental individual’. Many of the larger NGOs tend to be visible and dependent upon financial or other contributions by the general public, which means that they tend to be accountable to that public, but smaller NGOs often lack such an accountability to a clear constituency (see 8.10). This does not need to be problematic if the main function of NGOs is to provide advice based on their own research and analysis of environmental or

⁷⁰¹ Summary and analysis report of IISD Reporting Services of the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2016. See <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb3327e.pdf> (last visited 2 August 2016).

similar public challenges like social injustice or human rights violations, without pretending to represent broader constituencies. Such advice can often provide an inspiring source of knowledge and analytical thinking that will be taken into account by decision-makers involved in international regime building if, and only if, the advice is considered convincing. Precisely because of their independence, small NGOs and NGIs often have the freedom to base their advice on their objective analysis only. Their legitimacy is based on their expertise, embeddedness and utility, and their authority is based on their knowledge and quality of their advice, which means that their agency is limited if the advice is of questionable quality (see also 2.10).

Large NGOs tend to have large constituencies to which they are accountable. This enhances their legitimacy, but their constituencies are primarily from the industrialized countries or individual donors. Many of these donors are concerned industrialized country consumers whose philanthropy is partly rooted in cognivism, but who also have an interest in continuing their emission-intensive lifestyles while other actors take the lead in mitigating climate change. Forest carbon offsets and REDD+ in general reflect this agenda. From this perspective it is not accidental that some of the main agents behind the REDD+ regime consist of US-based and other industrialized country conservation NGOs representing a constituency of wealthy consumers with a strong environmental awareness that are dependent upon fossil fuels for their economy (see 8.10). As such REDD+ fits neatly within other green economy proposals like certification schemes that aim to address environmental challenges without compromising the lifestyles of wealthy elites.

As described in 5.5, there is no clear statistical relationship between REDD+ funding and forest conservation. Yet, not only forests, but forest conservation organizations need funding. REDD+ as a regime serves the economic interests of conservation NGOs and other conservation organizations, including State agencies and international bureaucracies (see Table 9.3). NGOs, IGOs and other forest conservation agencies play an important role as intermediaries in REDD+, and thus receive a significant proportion of overall REDD+ funding. This has influenced the objectivism of these organizations in international policy discussions. This is of particular concern when it concerns NGOs, as NGOs are often presented as independent, not-for-profit actors. However, the professionalization of the environmental movement over the last decades has created a large and influential sector that is formally not-for-profit, yet depends on sustained funding to support its organizational structures and operations (see 8.3). On an individual level, there are undeniable economic incentives for NGO staff to pursue policies that lead to increased funding for the projects and programs for which they are responsible (see 6.6, 8.3). The mere existence of these economic incentives does not always have to compromise the ideological integrity of NGO staff, or the NGO as a whole. There are ample examples of environmental and social NGOs openly supporting policy changes that run against their own economic interests, and even the economic interests of their constituencies. Yet, the existence of potentially perverse economic incentives in the NGO sector that might compromise NGOs as independent, critical actors, is an issue that deserves more research and analysis. There is also a need to look more critically at potential perverse incentives that might compromise the objectivity of national and international research centers and IGOs.

Similarly, in line with interest-based regime theories there were strong economic incentives for some of the most important IGOs, and their individual staff to become an agent behind the REDD+ regime (see 8.10). Financially sustaining a UN or other IGO is even more challenging than sustaining an NGO, and as a result of austerity and UN

reforms stable and predictable contributions by Governments to the UN and its organizations have declined significantly over the past decades.⁷⁰² This means that the UN is increasingly dependent upon ad hoc, voluntary contributions. The competition between the FCPF and the UN-REDD+ program provides an example (see 8.4, 8.6). Norway funds both programs, and especially the UN-REDD+ program is strongly dependent upon Norwegian support, which created strong REDD+ agency within three key UN agencies, FAO, UNEP and UNDP (see 8.6). Similarly, Norway's support to CIFOR enhanced the REDD+ agency of the main international research institution in the field of international forest policy, while its support to a number of influential NGOs and IPOs secured that the opposition against REDD+ was fragmented (see 8.7, 8.3, 8.9). Here again I see that the organizations that were funded were critical, but the criticism never addressed the inherent flaws in the REDD+ regime. Rather, they were based on the assumption that the flaws and challenges in the REDD+ regime could be addressed through safeguards and other measures in support of the regime. This reformist and prosaic discourse framed around environmental solutions was in sharp contrast with the often radical and imaginative discourse that some of the social movements opposing REDD+ embraced (see 2.4, 8.3).

