

THE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL REDD+ FINANCE

COLOMBIA CASE STUDY

Charlotte Streck, Darragh Conway, Juan Pablo Castro, and Theo Varns

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ACRONYMS

CARs	Regional Autonomous Corporations
CONPES	Institutional Strategy for the Development of Climate Change Policies and Actions in Colombia
COP	Conference of the Parties
EN-REDD	National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IDEAM	Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies
ISFL	Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (BioCarbon Fund)
MADR	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MADS	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
MRV	Measurement, reporting, and verification
OECD	Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development
PND	National Development Program
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
REM	REDD Early Movers Program
RL	Reference Level
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
SISCLIMA	Institutional Strategy for the Formulation of Policies and Measures relating to Climate Change in Colombia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRD	Voluntary REDD+ Database

Note that throughout this report all dollar amounts are U.S. dollars.

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INTRODUCTION TO REDD+ FINANCE IN COLOMBIA

TOTAL FINANCE RECEIVED OR PLEDGED

In recent years, Colombia has received substantial amounts of financing from a range of donors for REDD+ activities. Funds have been provided across the three phases of REDD+, with the majority of initiatives supporting readiness activities—including REDD+ strategy development, stakeholder consultations, monitoring systems, governance, and social and environmental safeguards. Only eight of the 64 established programs fund pilot or demonstration activities, and only four support payments and transaction systems (VRD, 2015).

The two most complete sources of data on REDD+ finance in Colombia come from Forest Trends' REDDX initiative and the Voluntary REDD+ Database:

- According to Forest Trends, from 2009–2013, a total of \$53.8 million in REDD+ finance have been pledged to Colombia, and \$24.4 million (45%) have been disbursed (Gómez et al, 2014). 25 funding sources, both foreign and domestic, were identified, supporting 10 types of activities. The majority of programs are funding activities that would be best classified as “readiness” activities, although many of these also address aspects of policy implementation and project piloting.
- According to the VRD, for the period 2008–2015, the Colombian Government reports a total of \$59.1 million pledged and \$24.7 million disbursed (42%) from 38 programs. For REDD+ finance from domestic sources, a total of \$2.7 million is reported and one million (69%) has been disbursed within eight programs (VRD, 2015). In comparison, international funders have reported to the VRD that \$47.6 million has been pledged and \$5.1 million disbursed (11%) among 18 programs. These discrepancies are most likely due to underreporting by donors to the VRD (VRD, 2015 and personal communication).¹

See the Annex to this paper for a list of donors and sources of REDD+ finance.

The above amounts do not include what is likely to be the most significant funding stream for REDD+ in Colombia, namely Germany's REDD Early Movers (REM) program², which aims at channeling finance from Germany and Norway to programs in the Colombian Amazon. Sources reported an announcement at the Conference of the Parties in Lima (COP20) that collective funding from Norway and Germany under the program would be up to \$65 million, with actual amounts depending on emission reductions achieved (Goldstein, 2014). The source reported that approximately \$15 million would come from Germany and \$50 million from Norway. The official statement from the meeting, however, did not provide a specific amount, only saying that it would be agreed shortly (Joint Statement, 2014). Results-based funding is also being considered under the World Bank's BioCarbon Fund's Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (ISFL) for Colombia's Orinoquia region.

MAIN FUNDERS

According to data from both Forest Trends and the VRD, government agencies from donor countries have provided the lion's share of REDD+ finance either through bilateral channels or multilateral implementing agencies:

- According to VRD data reported by Colombia, donor government agencies have provided \$31.2 million (53% of total) through bilateral agreements, while multilateral finance channels account for \$21.5 million (36% of total). With respect to bilateral finance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has

¹ The USAID funded BioREDD+ program, for example, has disbursed more than \$12 million already.

² The REM program is implemented by the German Development Bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) and the Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz).

committed \$18.3 million, Germany has committed nearly \$8.5 million (excluding REM finance), France has committed \$1.8 million, and Finland and the Netherlands have each committed just over \$1 million. .

- Funding through multilateral institutions—including the Global Environment Fund, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), UN-REDD, and the World Bank—form the second largest channel of finance to Colombia, with approximately \$13 million committed. These include the \$3.4 million readiness grant from FCPF (not yet disbursed) and a \$4 million grant from UN-REDD (disbursed).

Private foundations form another source of international funds, providing around \$5 million. The smaller donors to REDD+ in Colombia include the European Union (approximately \$1 million), while reported REDD+ finance received from private companies—mostly for small-scale feasibility studies—is limited to \$650,000 (VRD, 2015).

According to data reported by Forest Trends, Colombia’s Government agencies have also significantly increased their contributions from \$65,000 in 2012 to \$2.3 million in 2013 (Gomez et al, 2014). Data reported to the VRD by the Colombian Government provide a similar estimate of \$2.7 million pledged and \$1.9 million disbursed from 2012-2014. These domestic sources include the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), scientific research institutions, and the Autonomous Regional Corporation of Magdalena (CORMAGDALENA) (VRD, 2015). The actual numbers may even be higher as REDD+ requires cross-sectoral investment for building capacities and institutions.

TIMELINE OF SUPPORT AND REDD+ PROGRESS

As a tropical and biologically megadiverse country with improving socioeconomic conditions, Colombia has become attractive for REDD+ investments. Furthermore, during the past five years, Colombia has been promoting itself as committed to sustainable development, and this has had a positive impact in the acquisition of new international public funding. Under the UNFCCC, Colombia has been an active player on REDD+ negotiations and has invested significant effort to be seen as a trusted partner and “good global green citizen”.

