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A REVIEW OF REDD+ EFFECTIVENESS AT ENSURING RURAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA

¹Awoniyi, S.O.M and ²T.T. Amos

¹Agricultural Economics and Extension Department,
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Nigeria

²Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics,
Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria.

Email: ttamos2004@gmail.com

Tel: 08062484770

Abstract

The paper reviewed one of the mitigation and adaptation measures, REDD+, against Climate change's devastating effects. REDD+ incorporates the reduction of GHG from deforestation, forest degradation reduction, and poverty reduction. Some grey areas, however, exist despite many benefits of the REDD+ mechanism. Such include the need to develop long-term "deep decarbonization" pathways that will benefit from REDD+ and also limit environmental problems, eschewing politicising the initiative and weak institutions. The process of tenure reform will also need to be carefully managed under a REDD+ strategy, as there is a risk of loss of access by communities to forest products that are critical to their livelihoods. It is recommended that due attention to social and environmental safeguards should apply to all REDD+ mechanism in Nigeria for it to influence climate change positively and enhance food security.

Keywords: Climate Change, REDD+, Greenhouse gas emission, Carbon stock

Introduction

Climate Change, a devastating phenomenon ravaging the entire world, is to be mitigated and adaptive measures put in place to reduce its effect. REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) is one of the initiatives adopted internationally to address mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The "+" in REDD signifies the incorporation of more carbon components being considered for rewards in the preparation to the Conference of Parties (COP-15) in Copenhagen which include enhancing carbon stocks, sustainable forest management and other multiple benefits of forests (Parker *et al.*, 2008). While the initial focus for REDD was on reducing carbon emissions, rewards for enhancing carbon storage through forest restoration, rehabilitation and afforestation/reforestation were later considered, and the REDD debate finally moved towards reducing emissions over entire endeavours, including from agriculture. The reduction is not about carbon only (regarding soil carbon from agriculture), but about reducing other greenhouse gas emissions as well, predominantly methane and nitrous oxides, from which the REDD+ acronym was derived.

The REDD+ is designed to reduce carbon emission through reduction in deforestation and land degradation while at the same time reducing poverty in vulnerable communities in the developing world where a significant level of Carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas (GHG), is emitted through deforestation (UNEP, 2013). It is simply a mechanism by which industrialised nations want to compensate developing countries financially for reductions in GHG emissions associated with a decrease in the conversion of forests to alternate land use. This is necessary because the world has been losing its forest cover of about 4 billion hectares at the rate of 6.2 million hectares annually, a situation which aggravates climate change effect (FAO, 2010). The reduction of deforestation and land degradation through REDD+ is necessary because forests act as a carbon sink which absorbs CO₂ in the atmosphere thereby acting as a natural air cleaner (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 2012). This, therefore, places initiatives that reduce tropical forest destruction at the core of collective efforts to combat climate change, hence the introduction of REDD+ by the UNFCCC in 2005 (Parker *et al.*, 2009).

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO, 2014), the year 2013 was among the top ten warmest years since recordings began in 1850. The year 2007 tied with 2013 as the sixth warmest year with the 2013's global land and ocean surface temperature being 0.50°C higher than the 1961-1990 average and 0.03°C above the 2001-2010 decadal average. This came into being due to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2013) most recent estimates of global greenhouse gas emissions for 2010, amounted to 50.1 gigatonnes (unit for measuring GHGs emitted into the atmosphere expressed as GtCO₂e) of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e) per year (range: 45.6–54.6 GtCO₂e per year). This is about 14% greater than the median estimate of the emission level in 2020 with a likely probability of achieving the least cost pathway towards meeting the 2° C target (44 GtCO₂e per year)³. The implication for the rural agrarian communities is that this would bring about unusually heavy storms or unexpectedly long periods of dry spell with unexpected heat waves. This would reduce production and crop yield, hence hunger and poverty could be perpetuated in the developing world.