9.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Several knowledge gaps have been identified for further research. First, there is a clear need for more research on the role of agents in Earth System Governance, including the role and interests of individual policy entrepreneurs in regime development, and the role of policy networks. This includes a need for more research on the role of official development aid and other forms of financial support as a potential tool to consolidate the hegemony of donor countries in international regime development, including relatively small and politically less dominant donor countries. Hence more research is needed on the role of public financial support, individual policy entrepreneurs and policy networks in contemporary international regime development.

Second, the REDD+ sub-regime shows the importance of analyzing economic incentives that might undermine objective global environmental governance, including those that influence the behavior of individuals formally representing larger organizations. As not-for-profit organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are assumed to represent public interests, and provide objective advice. Yet regardless of good intentions, like any other institution these organizations and the individuals that work for these organizations are influenced by incentives. Such incentives include legal, institutional, moral, social and cultural incentives, but also economic ones. While it should be emphasized that many individuals and organizations will refrain from compromising their professional integrity in response to economic incentives, analyzing the presence of potentially perverse economic incentives is important to enhance the objectivity and independence of public governance. This requires more research on the influence of economic incentives on the independence and objectivity of IGOs and NGOs, and on the ability to govern global public goods.

⁷⁰² For example, the percentage of funding provided by the UN regular budget to the UN Environment Program declined from 21.1% in 1973 to only 2.8% in 2012. See <http://www.unep.org/about/funding/SourcesofFunding/RegularBudget/tabid/131358/Default.aspx> (last visited 18 June 2016).

Third, there is a need to unravel the concept of civil society. The increased role of civil society in international policymaking calls for improved analysis of the diversity within civil society, and the differentiated constituencies and interests that different actors in civil society represent. It is particularly important to distinguish rightsholder groups that legitimately represent specific social groups subject to certain categories of human rights, like women, Indigenous Peoples, youth and children, workers and farmers, from stakeholders that merely represent a certain sector, ideology and/or discourse, like NGOs, business and industry, science and research organizations, and local authorities. The full, effective, balanced, and equitable participation of all these Major Groups in international regime building is important and will contribute to better informed and more accountable global policies and institutions. Yet certain stakeholder groups pretend to represent the rights and interests of certain rightsholder groups without a legitimate mandate, while rightsholders may be unable to participate due to their lack of financial resources, or strategic, technical, advocacy or linguistic skills. Hence, a potential topic for further research concerns the contextual power asymmetries between different Major Groups and the implications of those for their participation in Earth System Governance.

9.5 Policy Recommendations: The Need for Transformative Change, Rightsholder Participation and Considering Alternatives to REDD+

9.5.1 Reconsider REDD+ Support in Light of the Need for Transformative Change

The concept of global environmental governance or Earth System Governance has gained increased popularity in international relations. The global interconnectedness of environmental challenges like climate change and deforestation, and the transboundary nature of their impacts calls for strong global environmental governance that serves the interest of the global community, including politically and economically marginalized groups, whose rights and interests might be easily overlooked. The global climate regime is a good example of a necessary regime (see 2.2).

However, the emission reduction commitments in the Paris Agreement, and the related commitments to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, are nationally determined and essentially voluntary. There is a shift toward soft governance in terms of non-binding rules and norms and weak or non-existing enforcement mechanisms in the global climate regime (see 2.2). The climate regime has become reactive, fragmented, inequitable, and unable to deal with systemic problems as it lacks the tools required for a fundamental reordering of society that could facilitate integrated and systemic management (see 2.2). The Paris Agreement and the REDD+ regime also seem to be designed to protect current and new hegemonic interests at the expense of global values like equity and intergenerational justice (see 6.7).

Another inherently problematic aspect of REDD+ is that it converts complicated life systems that are essentially public goods to be reduced to simplified units of so-called “natural capital” that can be commodified monetized, registered, and used as a basis for performance-based payments. As explained in 4.2.2, carbon accounting systems are not only inherently flawed, they also trigger unbalanced approaches to forest conservation that incentivize one specific benefit of forests while ignoring other environmental and social co-benefits, and cultural, spiritual and intrinsic values of forest ecosystems (Vatn et al., 2011,

Moreno et al., 2015, see also 4.3.1). Moreno et al. (2015) describe how similar approaches of using GDP as an indicator for development were originally contested but subsequently widely accepted by the main capitalist economic organizations of the last decade of the 20th century. They describe how such deductive calculations formed the basis of the expansion of capitalism. However, these approaches are now broadly criticized for failing to take into account other social, environmental and cultural aspects of development. They also highlight that the methodological cautions of the economists developing deductive “carbon metric” approaches are often ignored by the policymakers that are using these approaches as a cornerstone for the climate regime (Moreno et al, 2015: 53, see also Lovbrand, 2004, Stephan and Paterson, 2012, Van der Hoff et al., 2015).