Colombia’s National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (EN-REDD+) is under construction, and the process of developing the strategy has informed its FCPF Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) as well as Colombia’s “low deforestation vision for sustainable development of the Colombian Amazon” (Visión Amazonía or Amazon Vision). The Amazon Vision delineates a model for engaging with potential partners and donors on activities to obtain the goal of zero net deforestation by 2020 in the Amazon region, through strategies that include: improving governance, institutions, and land use planning; supporting “sustainable productive activities” and other low-carbon development alternatives; safeguarding the livelihoods, territories and rights of indigenous peoples; and creating enabling conditions to support the Amazon Vision (MADS, 2013). Comprehensive dialogue between Colombia and international donors has also facilitated the inclusion of the zero deforestation by 2030 goal within the latest National Development Plan currently under consideration by Congress (Government of Colombia, 2015).

Facilitated by collaboration with various donors, Colombia has increased institutional capacities to develop REDD+ initiatives and has created spaces for dialogue and interagency coordination. However, it is still necessary to strengthen these capacities and improve coordination between national, regional and local institutions, especially in the Amazon region where there is a history of armed conflict and little government presence. Within the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies (IDEAM), Colombia has succeeded in building technical capacities. IDEAM has proposed a National Forest and Carbon Monitoring System and is developing a national reference level. However, IDEAM’s REDD+ work is not yet financially sustainable, and remains dependent on donor support.

The implementation of REDD+ has long been hampered by the country's armed conflict. Activities have picked up as the peace process and increased security in rural areas make engagement in REDD+ both feasible and necessary. In preparation for the upcoming Paris COP (COP21), President Santos is expected to throw additional political weight behind REDD+. As a result of the peace process and agreements made between the Government and FARC rebels in Havana, the Government is also expected to adopt and implement post-conflict activities that include environmental, social and sectoral development policies. The peace process could have various effects on the rates of deforestation depending on how certain issues are resolved, such as incentives for peaceful occupation of the territory, the defense of forest reserves, land restitution to displaced people, creation of rural reserve areas, disincentives for illicit cultivation and trade, and the inclusion of former combatants into the economy.

OBSERVED IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL REDD+ FINANCE

In this section, we summarize the observations shared with us in interviews with 11 people from the Colombian Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor governments, academia and international organizations, between March and May 2015, and the knowledge of the authors who live, or have worked, in Colombia.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The majority of interviewees agreed that there have yet to be direct environmental impacts from REDD+ finance at any substantial scale in Colombia. Several noted that quite little international public-sector REDD+ finance has, as yet, been used to address deforestation at local levels. Nevertheless, interviewees identified two relevant environmental impacts described below.

Direct environmental impacts on a small scale from local or pilot projects

In terms of direct impacts, project-level activities are more likely to show measurable results in a shorter timeframe than jurisdictional REDD+ programs that are focused on long-term transformational change. Projects that address specific local drivers can often measure emission reductions associated with the targeted investments within a year of operations.

In terms of local projects and programs, USAID's BioREDD+ project, which works with communities in the Pacific region to develop economic alternatives to forest degradation activities, was highlighted by some as one of the few activities that have achieved direct environmental results. While it was generally agreed that the impacts from this program have yet to be empirically quantified, it is understood that it has achieved a number of successes in reducing forest degradation in the targeted localities.

With respect to the implementation of the jurisdictional program in the Amazon region, in contrast, the prevailing view is that efforts so far have focused on strategic and planning activities. Concrete climate benefits have yet to be achieved. One expert explained this as a failure of most initiatives to proceed past project design and piloting, often not succeeding to achieve implementation due to factors such as the absence of supporting policies, uncertainties regarding the future of the international system and the lack of technical capacities in local political institutions to facilitate implementation. Uncertain future funding streams and weak institutions in former conflict areas further hamper the implementation and scaling of pilot projects. Nonetheless, it was pointed out that the Colombian Government in collaboration with some donors are currently accelerating efforts leading to the full implementation of local projects, and that more results can be expected soon.

Improvements in the country's readiness to achieve emission reductions at a larger scale

A number of experts highlighted the role that REDD+ finance—both actual and expected—has played in supporting and driving the development of the architecture needed to implement REDD+ and achieve emission reductions at scale. Areas where progress has been observed include better availability of information upon which decisions can be made (including on deforestation drivers, implementation costs, policy and institutional gaps, etc.) and improvements in institutional coordination, in particular between the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR). Moreover, the identification of the investment activities that will be supported by REM has led to the agreement of concrete measures to address drivers of deforestation within the context of the Amazon Vision. It was also noted that REDD+ finance has helped simply through putting the questions of how to reduce emissions from the forest and land sector on the political agenda, and therefore encouraging actors to think about deforestation problems and how they might be addressed.

At the same time, a number of actors were of the view that, while consciousness has improved and preparations begun, there is still no clear vision as to how emission reductions will be achieved and what alternatives to deforestation and forest degradation will be promoted (though, as noted above, others pointed to the measures decided to be taken to implement the Amazon Vision). Additionally, some experts highlighted that public REDD+ finance has only been part of the stimulus behind recent advancements in understanding how to achieve emission reductions, with other, more traditional forest projects, such as those involving the National Parks Authority, also playing an important role.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Interviewees generally agreed that there have been few economic impacts of any substantial scale in Colombia due to REDD+ finance. The commonly advanced reason for this is that no clear incentives have been created either at national or regional levels for the private sector to change its behavior or invest in REDD+-compatible business models.

There has been little action from the government seeking to regulate the private sector and drive behavioral changes among local private sector. There is a lack of investment in most of rural Colombia, where land use is inefficient and highly unproductive. This is particularly true with regards to the almost 35% of the country's territory which is constituted of pasture. The Colombian Government has so far not presented a benefit sharing or investment plan that would "crowd in" finance into sustainable land use operations. Existing incentives programs, while available in other sectors and regions, are largely absent in areas of high deforestation.

Similarly, it was noted that there has been quite some interest from foreign private and public investors in Colombia in REDD+. However, private financiers that rely on results-based payments for carbon or voluntary carbon markets as a tool to hedge project risks and drive the expected rate of returns up, are often not willing to make any substantial investments until there is more certainty from the national government regarding a REDD+ accounting and implementation framework. Lack of progress in meeting initial expectations to implement a market-based approach to REDD+ has reportedly caused frustration within the private sector and held back investments.