Relative contributions to global GHG emissions from the developed and the developing nations changed little from 1990 to 1999 values. Although, the balance changed significantly between 2000 and 2010; the developed countries share dropped from 51.8% to 40.9%, whereas developing countries emissions increased from 48.2% to 59.1% (UNEP, 2013). The developing and developed countries are responsible for roughly equal shares of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions for the period 1850-2010 (UNFCCC, 2005). This assertion cannot be contested because the latest available data on GHG emission for most of the developing countries is over two decades ago. Agriculture in the tropics where most of the developing countries are situated contributes about 11% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which excludes GHG emission from other sources like gas flaring, fossil fuel use. (UNEP, 2013). This could inform the conclusion that developing and developed countries are responsible for almost equal shares of cumulative GHG emissions.

Agriculture is among the sectors most affected by climate change, but which also significantly contribute to the world's greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2007). Bellarby *et al.* (2008) stated that emissions of nitrous oxide from soils arising from the use of synthetic fertiliser accounted for 38% of GHG, methane from enteric fermentation in ruminant livestock (32%), biomass burning -12%, rice production-11% and manure management-7%. Direct agricultural emissions account for 60 percent of global nitrous oxide emissions and 50 percent of global methane emissions according to Smith *et al.* (2012). Globally, 80% of

deforestation and forest degradation is believed to be related to agriculture (Kissinger *et al.*, 2012). Adding agricultural pre- and post- production emissions, the global food system accounts for about 19 % –29% of the global GHG emissions (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2012). The percentage given by UNEP is at variant with Vermeulen *et al.* which is an indication that the contribution of agriculture to GHG emissions could have been over or under estimated. However, the estimated emission reduction potential for the sector ranges from 1.1 GtCO₂e to 4.3 GtCO₂e in 2020 (UNEP, 2013).

The REDD+ mechanism is to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C through the provision of financial incentives to maintain and enhance carbon stocks in forests and trees. Consequently, this paper takes a critical analysis of the benefits and preparedness of Nigeria to key into the mechanism. The paper is divided into five sections. The first introduces the paper, while the second section takes a historical look at the REDD+. The third section discusses the justification for REDD+ in rural Nigeria and REDD+ effectiveness while the fourth section discusses making REDD+ more effective in Cross River State and the fifth section concludes the paper.

Historical Development of REDD+ in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The Kyoto Protocol (KP) of 1997 set emissions reduction targets for 2008-2012, but the rules for implementing the Protocol, including initial treatment of avoided deforestation, were only negotiated from 1997 to 2001. During this early period, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), Brazil and the European Union initially opposed including forestry-based offset credits. Their concerns included failing to hold developed countries accountable for mitigation of fossil fuel emissions in the North, reducing the return on investment for fossil fuel mitigation through lower carbon prices and flooding the market with offset credits. The Coalition for Rainforest Nations (CfRN) introduced in 2005 the concept of avoided deforestation, which led to the inclusion of REDD in the Bali Action Plan in 2007 and a subsequent planning process of about two years for an agreement on REDD at COP15 in 2009. Right from 2005 onward, efforts of the CfRN and its allies mobilized support by (1) framing REDD+ as an economic development strategy with clear incentives for developing countries rather than a mandatory reduction; (2) enlisting high profile academic leaders to be spokespersons and provide rigorous analysis; and (3) sustaining high-level political engagement. The REDD+ development in the developing countries at the national level is executed in three phases (UNFCCC, 2011) which are planning and capacity building; national REDD+ implementation strategy; and payments for results-based emission reductions.

The main international and/or regional initiatives on REDD+ are The World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), The Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing nations (UN REDD), the World Bank Forest Investment Program, the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) and the REDD+ Partnership. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility offers financial and technical assistance to countries in building their capacities to benefit from incentives for REDD+ while the UN-REDD Programme aids nationally-led REDD+ processes and enhances the informed and significant involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-

dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation. Others equally play supervisory and supportive roles in REDD+ implementation.