REDD+ is a good example of a prosaic and reformist environmental problem-solving discourse (see 2.4, see also 9.5.3 for alternative discourses). It is a regime that accepts economic rationalism as a basis for sustainable development. PES systems inherently imply a support for business-as-usual and reductionist capitalist approaches rather than transformational change (see also Vatn et al., 2011). Due to its emphasis on capital as a central vector in triggering environmental change one could classify it as an outspoken capitalist system, and capitalism is dependent upon unlimited economic growth. The REDD+ regime is also based on existing societal structures, even though one could claim that the REDD+ safeguards were designed to correct some of the inequities in existing political-economic structures. However, the REDD+ regime itself does not challenge those existing political-economic structures. This acceptance of existing capitalist models of economic growth and political-economic structures fits neatly within the framework of hegemonic interest. In light of the need for global governance systems that serve the global community as a whole, and the transformative change that has been called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁷⁰³ there is a clear need to reconsider financial and other forms of support for REDD+.

9.5.2 Address Power Imbalances and Promote Effective Participation and Agency of Rightsholders

If there is political will to develop and strengthen effective, efficient and equitable international forest regimes, there is a clear need to address power imbalances and ensure that the rightsholder groups that represent the assumed beneficiaries of international forest policy are able to participate directly in international forest regime design and implementation, through their own legitimate representatives. The freedom to participate in decision-making regarding one’s own life can be seen as both a goal and an instrument for development (Lawlor et al., 2013). Such participation will not only lead to more equitable regimes that better address the rights, role, interests and aspirations of rightsholder groups like Indigenous Peoples, women and forest-dependent communities, but it will also lead to a more effective, efficient, equitable and legitimate regime (see 2.2, 6.8). Or as Norgaard (2010: 1226) points out, “Designing better environmental governance always entails addressing the question: better for whom?”

Yet, participation does not necessarily lead to agency. Due to linguistic, geographical, technological and political obstacles genuinely effective participation by rightsholder groups in regime development is a significant challenge. The simple participation of a small group of community representatives in a multi-stakeholder

⁷⁰³ The Future We Want, Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, A/RES/66/288, par. 43.

consultation process, for example, will almost always lead to the marginalization of those representatives if other participants, like NGOs, government representatives, intergovernmental agencies and research organizations have considerably more political and economic power, and academic and linguistic capacities (see 6.4). The effective participation of women in consultation processes also forms a substantial challenge, due to often deeply embedded cultural norms (see 6.4). An additional challenge is that the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women often does not receive the respect it deserves, which undermines their authority (see 2.10). This also decreases the agency of these social groups in international regime development (see 6.3, 6.8)

While more research is needed to develop satisfactory solutions to all the challenges mentioned, there are a number of approaches that can address some of the major problems. One key approach is to ensure a proper distinction between rightsholders and stakeholders, and to create appropriate space for autonomous rightsholder organizations and movements in international regime development processes. Social movements such as national and regional Indigenous Peoples', women's and peasant movements provide important spaces for different forest-dependent groups to develop and refine their own political vision, and thus present a common view that represents their main concerns and aspirations. Due to their representativeness and embeddedness, these social movements and rightsholder groups are legitimate actors in Earth System Governance. The UN Major Groups system, through which the main rightsholder groups receive clearly distinguished participation opportunities, can contribute to more balanced participation, but more recognition of the distinct position and interests of rightsholder Major Groups and stakeholder Major Groups is required, as well as pro-active policies that ensure that politically and economically marginalized groups are enabled to participate in an equitable manner. The tri-Partite governance of the ILO, and the pro-active engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the deliberations of the CBD provide some positive, though not necessarily satisfactorily, models. At the local level, there is a need to seek the FPIC of Indigenous Peoples and other rightsholders in a genuine manner, using methodologies that take into account potential cultural, epistemological, linguistic and practical barriers, including gender-related barriers. The guidance developed by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues forms a good model, which should be adopted broadly, especially by the forest sector.⁷⁰⁴

However, it should be emphasized that it does not necessarily make sense to advocate broader participation of these rightsholder groups in REDD+ policies and projects, as several of the movements representing them have taken a principled stance against REDD+ in light of what they consider inherent flaws in the regime. The discourse of many of these social movements can be qualified as radical and imaginative (see 2.4). The views of movements like La Via Campesina, the world's largest movement of small farmers,⁷⁰⁵ challenge both the concept of unlimited economic growth, and existing

⁷⁰⁴ UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2005. Report of the International Workshop on Methodologies regarding Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Indigenous Peoples E/C.19/2005/3, available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/243/26/PDF/N0524326.pdf?OpenElement> (last visited 21 July 2016).