A related barrier for private sector investment that has been identified is the lack of "nesting" rules and the risk of overlapping accounting frameworks. One expert commented that existing emission reduction programs supported by specific international donors are unlikely to be of sufficient scale to leverage large amounts of private sector investments, and that much larger amounts from an international system (e.g. the Green Climate Fund) would need to be channeled to Colombia to create effective investment incentives. It was also noted that private sector actors at the local level are generally not aware of REDD+ and potential incentives to reduce deforestation.

A number of existing donor-funded programs have, however, received additional impetus through REDD+. USAID's BioREDD+ project that forms part of the USAID forestry program has already seen successes in the creation of tangible economic benefits and reductions in forest degradation. The program has been operating already for some ten years. Initially it was focused on forest livelihoods and only incorporated a REDD+ component in 2011 through the BioREDD+ initiative. BioREDD+ works with communities to develop alternative income sources—typically by developing value chains for non-timber forest products—and links them with local producers and markets. Voluntary market REDD+ projects are developed to supplement this income. Similarly, Germany has a history of supporting protected areas in the Andean Region and relevant programs have received additional attention and funding through REDD+ (GiZ, 2015a; GiZ, 2015b).

A number of experts also highlighted that there have been some examples of economic (or other) initiatives that have been created independently of REDD+, but support its objectives and in some cases are expected to be modified and/or scaled under donor-funded programs such as the Amazon Vision. Examples include:

- Alianzas Productivas, a program connecting suppliers and buyers of agricultural commodities. This program has been included in Vision Amazonia and is expected to be expanded through REDD+ finance;
- Sustainable cattle program that supports the piloting of silvopastoral systems;
- Support for Colombia's network of national parks (e.g. Chiribiquete National Park receives German support);
- Banco2, a private sector initiative linking companies that use environmental services to the providers of those services. So far it does not include a carbon component, though this could be envisaged in the future.

A number of donor-funded programs are also evaluating incentives to support REDD+ goals. The investment portfolio being developed under the REM program includes measures to engage farmer organizations, while the BioCarbon Fund's work in Orinoquia is also expected to work with private cattle ranchers, although details have not been decided yet.

POLITICAL IMPACTS

The majority of experts interviewed agree that the importance of forest conservation and environmental protection, including climate action, in Colombian political discourse has increased in recent years and that international climate finance (including REDD+ finance) has played an important, if subordinate, role in this development.

Several experts pointed to the increased attention these issues have received by the President and Council of Ministers, the highest political bodies in the country. For example, President Santos has begun to speak about deforestation with increasing frequency, and the Council of Ministers recently held a meeting in the Amazon region, increasing the visibility of the region in general, and deforestation in particular. Deforestation is also addressed more frequently at the diplomatic level, in bilateral meetings with international partners, at international conferences, and in technical and high-level exchanges of views and at coordination meetings. Moreover, the zero deforestation goal set for the Colombian Amazon has received significant media attention (Agencia EFE, 2014), and the role of forests as well as the risk of deforestation in the post-conflict process is becoming increasingly discussed in both the media and in political circles (Fergusson et al, 2014; Macias, 2015; Gutierrez Roa, 2015).

While not among the principal reasons, some experts did note that the potential to receive relatively large sums of finance (for example the potential contribution currently being negotiated with REM or the BioCarbon Fund) does play a contributing role, and in particular makes decisions easier to justify politically. It was also highlighted that the dialogue between Colombia and bilateral REDD+ donors has been an important factor in building on and cementing the impetus created by the internal factors mentioned above. For example, the direct dialogue between President Santos and the Prince of Wales, as well as broader high-level diplomacy with the United Kingdom and other REDD+ donors, was highlighted as an important factor in securing high-level political attention for forests in Colombia. Similarly, the consistent participation of the Vice-Minister of MADS in REDD+ conferences was underlined as demonstrating the high-level support that Colombia attaches to REDD+. The coordination of donors, in particular the strategic dialogue between Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom and the Colombian Government, has further strengthened the political impact of REDD+ finance on national policy development. Most notably the high-level dialogue has helped to anchor the goal of the Amazon Vision in the pending National Development Plan (2014-2018). Several experts also pointed to Colombia's desire to build an image as a 'green' country and 'good global citizen' as motivating interest, which in parts may also be geared towards attracting finance.

Nevertheless, there is agreement among experts that the role of REDD+ finance in raising deforestation as a political issue remains subordinate to local factors. Among the main impetuses identified, local conflicts around land rights was considered important, many of which have led to large scale protests by local people and have gained substantial media attention (Durango, 2015; El País, 2015). The role of forests in the post-conflict process was also

identified as important, though there is also the concern that the post-conflict process does not have any safeguards to ensure that new development pressures do not generate deforestation impacts.

Despite the increasing importance of forests in political discourse, experts agree that so far there have been few tangible shifts in power relations relevant to forest protection. While there have been some important policy developments at the high level (see section 0), these for the most part have not yet translated into political action. In most sectoral ministries—in particular mining, energy, transport and finance—there has yet to be any substantial integration of the climate/forest agenda, and these ministries still hold substantially more political weight than MADS. One participant expects that this will change in the coming years as the political goal of reducing deforestation begins to seep into ministries' strategies, and it was also noted that some funding under the REM program has been earmarked to streamline deforestation goals within sectoral policies. A more pessimistic view forwarded by one respondent, however, is that the tendency in recent years has been toward even more exploitation of land and that the power of MADS has in fact diminished.

The notable exception in this regard is MADR which has begun to increase dialogue with MADS on forest protection and has agreed in principle that future agriculture development will not come at the expense of forests. This appears to be at least partially due to the development of REDD+ programs, in the context of which MADR has begun to work more closely with MADS. In particular, MADR has agreed to lead the implementation of the BioCarbon Fund ISFL program in Colombia, which was highlighted as bringing substantial political clout to the program (and to REDD+ more broadly), and to have been advocated strongly by donors.