Table 1: Current REDD+ funding channels and the phases

Funding Channels	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Pledge by industrialised countries (US \$Mn)	Deposited by industrialised countries (US \$ Mn)	Disbursed by World Bank (US \$ Mn)
Multilateral						
FCPF Readiness Fund	√			240	240	16
FCPF Carbon Fund			√	219	219	0
FIP		√		611	490	0
Congo Basin Forest Fund	√	√		186	164	35
UN-REDD Programme	√	√		173	171	130
Bilateral						
Brazil Amazon Fund	√	√	√	615	597	85
GRIF	√	Unknown	Unknown	250	60	2
Norway-Indonesia Letter of Intent	√	√	√	1000	0	0

Source: Interim Forest Finance (IFF, 2014)

History of REDD+ in Nigeria

The Nigeria Government, with the pioneering efforts of Cross River State in 2009, initiated the engagement in REDD+, with a request for membership of the UN-REDD Programme, which was granted. During 2010-2011, with the help from UNDP, the country took the first tangible steps towards REDD+ by creating the first REDD+ coordination and consultation structures at the Federal level and in Cross River State as well. The *Preliminary Assessment of the REDD Context in Nigeria* was also comprehensively carried out to kick start the REDD+ planning. Preparation, consultations and validation of a national REDD+ readiness programme were also embarked upon. The actions give rise to the present *Nigeria REDD+ Readiness Programme (2012-2014)* which was presented in 2011 at the sixth UN-REDD Policy Board. The Nigeria's REDD+ readiness proposal was acclaimed to be an innovative approach internationally and was subsequently approved by the seventh UN-REDD Policy Board in 2011 with an allocation of US\$ 4million.

Nigeria has launched work on various REDD+ streams notably on socio-environmental safeguards, multiple ecosystem benefits, participatory governance assessment for REDD+, and enhanced capacities for UNFCCC reporting as part of developing and finalising its proposal. (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011). Moreover, Nigeria conducted a "REDD+

University" event, in Calabar (Cross River State), in 2012, as an effort at finalising REDD+ document, also serving as a capacity-building and providing the basis for the programme's public inception (UNEP, 2103). The REDD+ University was to mark a public inception of REDD+ programme in Nigeria and to develop the knowledge base for the programme implementation. Also, the REDD+ University was to foster understanding, learning and stakeholder discuss in Nigeria on the REDD+ mechanism. The REDD+ University was organised by Cross River State Forestry Commission, involving the National REDD+ Secretariat and the Federal Ministry of Environment while the UN- REDD provided technical and advisory support (FME, 2011). The Federal and state officials from the country, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), forest-dependent communities representatives in Cross River State, researchers, lecturers and students, extension workers, delegates from states interested in REDD+ such as Ekiti, Ondo, Delta, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Kaduna States, journalists, and private sector entrepreneurs participated in the programme.

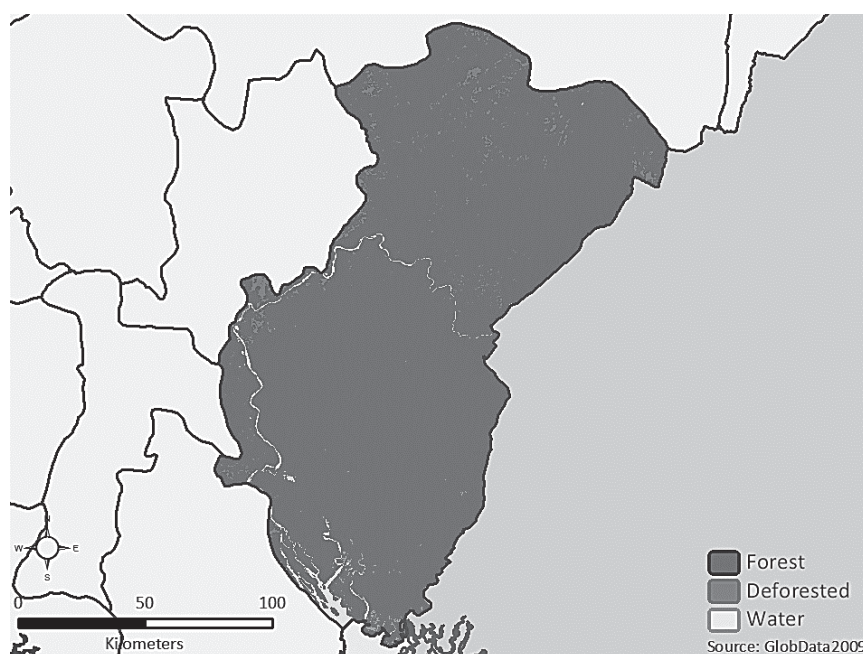


Figure 1: Picture of Cross River State showing the vast forest areas committed to REDD+.
Source: Nigeria-UN REDD Document, 2011

