

# WORKING PAPER

## REDD+, LOW EMISSIONS RURAL DEVELOPMENT (LED-R) & NAMAS IN THE UNFCCC



### INTRODUCTION

For REDD+ to be successful and part of a coordinated global response to climate change, it must address the drivers of deforestation and degradation and therefore [must be addressed in the context of rural development](#)<sup>1</sup>. On the ground, REDD+ must function within complex local contexts juggling rural development needs; livelihoods; services; agricultural practices; local cultural and political circumstances; commodity markets and trade. There is growing recognition that REDD+ should not be treated in isolation; but rather, it should be considered as part of a holistic, sustainable land use strategy that considers a range of benefits (carbon and non-carbon, not just focused on off-setting), sectors and actors. The question of how to operationalize such an integrated strategy for climate change will be a central question for nations moving forward.

Adoption of the [Warsaw Framework for REDD+](#) in 2013 concluded one phase of REDD+ negotiations. Questions related to REDD+ remain to be addressed, for example in relation to non-carbon benefits and market and non-market mechanisms. However, in light of the on-going negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), the major questions concern what role REDD+ may play in the 2015 climate agreement and in enhancing ambition prior to 2020. Lack of progress on financing for REDD+ and potential market mechanisms has raised doubts about REDD+ in some developing countries that had initiated significant actions to reduce deforestation. The ADP negotiations could provide new momentum.

Through its Sustainable Tropics Initiative, the Sustainable Tropics Alliance<sup>2</sup> is responding to this call by developing a model for Low Emissions Rural Development (LED-R). The STI is part of a broader trend towards integrated approaches to the planning and management of landscapes. Unlike many previous development models, the LED-R approach supported by the STA is explicitly evidence-based and participatory and focused on sub-national regions defined by administrative or watershed boundaries. In developing an alternative to the “business-as-usual” development model in the rural tropics, key challenges include how to balance resource use, ecosystem health and ecological function, economic development, equity and wellbeing for all members of society. More information and experimentation regarding how to finance such a transition is also needed. In the context of the UNFCCC, and

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<sup>1</sup> Nepstad D, Boyd W, Stickler C, Bezerra T, Azevedo A. 2013. Responding to climate change and the global land crisis: REDD+, market transformation and low-emissions rural development. *Phil Trans R Soc B* 368: 20120167.

<sup>2</sup> The Sustainable Tropics Alliance is composed of five founding member organizations ([Earth Innovation Institute](#), USA, Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia; [Pronatura-Sur](#), Mexico; [Instituto del Bien Común](#), Peru; [Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia](#), Brazil; [Greenbelt Movement](#), Kenya) in collaboration with the [Foundation for International Environmental Law & Development](#), UK.

irrespective of the evolving ADP negotiations, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) could play an important role in supporting REDD+ and LED-R. This brief working paper highlights some aspects of the emerging LED-R model and the potential for REDD+, LED-R and NAMAs to work in concert.

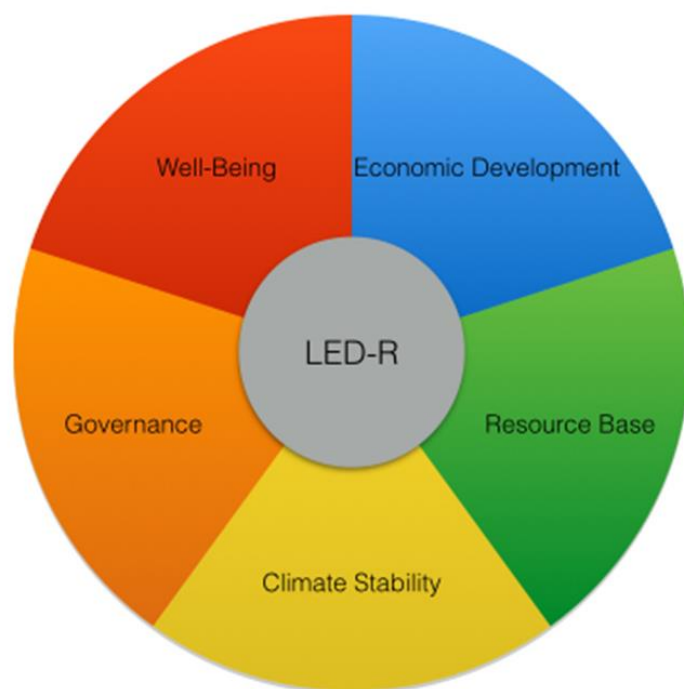
## THE SUSTAINABLE TROPICS ALLIANCE & INITIATIVE

The Sustainable Tropics Alliance is a network of non-governmental organizations working in regions critical to climate change due to high value carbon stocks and the vulnerability of local populations to climate change. The strength of this network lies in the participation and collaboration of grassroots civil society organizations across the tropics who play critical roles in shaping climate change policy at the jurisdictional and national level in their respective countries, and in its ability to collectively design LED-R strategies and share lessons learned. Civil society is a critical actor in social change because it (1) provides a long-term memory and support role (e.g., when government administrations change), (2) helps governments to carry out their responsibilities (e.g., analysis, facilitation, monitoring, service provision), and (3) builds bridges and alliances with and between other main actors, among other functions.

The Sustainable Tropics Initiative seeks to address the lack of an effective policy, market and institutional framework for changing prevailing models of rural development, in which agricultural frontier expansion (whether for large-scale commodity production or subsistence) drives tropical deforestation and forest degradation which in turn drives the degradation of a range of other ecosystem services on which local and regional communities depend, including water sources, fish and game, timber, and soil resources.