LEGAL AND POLICY IMPACTS

The general view among experts is that REDD+ finance has contributed to the adoption of a number of important high-level policies linked to the goals of REDD+. The key policies identified are:

- The 2009 announcement of achieving zero net deforestation in the Amazon region by 2020;
- The adoption of the Amazon Vision in 2013;
- The National Development Plan 2014-2018 (PND), which sets the goal to eliminate deforestation in natural forests by 2030 (MADS is charged with developing an action plan to meet this goal) (Government of Colombia, 2015);
- The commitment to adopt a national greenhouse gas (GHG) registry, including a REDD+ registry, also set out in the PND (and currently under development).

The adoption of some of these policies is strongly influenced by REDD+ finance. The Amazon Vision in particular is closely connected to the REDD+ finance that is expected to fund its implementation, while the development of a GHG and REDD+ registry responds to the requirements for adopting these measures set out by international donors. As with the increased role of forests in political discourse (see section 0), the adoption of high-level deforestation goals is influenced by REDD+ finance, but also strongly influenced by national political issues and the desire to build a positive international reputation, something that is also evidenced by Colombia leading the Lima Challenge initiative.³ Colombia also has a strong legal framework surrounding forests and land-use, though this has largely developed independently of REDD+ finance, including through grassroots movements and judicial activism.

³ Through this initiative fourteen forest countries declared their commitment to reduce emissions that originate from forests as a part of their low carbon development strategies See: <http://wwf.panda.org/?235270/Forest-countries-call-for-international-collaboration-to-achieve-emissions-reductions>.

The new National Development Plan (PND) explicitly integrates forest protection within the country's long-term development goals, specifically under Chapter IV ("Green Growth"). In the PND, Colombia's government pledges to implement a long-term low-carbon development strategy with GHG mitigation goals for each sector, including forests. MADS is charged with designing and implementing the REDD+ strategy in coordination with other ministries, public entities, and the private sector as part of Colombia's national climate change policy (PND, Chapter IV, Article 170). The PND requires MADS to create a national policy to end deforestation and to stop the loss of natural forests by 2030. This is encouraged through interventions in the supply chains contributing to deforestation by, for example, working with producers' associations to restore forests (PND, Chapter IV, Article 171). MADS is also charged with creating and regulating a national emissions registry that will contain the national REDD+ registry (PND, Chapter IV, Article 175). During the development of the PND, the implementation of the Amazon Vision, which was encouraged through dialogue with international donors, was included as a key component of meeting the objective of zero deforestation by 2030 found within the PND (Government of Colombia, n.d.).

It is generally considered that so far there has been little progress in adopting concrete laws or specific implementing policies or strategies to implement these high-level goals. There are substantial conflicts between deforestation goals and various sectoral policies, and it remains unclear how these will be resolved, though MADR has at least begun to consider this issue. The absence of policies to integrate conservation as a strategy within economic planning was also highlighted in the interviews. Some interviewees even pointed to regressions in forest and environmental protection policies, for example through the decision to expedite environmental permits for priority projects in the area of oil exploitation, mining and large scale agricultural development. Similarly, the strong legal framework often suffers from inadequate implementation. One expert considered that the reason for this absence of concrete steps is due to the lack of clarity from the international framework on implementation of REDD+. On the other hand, some pointed out that the development of donor-funded REDD+ programs—in particular the Amazon Vision—have seen the creation of plans to achieve better implementation of policies and laws that have laid dormant, and so are hopeful that REDD+ finance will give new life to the legal and policy frameworks for forests.

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTION AND PARTICIPATION

There is general agreement among the experts surveyed that REDD+ processes—most of which are at least partially donor-funded—have reached and influenced different stakeholders, though there are a range of views on the nature of these effects on different groups. The following describes the views with respect to two broad stakeholder groups: civil society organizations and local communities.

Civil society organizations

Several experts are of the view that, at least among large Colombian NGOs, principally based in Bogota or to a lesser extent Medellin, there has been a substantial increase in the understanding of REDD+ and significant participation in national REDD+ processes. For example, several of these larger NGOs have participated closely in the formulation of the national REDD+ strategy (EN-REDD+) and in the National REDD+ Roundtable (*Mesa Nacional REDD+*)—both of which are in large part financed through REDD+ readiness processes under the FCPF and the UN-REDD programme, as well as with support from other donors such as Germany. Through these programs they have enhanced their understanding not only of the REDD+ process but also of underlying issues and relevant strategies. Some have begun to take their own initiative to submit various inputs to the government, seeking to influence how REDD+ is addressed.

In contrast, local civil society organizations outside big urban centers have been substantially less involved, particularly since REDD+ policy processes have so far been to a large extent centered in Bogota. There has been some implementation in the regions, for example through BioREDD+ or Amazon region pilots. There has been some regional policy development, for example through the Amazon Indigenous Environment and Climate Change Roundtable (*Mesa Indígena Amazonica Ambiental y de Cambio Climático*) which, though created independently of

REDD+ finance, is supported by REDD+ finance to enable it to participate in national REDD+ processes such as the development of EN-REDD+. Even here, however, regional NGOs often have insufficient capacities to effectively participate and there have been a number of delays in channeling finance, hindering progress.

Local communities

In Colombia, three categories of local communities are commonly identified:

- **Indigenous Communities:** refer to indigenous communities recognized by the government and with a range of rights protected by the Colombian Constitution, including collective land and self-government rights;
- **Afro-Colombian Communities:** refer to Colombian communities of African descent, also recognized by the government and with rights protected by the Constitution, including collective land and self-government rights;
- **Farmers (*campesino* communities):** refer to other rural communities, whose rights are not specifically recognized by the Constitution.

