

## **Focus Group Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)**

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The group discussed not only REDD, but also forestry issues in relation to climate change mitigation in general. The main message is that we should try and mainstream the ecosystem services provided by forests into thinking about climate change mitigation. This is important because of a triple bottom line: forests are a major carbon sink, they provide important ecosystem services, and sustainable forestry contribute to poverty alleviation. In addition, the group saw lots of mitigation potential through forestry projects and REDD, as exemplified by the McKinsey curve. The group argued that so far, the focus had been too much on 'silver bullet' technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) in comparison to community-based projects. Still, REDD is not included in the CDM, and there is no mechanism as of yet to address the issue, while incentives are needed to avoid deforestation.

The group identified several barriers for a REDD mechanism. One of the biggest obstacles was considered to be the construction of baselines against which avoided emissions need to be measured. In the context of Africa, a major gap relates to the science-policy interface, but also to the interactions between science and other stakeholders at the community level. There is an apparent lack of knowledge in Africa about the possibilities for reducing emissions from deforestation. In Botswana, but also in other parts of the SADC region, the lack of a regulatory framework was considered to be another barrier. Finally, one important practical hurdle was the lack of upfront capital for implementing REDD-type projects.

The group also discussed several ways of overcoming these barriers, exploring possible opportunities for REDD in Africa and in Botswana. They argued that REDD projects require community ownership, which means that revenues of these projects should flow directly to the local communities and not first to the government. Of course, this would depend on the specific drivers for deforestation: some causes are best dealt with at higher scales of governance, such as deforestation caused by large-scale palm oil plantations. Governments can also be involved by asking for international support for funding REDD project preparations, for instance starting a nationwide programme on constructing baselines. Another way of tackling deforestation and forest degradation in Africa is by improving the science base in Africa on how forests function as a carbon sink. Finally, it was argued that REDD should be included in a market mechanism to obtain upfront capital for projects.

For Botswana, it is important to consider the types of deforestation that take place in the country. Much deforestation is caused by localized woodcutting. This 'mosaic deforestation' could possibly count as REDD.