Presently, the total financial commitment of ₦636.98 million has been made with three active REDD+ projects in place in the Cross River State which are Ekuri-Ikosi-Okori-Etara-Eyeyeng-Owai-Ukpon River Forest Reserve which covers 940km²; Afi Mountain/Mbe Mountains with an area of 500km² and Cross River Mangroves which is 589km² in area. The total area of forest committed to the mechanism is 2029 km² covering seven years period.

Justification for REDD+ in rural communities

A High rate of deforestation in the country exists, therefore, there is need to prevent appreciably significant loss of forests which are mainly common to our rural communities. Nigeria's rate of deforestation is one of the highest in the world, and less than 10% of Nigeria's original forest remains (FAO, 2010). Over 50% of Tropical Forest in Nigeria was found in Cross River State (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011). REDD+ has the potentials to discourage deforestation and land degradation in Nigeria through incentive

based arrangement. REDD+, among other things, provides an incentive for forest conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (FME, 2010).

The mechanism would sustain, at the community level, the provision of services like food, fibre, fresh water, and biochemical. It would also regulate seed dispersal, natural hazard protection, erosion regulation and forest water purification (Minang and White, 2010). Also, the mechanism would support primary production, provision of habitat, nutrient and water cycling, soil formation and retention. Cultural services like preservation of spiritual and religious values, knowledge system, and recreation and aesthetic value would be ensured by the introduction of the REDD+ mechanism at the community level (UNEP, 2011). Saving the remaining forest cover in Nigeria through the REDD+ mechanism to safeguard these benefits (ecological, economic, cultural, and biodiversity) should be the core focus of the government in the face of desert encroachment and high level of deforestation in Nigeria. Significant opportunity for increasing carbon stocks in degraded forests, woodlands and grasslands in the country also lends more force to deforestation prevention in Nigeria and rural communities in Nigeria.

REDD+ Mechanism and Its Effectiveness

The REDD+ mechanism is expected to produce cost-effective, politically attractive means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while producing other benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, maintenance of ecosystem services, and sustainable rural development (Phelps *et al.*, 2012). However, UNFCCC decisions is yet to specify which exact land-use reforms and activities will be promoted and rewarded under a future REDD+ mechanism; with the uncertainties about carbon stocks and fluxes under slash-and-burn agriculture and other alternative land uses, it is unclear how the mechanism will influence the livelihoods and agricultural practices of rural and forest-dependent communities across the tropics and in Nigeria.

REDD+ is taken as a source of additional income for local communities and structured to check deforestation. The observed concerns are whether its implementation will be effective and cost efficient and whether benefits will be shared equitably. REDD+ advocates (researchers and organisations) are optimistic about the future of REDD+, seeing it as a source of income and an approach to curb deforestation. The optimism encourages thespians of REDD+ to advocate for policies that will support REDD+. At the same time, actors expressed scepticism about REDD+ because there are still many unanswered questions about how REDD+ will unfold, especially around benefit sharing, land tenure and carbon rights in the Nigeria context. Again, the maturation period of the benefits which is about an average of 4-5 years could be a form of disincentive to the rural communities who would be denied access to their farms and the forests where they source their livelihoods.

The argument about forests as part of the post-2012 climate change regime was based on the magnitude of emissions from deforestation and on the low-cost of achieving carbon emission reductions through reducing deforestation. Though there was agreement that emission reductions have to be effective and efficient, there was no consensus on REDD+ being pro-poor or merely designed not to harm the poor. Many REDD+ proponents compare REDD+ to some multi-level payments for environmental services (PES) to achieve the aim of emission reductions: conditional payments to countries reducing emissions, and conditional payments from national levels to forest stewards reducing emissions. However, will cheap carbon (which according to the Stern report is US\$ 5/tonne of CO₂) provide sufficient incentives to indigenous forest owners to change behaviours on the ground? The literature on PES suggests

that payments to forest owners could only work where the value of the environmental service (ES) is greater than the opportunity costs of the forest stewards, determined by profits foregone from abandoning their first best land-use option, plus the transaction costs (Wunder, 2008). Anything contrary to this will render the initiative ineffective as indigenous forest owners would prefer to make alternative use of their forests. However, in the event of a serious enforcement of the law banning the native forest people from their land, there is every possibility that the initiative would further entrench poverty and food insecurity due to loss of land right and loss of livelihood which might result.