Some experts noted important increases in understanding of REDD+ across all these communities, arising from both national REDD+ processes (which, as highlighted above, are primarily funded by donors) and specific local projects and programs, some of which are funded by international donors and others of which are funded by private sector project developers. Other experts, however, expressed the view that, while some indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have been informed about REDD+, *campesino* communities have not been targeted by REDD+ outreach.

In terms of the nature of understanding, several experts noted that some indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have been involved in outreach activities that have helped them understand the nature and main ideas of REDD+, but have often not delved deeper into how the mechanism works or what should be done to achieve results. Several experts noted that a few Afro-Colombian communities have begun to recognize REDD+ as an alternative income source to forest exploitation, in particular where they participate in existing projects, such as the BioREDD+ project.

Indigenous communities, on the other hand, have frequently been distrustful of REDD+. Many of these communities have already been protecting the forest for centuries, and are often suspicious that REDD+ will require them to give away rights, change their management practices or have reduced access to the forest. In terms of internationally-financed initiatives, some experts noted that there has been some receptiveness by indigenous peoples to REDD+ as a means to continue conservation in the face of external threats (e.g. mining). In this regard, REDD+ finance has helped communities to start 'speaking the same language' and thinking about strategies to resist outside pressures. However, the majority of REDD+-financed support for indigenous areas (e.g. the REM Program in the Amazon) are still in the process of identifying programs that will benefit indigenous communities. Moreover, past projects have frequently been delayed and have not always been effective in their consultation and outreach, leading to further distrust among communities. On the other hand, the involvement of the Indigenous Environment and Climate Change Roundtable in REDD+ processes has helped to get indigenous community leaders more involved in defining national REDD+ development, and therefore helps to build trust.

IMPACTS ON CAPACITIES

As with stakeholder engagement, there is a general feeling among experts that REDD+ finance has fostered capacity building, but somewhat diverging views regarding the extent to which this is true across groups of actors. The following provides an overview of views received with respect to different categories of actors.

There is overall agreement that capacities in the national Government have increased due to REDD+ finance. This is particularly so in terms of knowledge and understanding of REDD+, though some experts also point out that, for example, MADS now has people that think strategically about how to address deforestation. Some experts also noted that capacities in other institutions that have been involved in donor-funded REDD+ programs, such as MADR and the National Planning Department, have increased, though others suggested that these capacities are typically limited to understanding the basics of REDD+, rather than how to address deforestation. Capacities in institutions responsible for measurement, reporting and verification, in particular in IDEAM, have increased, including having more data and better organization. Nonetheless, some experts believe IDEAM still requires additional training to better interpret, communicate and translate information.

Where government capacities have been raised, this appears to at least partially be due to involvement in (mostly donor-funded) REDD+ readiness processes—in particular those supporting the development of technical capacities for forest monitoring and supporting drivers analysis and strategy development—and through direct capacity-support programs such as that implemented by the Global Green Growth Institute. It also appears to arise from the recognition by the Government that competent persons have to be in place to facilitate the dialogue with donors, and in this sense can be seen to be incentivized by REDD+ finance.

The multiplicity of donor programs with different criteria, preferences, framework, and requirements challenges limited government capacities. Colombian ministry staff has to invest significant resources in different donor dialogues. Donors also support programs that follow their strategic guidance and preferences without always coordinating them. This leads to a situation where various aspects of REDD+ readiness—for example, reference levels (RLs), monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of emissions, and safeguards—are developed in parallel at the national level or for various regions not always following harmonized criteria. A lack of flexibility also hampers Colombia's ability to integrate various donor programs into national policies.

Some experts finally noted that capacities in regional institutions—in particular Regional Autonomous Corporations (CARs)—have increased somewhat, especially in understanding the basics of REDD+, which has been supported by international REDD+ finance. Other experts, however, feel that capacities in CARs are still very limited, and that much work remains to be done.

IMPACTS ON COLOMBIA'S FOREST SECTOR PATHWAY

From 1990-2010, Colombia lost primary forests at an average rate of 0.16% each year. From 2000-2012, Colombia was among the top 10 developing countries with regard to annual forest loss. The main drivers of deforestation are farming and livestock, illicit crops, settlement/displacement, infrastructure (including activities associated with energy, road building, etc), mining, extraction of timber for sale or self-consumption (including both legal and illegal extraction) and wildfires. Wildfires and over-harvesting of timber are also considered major drivers of forest degradation in Colombia (Government of Colombia, 2013).

To address these drivers, MADS is currently in the process of creating an investment package and defining programs and interventions that will be implemented in the Amazon and other regions with high rates of deforestation. At the same time there exist already a series of initiatives that can support REDD+ goals and can serve as a basis for implementing dedicated REDD+ policies and measures. These initiatives include, in particular, the extensive network of national parks, efforts to intensify cattle ranching, and rural development initiatives in former conflict zones.

Any REDD+ effort in Colombia has to be considered in the context of the country's history of civil war and the related high levels of illegality with respect to coca plantations and the drug trade. The success of REDD+ depends on the peace process and the country's efforts to promote sustainable development in former or current areas of conflict. REDD+ can contribute to promote peace and a transition to sustainable land use, but it will always be only one element in a country with an extremely complicated history of war, displacement, and illegality.

Colombia is firmly committed to both the international REDD+ mechanism as well as to national climate mitigation goals. The Government has publicly committed to eliminate deforestation in Amazon and stressed its commitment to low carbon development. It has engaged in a dialogue with donors and in multiple multilateral and bilateral processes and programs.

Despite these efforts, there persists a contradiction between political will for forest conservation and the implementation of sectoral projects that drive forest conversion. As in many other countries, there is a multiplicity of sectoral policies that still act in contradiction to policies and programs that reduce deforestation, either by generating significant pressures on natural forests (e.g. infrastructure programs, mining or oil) or by maintaining barriers to act in the areas with the highest rates of deforestation (e.g. absence of strong national institutions in areas with high deforestation rates).