## AN EMERGING MODEL FOR LED-R IN THE TROPICS

How can tropical societies successfully advance rural development in a way that addresses local and



The five principal components of the LED-R model

regional needs while also producing agricultural and other commodities and without further compromising global climate stability and ecosystem health? Traditional approaches to sustainable development have failed to capture the global significance of the myriad environmental and social ills that plague tropical forest regions, including deforestation, labor conflicts and economic development models with high environmental costs and few benefits to society as a whole. Issue- or sector-specific approaches can neglect the fact that, ultimately, these complex problems must be resolved through a new rural development model that improves livelihoods, offering employment opportunities, while managing and sustaining natural capital.

The principle aims of LED-R are to achieve or maintain climate stability (both at global and local levels), to increase the capacity of local actors and institutions to adapt to climate change, to increase the sustainability of and ensure equitable access to natural resources, while simultaneously increasing agricultural (and other economic) productivity, job creation and incomes. Furthermore, LED-R aims to increase participation by a wide spectrum of actors in the development of regional plans. The STA has identified five principal components that define LED-R: 1) human well-being, 2) economic development, 3) the resource base, 4) climate stability, and 5) governance.

The model differs from standard prototypes of rural development in that it maintains a focus on increased economic productivity and standards of living while targeting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction from land-based activities. It also differs from REDD+ in that it maintains a focus on GHG emissions but within the context of an integrated rural development approach that explicitly addresses the drivers of land use change and provides a range of incentives for land use change, including performance-based climate finance mechanisms, policy alignment, and market-based (supply chain) approaches.

The proposed LED-R model is based on the premise that the relationships between actors and the resource base are key to changing the current high-emission model of rural development. These actors include governments, financial institutions, large-scale producers and extractors, smallholders, indigenous peoples and traditional communities, and civil society. In the current state of affairs, these actors typically hold different and conflicting views and interests and have little or no tradition of collaboration. A regional/jurisdictional LED-R approach seeks to align these actors around a shared agenda for changing the rural development model from its business-as-usual, resource degrading, and inequity inducing trajectory to an alternative model of sustained low-emission rural development. This transition has the following characteristics: (1) agricultural and livestock production increase “vertically” through improved yields on existing cleared land instead of “horizontally” via expansion into forests and woodlands; (2) governments, local and regional land-users, and private sector actors are provided with information and tools to increase governance capacity to improve resource management at landscape scales increases; (4) civil society organizations are strengthened to coordinate jurisdiction-wide, sector-specific participatory planning processes; and (5) the destruction of native ecosystems, soils, and freshwater systems is slowed, stopped, then reversed.

The process for designing and implementing LED-R plans at regional or jurisdictional scales requires assessment of the current state, identification of the future desired state and indicators appropriate for measuring progress toward that state. In designing a strategy to achieve the future desired state (LED-R), we focus on changes in the relationships between actor groups, between actor groups and resources, and the broader regional context. The approach is iterative and adaptive. That is, levers, tipping points and strategies and even the future desired state should be re-evaluated and modified in the context of changes in the current (internal and/or external) state and progress toward LED-R at each cycle of the process. Furthermore, the approach is evidence-based and participatory; each step is carried out with multi-stakeholder input, and decisions are based on rigorous research and analysis.

### REDD+, LED-R AND NATIONALLY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION ACTIONS (NAMAS)

Framing REDD+ as part of LED-R may have implications for how land use-related issues are addressed under the 2015 agreement and in the context of enhanced pre-2020 ambition. Irrespective of this, Parties already have a tool for supporting REDD+ and advancing LED-R. Nationally Appropriate

Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) refer to actions that developing countries will take with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions compared to business as usual in 2020, with support on technology, financing and capacity-building, and in the context of sustainable development. NAMAs can be implemented now, at virtually any level of governance, including at jurisdictional levels (subject to financial support being available where required). Well-designed NAMAs, including suites of NAMAs, have the potential to address drivers of deforestation and degradation and to create positive incentives for LED-R.

For example, [a recent study](#)<sup>3</sup> that focused on Southeast Asia recognized potential opportunities related to linking REDD+ and NAMAs. The authors considered how REDD+ and NAMAs could potentially be integrated, suggesting that NAMAs could be used to bridge the gap between activities and carbon accounting within forests and those that take place outside, but which affect land use patterns. The study also recognized challenges, for example coordination among stakeholders within jurisdictions over differing land types. [A recent review](#)<sup>4</sup> of national integrated mitigation planning in agriculture considered low-emission development strategies (LEDS) and NAMAs in developing countries. The authors emphasized that REDD+ implementation will require cross-sectoral planning and actions in the agriculture sector.

The relationship between REDD+ and NAMAs is not fully clear yet, for example in relation to safeguards for forest-related actions that fall outside the definition in decision [1/CP.16 paragraph 70](#). Parties can and should in any case ensure that safeguards are in place for NAMAs, to avoid negative impacts and manage risks, and this can be done through applying the LED-R approach.

Open questions about NAMAs include how they may feature in the future market and non-market based mechanisms that are under negotiation. In the meantime, however, NAMAs have significant potential as a tool for promoting LED-R transitions. NAMAs can complement REDD+ and address a wide range of other LED-R-related issues.

## NEXT STEPS

A more detailed presentation of the LED-R model for tropical regions with an analysis of regional case studies will be prepared ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru (December 2014). The analysis will also address specific NAMAs under development in STI regions, as well as establishing clear metrics for monitoring progress toward LED-R (including achieving REDD+ objectives).

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<sup>3</sup> Costenbader J, Pritchard L, Galt H, Roe S, Stanley L, 2013, NAMAs and REDD+: Relationship and main issues for consideration – with a focus on Southeast Asia, Climate Focus.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkes A, Tennigkeit T, Solymosi K, 2013, National integrated mitigation planning in agriculture: A review paper, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) & Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) program.