⁷⁰⁵ See for example <https://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/actions-and-events-mainmenu-26/-climate-change-and-agrofuels-mainmenu-75/985-strong-rejection-of-REDD+-by-la-via-campesina-mobilisation> (last visited 23 July 2016).

political-economic structures. Such views were also reflected in the statements produced by the massive gatherings of social movements in Cochabamba⁷⁰⁶ and the Rio Peoples' Summit.⁷⁰⁷ The final declarations of these summits unequivocally rejected REDD+ and embraced bottom-up, rights-based approaches like respect for Indigenous Peoples' territories and community conservation, and the redirection of perverse investments and incentives that trigger forest loss. Similarly, CJNI, in which many of the social movements representing rightholders are represented, embraced a clear green radical discourse advocating systemic change as a pre-condition for climate action (see 2.4, 8.3). Equitable Earth System Governance mandates the development and strengthening of alternative forest policy regimes that embrace these rightholders perspectives rather than ignore them.

9.5.3 Consider Green Radical Alternatives to REDD+

As noted in Section 6.3, increased autonomy and control of forest-dependent communities over their own forest resources often leads to more effective, efficient and equitable forest management. For that reason, the Parties to the CBD have recommended the formal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) as an important strategy for biodiversity conservation.⁷⁰⁸ They have also developed an action plan on supporting customary sustainable use and a Gender Plan of Action to enhance respect for the role, rights, needs and aspirations of women in ecosystem conservation policies.⁷⁰⁹ More in general, the Expanded Work Program on Forest Biological Diversity of the CBD, which was adopted 2012,⁷¹⁰ recommends that Governments actively support the conservation efforts by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The CBD has also adopted a Strategic Plan, which includes a target to at least halve and where feasible bring close to zero the loss of forests and other natural habitats by 2020, and to ensure that all areas under forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity. In 2015, these targets were significantly sharpened in Agenda 2030, which includes a SDG to halt all deforestation by 2020.⁷¹¹

Many actors involved in REDD+ thought that the REDD+ regime would be more effective than the CBD as it would generate more funding (see 4.4). However, as pointed out, even if REDD+ would generate significant funding for the forest sector, there is no evidence of a linear relationship between increased funding of the forest sector and forest conservation. The recommendations and action plans of the CBD to formally recognize ICCAs and the governance rights and customary sustainable use of communities in general do not require significant financial investments. Rather, they require political will and enhanced forest governance that actively involves forest-dependent communities and other rightholder groups in the design and implementation of bottom-up conservation and restoration initiatives. While REDD+, which is often broadly defined (see 3.5), could potentially provide support to ICCAs and community forest governance in general, the characteristics that distinguish REDD+ from non-REDD+, including in particular its

⁷⁰⁶ <https://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/peoples-agreement/> (last visited 20 April 2015).

⁷⁰⁷ <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/PeoplesSummit-FinalDeclaration-ENG.pdf> (last visited 21 July 2016).

⁷⁰⁸ Decision UNEP/CBD/COP/XI/24.

⁷⁰⁹ Decisions UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/12 and UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/7.

⁷¹⁰ Decision UNEP/CBD/COP/VI/22.

⁷¹¹ A/RES/70/1, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> (last visited 20 July 2016).

emphasis on MRV and top-down results-based payments, make it relatively ill-suited to support community conservation.⁷¹²

As illustrated in Appendix 2, alongside REDD+ there are more than 25 existing international regimes related to forests, including 18 global regimes and 15 legally binding agreements. The main challenge in international forest policy is the effective, coherent implementation of existing forest-related commitments, including the ambitious commitment of the SDGs to halt deforestation by 2020. The CBD and SDG recommendations and targets require policies that more effectively control and prevent deforestation by large corporate actors like oil palm, soy and timber companies. As highlighted in Section 4.5, these large corporate actors play a much larger role in forest loss than local communities producing for subsistence needs. The expansion of these commodities is partly incentivized by public subsidies for meat, dairy and, remarkably enough, “clean energy” in the form of bioenergy (see 4.5). That is why one of the most important targets of the CBD Strategic Plan calls for the elimination, phase out or reform, by 2020, of subsidies and other incentives that are harmful to forests and other ecosystems (see also Richards, 2000).⁷¹³

Such redirection of perverse incentives has also been supported by rightsholder groups.⁷¹⁴ In 2014 the CBD adopted a number of concrete milestones to pursue the implementation of this target by 2020.⁷¹⁵ The implementation of this target to phase out perverse subsidies would not only be effective, it would also be highly efficient as it would actually generate public financial resources, which could subsequently be re-invested in other climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and sustainable development policy in general. Hence, rather than competing over limited ODA, the implementation of these international targets and milestones would generate public finance that could be used for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development in general.