The administration of President Santos, who was last year reelected, faces the challenge of translating declarations to concrete actions. These actions would need to include sectoral policies that, apart from being coherent with each other, need to be in tune with the possible agreements reached through a peace accord with the guerrilla group FARC.

REDD+ finance can play a catalytic role in helping Colombia to reduce deforestation. The interviews indicate that, in order to successfully bring REDD+ to implementation and achieve emission reductions, the determining factor is likely to be high-level political commitment and action. While the expected amounts of international finance for REDD+ may be too small to compete in size with proceeds from mining, oil and large-scale agricultural development in the short term, they can have a catalytic effect on transitioning Colombia towards more sustainable land use patterns:

- President Santos has a stated interest in supporting a new climate agreement. The Government will be interested in showing progress on REDD+ implementation, and is expected to make another effort to close an agreement with Germany and Norway on REM and progress in the development of a BioCarbon Fund ISFL program.

- In 2013, Colombia launched the Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development (OECD) accession process. As part of this process, the OECD has reviewed the environmental performance of the country and recommended the development of a plan to address deforestation (OECD, 2014). The OECD states that the long-term opportunity costs of deforestation are high and the net value of current practices is negative.
- There is increasing media coverage of deforestation. Agreements with donors are also reported in the press, and there is an increasing interest in the Colombian population to reduce deforestation.
- International finance agreements (at relevant scale) also attract attention at Cabinet level, and catalyze cross-sectoral cooperation.
- REDD+ finance can help to concretize policies and initiatives which have emerged based on domestic interests but have not been operationalized, as well as extending existing initiatives or incentives.

To achieve these effects, REDD+ finance would, however, need to move from readiness to larger scale support either for sectoral investments or results-based payments.

Stakeholders in the agricultural sector show an increased interest in investments supported by REDD+ finance that promote goals of actors outside of the inner circle of environmental institutions. Increased government efforts, the promise of investment, and stepped-up international cooperation around REDD+ have started to show effects outside of MADS. MADR is becoming substantively involved in REDD+, which includes direct contact with donors. This appears to have largely been driven by an inclusion in dialogues around REDD+ financing resulting, among others, in an increased understanding of the importance of REDD+ (and forest protection more broadly) on the part of the organization's minister and vice-ministers. There is also an alignment of various policy objectives, in particular around more profitable and intensive cattle management and land use.

The increased involvement of MADR at the more practical level has arisen out of that ministry's involvement in the design phases of the REM and BioCarbon Fund ISFL programs (including agreeing to take the lead on the latter), indicating that REDD+ finance can help to instigate cooperation between sectoral ministries. The interest in benefiting from REM-supported investments also adds momentum to the elaboration of sectoral strategies that can enable the achievement of emission reductions. However, the implementation of these strategies remains in its infancy. Seeking to involve other sectoral ministries such as transport, mining or energy in the design of these programs may, though challenging, be a crucial factor in implanting forest protection within their agendas. There are also still no clear national instruments for efficient implementation, management and follow-up of REDD+ investments, though more concrete incentives are beginning to emerge through donor-financed programs.

Similarly, the increased attention that has been given to forests in the Council of Ministers is notable. International attention, including high-level international dialogues at least partially linked to REDD+ finance, brought the subject on the radar of other ministers and may comprise a first step in addressing forest protection in various sectors; however, it is likely that the Council and the President will need to provide clear signals on the importance attached to REDD+ in order for this awareness to translate into tangible action. Indeed, one interviewee was of the view that a high-level directive is crucial in order to galvanize action in key sectors.

Parallel to these developments, Colombia has advanced on acquiring international support to strengthen technical capacities for REDD+. The most visible results have been seen in IDEAM, where technical and scientific skills and equipment have improved the measurement and monitoring of forest carbon. IDEAM, however, is dependent on international funding to carry out its technical work and so far there are no visible funding commitments from the Government of Colombia to continue this work sustainably without depending on international sources of funding.

However, the creation of the national climate change strategy (SISCLIMA, or the Institutional Strategy for the Formulation of Policies and Measures relating to Climate Change in Colombia) is proof that the country wants to take charge and own the process by promoting a platform where different institutions meet for REDD+ within a structured governance system. SISCLIMA is the new institutional arrangement proposed as a decree, and not implemented effectively yet. Its objective is the creation of an institutional governance structure to deal with climate change policies and action plans and facilitate inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination to effectively design and implement them. SISCLIMA needs strengthening through international REDD+ finance. The National Planning Department, who acts as the coordinating entity for sectoral policies needs support to strengthen its leadership in providing a coherent governance structure for REDD+ within a larger climate change policy framework. Unfortunately this is only on paper so far. REDD+ finance to support the effective creation and operation of SISCLIMA might support overcoming at least some of the institutional and sectoral coordination challenges.

Another key element in achieving REDD+ impacts in Colombia involves motivating the private sector. Even though the private sector in Colombia has shown a good deal of interest in REDD+, it is reluctant to make any substantial investments in the absence of clear policy and regulatory signals from the government and/or clarity from the international framework on finance for REDD+, including on levels, means of access and conditions. Nonetheless, specific locally-focused donor programs such as BioREDD+ have had some success in linking communities and private actors in the creation of forest-friendly business opportunities. Clarity from the international framework on levels of disbursements is crucial for facilitating more concrete action at the national level.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE IMPACTS OF REDD+ FINANCE

Conflict: The delivery of REDD+ finance to the areas of high deforestation is being hampered by Colombia's history of conflict. Deforestation tends to be highest in areas of past and current conflict (Fergusson et al., 2014). Often, valuable territories have been cleared through violent intimidation, which induces forced displacement; second, the vacated land has been purchased at very low prices; and third, legal and illegal investments were instituted in those areas (Fergusson et al., 2014). The combination of insecure land tenure, weak institutions, displacement and high levels of illegality make the implementation of REDD+ in Colombia a formidable challenge.