It is apparent that REDD+ may provide sufficient financial inducement for forest conservation in the humid tropics regarding shifting cultivators and extensive cattle ranchers, but not in general for growers of industrial crops like cocoa and oil palm, or for those clearing forest for high-value timber. This is a serious issue of concern for a country that is trying to commercialise agriculture purposely to attain food security and an entrenched food self-sustainability. Carbon buyers will go to suppliers who can provide the most cost effective carbon emissions-thus the carbon price is not likely to be widely higher than the current opportunity costs for activities, for example, shifting cultivation. Accordingly, REDD+ is unlikely to be a driver of poverty alleviation and a source of food security for the state and possibly Nigerian rural dwellers in general; though it may help in diversifying incomes. Consequent upon that, the possibility of the mechanism addressing climate change is in doubt as indigenous forest owners may revert to their earlier practice of slash and burn and some practices that promote deforestation.

This has potentially significant consequences for the Nigeria's rural poor because discourses on deforestation reduction were directed on a handful of forest-rich countries in the humid tropics. The inclusion of reducing forest degradation provides opportunities for nations with less pristine forest and countries from the dry tropics- the very areas with denser populations and a higher level of poverty. However, expanding the REDD+ concept does not necessarily mean more opportunities for smallholders. For example, in the forest cocoa landscapes of southern Nigeria, the secondary forest is the source of land for expansion of cocoa plantations. Since cocoa is a relatively productive activity, smallholders will not opt for REDD+ if it means that they cannot expand their cocoa fields. The only condition that would make them opt for REDD+ is if carbon prices are very high far above cocoa prices. This comes back to opportunity costs; if these are high, then native people are unlikely to choose PES income forest degradation reduction. Also, the farmers could be sceptical about adopting it given the five years gestation period for the realisation of REDD+ benefits. Though this has been catered for under REDD+, the optimism may further be weakened by lack of trust in government by the people.

The mitigation agenda has been made known to many millions of rural dwellers that the payments would promote approaches and technologies that reduce emissions. However, there are severe challenges to incorporating agriculturally based mitigation measures in the post-Kyoto climate regimes. There are not many working models in developing countries of PES for forest conservation even though forests have the advantage that the Environmental Services is clear and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of service delivery is possible, although difficult. On the other hand, forest landscape tenure is often unclear and contested, with clearer use rights in agricultural landscapes.

Given that unclear tenure is a major stumbling block for forest PES, agricultural PES schemes may be institutionally simpler in smallholder contexts (Chomitz *et al.*, 2006).

Another stumbling block for PES involving numerous smallholders is high transaction costs. Moreover, for reasons of tenure rights and transaction costs, PES for avoided deforestation may be biased towards large land holders (e.g. the state, concession holders, private companies) rather than towards smallholders.

Towards Making REDD+ More Effective in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria

The Cross River State has indeed achieved some progress in implementing REDD+ in the State by developing an action plan, and training officials in the implementation of REDD+ in the State. However, the following issues must be adequately addressed regarding REDD+ which puts in doubt the effectiveness of the mechanism:

(i) Land/forest tenure administration in relation with REDD+

For instance, legal support and protection of forest tenure are yet to be defined about CRS REDD+ programme in Nigeria. Likewise, clear functions on, capacity and authority for forest tenure management; Actions planned by governments to resolve issues associated with land tenure uncertainties within REDD+ priority areas; connection between forest tenure solving and REDD+ objectives/actions; Recognition of communities and indigenous peoples' rights; Participation of communities and indigenous peoples in forest tenure definition; Definition of legal aspects related to property and rights to forest carbon in REDD+ project areas; and conflict resolution measures; are yet to be defined in relation to REDD+ programme. The indigenous people whose land are used for the REDD+ might lose their land rights and become impoverished if the precedings are not properly addressed since most of them depend mostly on land for their livelihoods.