Here again, it is not impossible to support the redirection of perverse incentives through REDD+ policies. In fact, as noted in 4.5, one of the positive aspects of REDD+ is that it has strengthened the capacity of countries to analyze the main drivers of the forest loss, including perverse incentives that trigger such forest loss. However, most of these incentive schemes have been established by sectors outside the forestry and environmental sectors, such as the energy or agricultural sectors. One of the problems with forest loss is that the government departments that are supposed to be responsible for forests, be they environmental or forestry departments, tend to have little say over the sectors that drive forest loss, including through subsidies and other perverse incentives. REDD+ funding tends to be received by the forestry or environmental departments of a Government, so it provides little incentive for other departments, including the agricultural department, to

⁷¹² See also the following discussion paper: <http://globalforestcoalition.org/climate-finance-results-based-payments-conservation-indigenous-peoples-local-communities/> (last visited 29 December 2016).

⁷¹³ Aichi Target 3 of the Strategic Plan of the CBD 2011-2020. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2, see <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf> (last visited 20 July 2016).

⁷¹⁴ For example, a global conference of Indigenous Peoples, local community representatives and other actors on the resilience of community conservation organized by the Global Forest Coalition in 2015 concluded that the redirection of perverse incentives is not only essential for forest conservation, but also to prevent the deterioration of community conservation initiatives (see <http://globalforestcoalition.org/ccri-durban/> (last visited 1 February 2017)).

⁷¹⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/3. See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-12/cop-12-dec-03-en.pdf> (last visited 23 July 2016).

redirect these subsidies (see also 4.6). This probably explains why there is a tendency in national REDD+ programs to focus on drivers within the forestry sector itself only, even though these drivers tend to be less important than for example the expansion of large-scale agriculture and livestock production (see 4.6).

Table 9.4 Comparison of policy approaches to reduce forest loss

Approach	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Equity	Contribution to transformational change
REDD+	Medium. Fails to address drivers of deforestation or conserve biodiversity.	Low. Requires significant and often unnecessary investments.	Low. Little procedural or distributive equity due to contextual inequities and a lack of effective participation.	Low. REDD+ legitimizes business as usual and reformist, prosaic solutions.
Redirection of incentives	High. Especially the removal of perverse incentives can provide significant positive impacts.	Very high. If done properly Governments can save and redirect significant amounts of public funds.	Dependent on whether rightsholder needs and interests are taken into account.	Potentially high. Redirection of incentives is an important instrument in transformational change.
Indigenous Peoples' and Community governance	On average high, but depends on community values and structures.	High. Tends to require little outside investment.	Relatively high, but only if needs and interests of women and other potentially marginalized groups in the community are taken into account.	Potentially high if community values and governance structures are supportive of transformational change.

Sources: Richards (2000), James et al. (2001), Forner et al. (2006), Sierra and Russman (2006), Johns et al. (2008), Norgaard (2010), Boucher et al. (2011), Fletcher et al. (2016).

As forests are home to some of the most politically and economically marginalized groups on the planet, their effective, efficient and equitable governance forms a significant challenge. One of the many problems inherent in the REDD+ regime is that it was developed without the full and effective participation of the people who depend the most on forests, and who play a key role in future forest conservation and restoration. One may only hope that the political ambiguity and financial vacuum that was created with the adoption of the Paris Agreement will provide an opportunity to re-invent more bottom-up, equitable, rights-based forest conservation and restoration approaches that contribute to the effective, coherent implementation of the numerous forest-related targets, agreements

and other commitments that already exist. It is broadly acknowledged that effectively addressing climate change requires a transition from fossil fuel-based economies to more sustainable forms of energy and land use, but the fundamental question is who will steer this transition, and with what motivations (see also Moreno, 2015). As described in Table 9.4 giving forest-dependent peoples the right to control and govern their own forests can potentially be an effective and equitable approach to forest conservation and restoration, which is more affordable than the current REDD+ regime. Establishing more effective mechanisms that facilitate the direct participation of representatives of these rightsholder groups in forest governance at the local, national and international level, and enhancing their agency in international regime development can be an important step toward more balanced forest policies that more adequately reflect the rights and needs of the people who depend most on forests for their livelihoods.