At the same time, the peace process and REDD+ finance provide an opportunity to build institutions and capacities in remote areas of the country, and to design and implement strategies that attenuate the negative effect of conflict on the environment. REDD+ strategies will have to address historic causes of deforestation while avoiding deforestation driven by legal development.

Implementation frameworks: The continued commitment of Colombia towards REDD+ and international cooperation has made the country a favored partner in REDD+ finance. However, deployment of REDD+ finance is often challenging.

REDD+ implementation requires that there is solid country ownership, not only in the discourse, but also in concrete actions. Very concrete, actionable political commitment is still relatively rare and it is now necessary that it moves from political declaration to actions. To reduce emissions from forests in Colombia, it is imperative that there is a coherent policy implementation structure guided by the government, which at this moment is lacking. Even though climate change in general, and REDD+ in particular, have been getting increasing attention in the political agenda, they are still largely in the realm of discourse.

To ensure sustainable REDD+ benefits, Colombia will also have to strengthen its compliance and enforcement frameworks. While Colombia has developed a comprehensive framework for legal enforcement and compliance, the respective laws have yet to be implemented at the local level. The CARs, which operate with a high degree of autonomy, are vulnerable to capture by local interest and often lack financial resources to ensure effective law enforcement (OECD, 2014).

There is a clear institutional leader which is MADS, who centralizes REDD+ efforts and oversees how funds are used, though recently MADR is becoming an increasingly important actor. Coordination of support is still managed by MADS, but the institutional capacity to identify and harmonize the different international REDD+ finance streams is insufficient. This lack of institutional capacity is seen clearly in regions where pilot projects and programs from different funding sources are duplicating efforts and there is no communication or coordination amongst them to learn, understand and complement what each other is doing.

Sectoral alignment: Not unusual in REDD+ countries, Colombia is still in the process of aligning sectoral policies in support of REDD+ and sustainable land use more generally. However, the lack of alignment has not yet hampered the flow of REDD+ readiness finance, and larger scale investments and results-based funding agreements are still being negotiated.

There is alignment of REDD+ finance and the REDD+ national strategy with national development goals, as established in the National Development Plan of the current administration; however this alignment is seen only at high level and, as mentioned previously, only on paper. At lower levels and in different sectors, this alignment is blurry or non-existent. The voice of lobbyists and parts of the government that put the exploitation of natural resources and large scale agricultural development above conservation interests remain vocal and strong.

In terms of institutions, the Institutional Strategy for the Development of Climate Change Policies and Actions in Colombia (CONPES 3700), delineates the new organizational structure of state institutions to deal with climate change, but that this has yet to be fully implemented (Government of Colombia, 2011).

Coordination of support: Many REDD+ donors are active in Colombia, which makes coordination challenging, but even more necessary. Working with multiple donors who have multiple standards and criteria has been a big challenge for Colombia. There is a concrete risk of overlapping programs and reference levels. Over the last months, donors have made great progress in coordinating their activities, which is expected to further unlock REDD+ funding. This is particularly true for the Governments of Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom which have launched a coordinated and strategic dialogue with the Government of Colombia.

Local capacity: Colombia's history of civil war and armed conflict means that there are significant regions of the country which have been, or still are, under control of armed groups with little or no government presence. These are also the regions—such as the Amazon or the Choco regions—with the highest rates of deforestation. REDD+ finance can support the building of a government presence in remote areas. However, donors as well as government agencies will have to accept that, for a middle income country, progress is slow, reflecting the low levels of governance in affected regions.

Private sector engagement: Despite a generally good investment climate and high interest among private sector actors, REDD+ finance has not leveraged private sector at a significant scale so far. This is mostly due to the fact that REDD+ finance so far has focused on readiness measures and failed to create concrete investment incentives. Currently, the private sector still sees too many risks at the local, national and international levels, in terms of legal and economic aspects, to be able to invest in REDD+ with certainty of what they are getting into. There is widespread frustration with the lack of clear investment incentives and frameworks. The steep decrease in the prices of carbon credits and the decline of the carbon market has also been a huge disincentive.

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Colombia is one of the strongest international proponents of REDD+ and has started to build national systems that support REDD+. The country is building a national REDD+ strategy (EN-REDD+), a process that has helped the development of the FCPF Readiness Preparation Proposal and the Amazon Vision that delineates a model for engaging with potential partners and donors on activities to obtain the goal of zero net deforestation by 2020 in this particular region.

While the REDD+ readiness process in Colombia has received support from multiple donors (Germany, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, etc.), the process has yet to deliver quantifiable emission reductions. So far, donor efforts have focused on the building of capacities in IDEAM, safeguard systems, reference levels and other measures that are conditions for full-scale REDD+ finance but do not generate emission reductions per se.

The various donor dialogues have helped, however, to elevate the problem of deforestation on the political agenda. Early efforts to participate in REDD+ were largely driven by technical and career staff in MADS. Only recently, the topic has been recognized as an important element of the country's environmental and development strategy. The discussions around REDD+ finance and high-level meetings with donors have helped to make REDD+ an issue that is now debated at cabinet level and supported by the presidential office.

The extent to which REDD+ finance can make a difference and yield relatively fast results, largely depends on the drivers and local context:

- Even where there is political commitment, it is difficult to finance activities in areas of high deforestation where such deforestation is not planned and outside of government control. In Colombia, there is a clear correlation between deforestation and areas with weak institutions, conflict and high levels of illegality, which makes the implementation of REDD+ policies and the deployment of REDD+ finance difficult. While Colombia generally counts as a solid middle-income country, the areas of the country that suffer from deforestation show low levels of institutionalization and largely lack government programs. In these areas, REDD+ finance—to be able to address direct drivers of deforestation—has to start with supporting governance programs and institutional strengthening, activities that are essential but unlikely to result in emission reductions in the short term.
- The situation is different where deforestation is at least partly planned or taken into account as a side effect of government policies, in particular mining. In these areas, government commitment can lead to emission reductions (e.g. through requiring environmental licensing for mining operations). However, interests that drive deforestation—such as oil exploitation, mining, agricultural expansion and infrastructure development—often still have stronger political influence than REDD+ interests.

The reduction of emissions from deforestation in Colombia has to rely on a mix of measures that strengthen governance and institutions in post-conflict areas and the integration of REDD+ in sectoral policies. It is unlikely that REDD+ finance will be delivered at the scale to compensate for the loss of short-term income related to oil, mining and large-scale agriculture. The government, in consultation with stakeholders and affected communities, will have to prioritize development options in combination with safeguards and the development of low carbon land-use policies. This process has started, but needs to be strengthened. Declarations have to be translated into concrete actions on the ground. REDD+ finance can help to support the transition by creating local sustainable income opportunities and protecting remaining forests.

Public international REDD+ finance will always be limited. It is therefore essential that resources are deployed in a strategic, efficient and effective manner. For that to happen, it is essential that REDD+ donors coordinate their

efforts. Currently, donor programs often overlap. Colombia is also challenged by different, and often non-negotiable, donor criteria. Harmonization and coordination among donors, including their requirements regarding the different elements of the country's REDD+ architecture (RL, MRV, safeguards, benefit sharing) would greatly facilitate the task of REDD+ implementation in Colombia. The environmental ministry and agencies have only a few staff that are fully dedicated to REDD+ and these individuals, despite investing significant amounts of time, are challenged to ensure effective internal (national) and donor (international) coordination.

Despite these challenges, Colombia has the potential to become a REDD+ leader, not only on paper, but also in concrete action. The momentum created by the peace process in combination with a high-level commitment to protect the country's large areas of tropical forests, creates an opportunity for actors ranging from international donors to local communities.

ANNEX: SOURCES AND TYPES OF REDD+ FUNDING IN COLOMBIA

Table 1: Number of programs supporting specific REDD+ activity types

REDD+ finance category (i.e. phase)	# of programs	\$ of programs (Forest Trends data 2013)
Phase I ("infrastructure" and enabling environment)		
• Capacity building	16	n.r.
• Stakeholder engagement	14	11
• MRV and Reference levels	11	9
• Forest carbon project design	9	12
• Legal and Policy Analysis; REDD+ Strategy development and advocacy	8	9
• Institutional Strengthening	7	6
• Forest improvements and land management	6	4
• Rights and Tenure	5	6
• Management and Coordination	3	n.r.
• Safeguards	2	2
Phase II (implementation support)		
• Demonstration Activities	2	n.r.
Phase III (results-based finance)		
• Carbon compensation	1	2
Other	n.r.	15

Source: Gómez et al. 2014:12 and Forest Trends data from 2013.

Table 2: Colombia REDD+ funders organized by donor type

		2012		2013		
Donor Type	Donor	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage	
Multilateral	GEF	\$1,664,080	5.0%	\$4,494,080	8.4%	
	FCPF	\$4,000,000	12.0%	\$3,800,000	7.1%	
	World Bank	\$395,307	1.2%	\$595,307	1.1%	
	UN-REDD	n.r.	n.r.	\$4,050,000	7.5%	
Donor Government	European Union	\$958,669	2.9%	\$958,669	1.8%	
	Norway	\$50,000	0.2%	\$50,000	0.1%	
	Finland (FORMIN)	\$280,585	0.8%	\$441,120	0.8%	
	Germany (GIZ and BMU)	\$8,000	0.0%	\$6,950,400	12.9%	
	France (FFEM)	\$136,556	0.4%	\$1,794,198	3.3%	
	UK (DFID)	\$481,704	1.4%	\$481,420	0.9%	
	Netherlands	\$1,772,207	5.3%	\$1,772,207	3.3%	
	USA (USAID)	\$17,797,877	53.5%	\$18,297,877	34.0%	
	Colombian Govt. Agency	MADS	n.r.	n.r.	\$2,240,000	4.2%
		Colciencias	\$43,644	0.1%	\$43,644	0.1%
Invemar		\$21,822	0.1%	\$21,822	0.0%	
CORNARE		n.r.	n.r.	\$9,814	0.0%	
National Foundation	Amazon Fund/ITTO	n.r.	n.r.	\$1,994,959	3.7%	
	Fondo Acción	n.r.	n.r.	\$15,000	0.0%	
Private Foundation	Moore Foundation	\$4,956,380	14.9%	\$4,956,666	9.2%	
	Fondo Acción	\$15,000	0.0%	\$15,000	0.0%	
Intl NGO or Academia	WWF International	\$30,000	0.1%	\$30,000	0.1%	
	GGGI	n.r.	n.r.	\$150,000	0.3%	
Private Sector	J.P. Morgan Chase	\$100,000	0.3%	\$100,000	0.2%	
	Cerrejón	\$132,800	0.4%	\$132,800	0.2%	
	CCX Colombia	\$40,469	0.1%	\$40,469	0.1%	
	Cargill	\$380,000	1.1%	\$380,000	0.7%	

Source: Gómez et al. 2014 and unpublished data.

Table 3: Colombia REDD+ financing amounts by donor type

Donor Type	2012 data		2013 data	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Donor Government	\$21,485,598	64.6%	\$30,745,891	57.2%
Multilateral	\$6,059,387	18.2%	\$12,939,387	24.1%
Private Foundation	\$4,971,380	14.9%	\$4,956,666	9.2%
Supranational	\$958,669	2.9%	\$958,669	1.8%
Private Sector	\$653,269	2.0%	\$653,269	1.2%
Colombian Govt. Agency	\$65,466	0.2%	\$2,315,280	4.3%
Intl NGO/Academia	\$30,000	0.1%	\$180,000	0.3%

Source: Gómez et al. 2014 and unpublished data.⁴

⁴ Data available at <http://reddx.forest-trends.org/country/colombia/overview>

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