(ii) Information on transparency of REDD+ program

Public access to available information at all time is a prerequisite for the success of the programme. Though, given the low level of access to information in the rural communities, and the bottlenecks in accessing information in the country, there is need to make information available readily in the state and at the community level for the success of the programme. The traditional authorities, community groups and other community-based organisations should be carried along for enhanced acceptability of REDD+. Use of media to raise programme awareness may be necessary. There will be a need to identify areas for improvement in community participation and transparency, and also developing and rolling out the countrywide REDD+ stakeholder engagement plan. When this is accomplished, the communities would the developmental impact of the programme and support every effort that will ensure REDD+ success and forestall any efforts that are inimical to the mechanism.

(iii) Benefit sharing mechanisms

This pertains to the broad concept of REDD+ programme addressing the social and economic well-being of communities depending on forests, including poverty reduction, equitable benefit sharing. Description of the PES or benefit sharing mechanisms currently in place shows no evidence of the participation of stakeholders in the mechanisms development. The benefit sharing mechanism should involve the communities, majority of who are farmers. This will forestall further deforestation for agricultural purpose since the sharing mechanism will be agreeable to all stakeholders.

(iv) Technical capacity gaps exist in the country

The 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, in Copenhagen (2009), adopted decision 4/CP.15, which provides methodological guidance for REDD+ implementation. The

agreed guidance requires countries to establish a “robust and transparent national forest monitoring system”. The decision also lists several characteristics of such a system: uses a combination of remote sensing and ground-based forest carbon inventory approaches which provide estimates that are transparent, consistent, accurate, reducing uncertainties, and suitable for review. However, in determining the technical capacity of the country to achieve this, the following needs to be taken into consideration:

- a. Completeness of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories: Estimating and reporting of national GHG inventories, in the application of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and with a limited engagement in the UNFCCC REDD process so far; is lacking in the country. This culminated from low existing competencies to continuously monitor change in forest area, likewise forest carbon stocks variation as part of a national forest monitoring system.
- b. Forest area change monitoring capacity: Current deforestation frequency and significant emissions due to forest degradation, soil carbon stocks and biomass burning are currently not measured on a regular basis in the country. Investments are required to observe more IPCC key categories for the country to move forward. This may be difficult due to the current economic situation of the country and which could jeopardise the effectiveness of the mechanism.
- c. Remote sensing technical challenges: The availability of useful data sources for REDD+ monitoring in the country is constrained. That is, the availability of common satellite data sources is limited in their use due to persistent cloud cover, issues of seasonality, topography or inadequate data access infrastructure, etc. The technical capacity in this regard must be enhanced for the country to fully mitigate the effects of climate change which impact our agriculture, rural livelihood and food security.

(v) Weak institutions and governance structures

In Nigeria, agricultural expansion and commercial logging have been the major deforestation drivers, followed by urban growth and domestic energy use. Likewise, fuel wood harvesting, outdated forest laws (enacted since the 1960s), weak forestry department capacity, high forestry revenue targets and low timber fees, and corruption in the forest sector have all contributed immensely to deforestation and degradation in the country (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011). In the whole of Nigeria, an estimated 70% of the population is directly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods (FMARD, 2014). This is a major concern for the success of REDD+ in Nigeria as a good percentage of the farmers could be affected by the initiative. Pressure from the affected farmers could weaken the enforcement of the regulations guiding REDD+ by already weak institutions.

Conclusion

This work reviewed the effectiveness of REDD+ in Nigeria. It started by threading on the meaning and historical perspective of REDD+ and later discusses issues of concern on the REDD+ implementation which include Land/forest tenure administration in relation with REDD+; Information on transparency of REDD+ program; Benefit sharing mechanisms; Technical capacity gaps that exist in the country; Weak institutions and governance structures and continuity and sustained political will. Without the issues above being adequately addressed, there is doubt that REDD+ might simply be a temporary measure to a continuing negative trend of deforestation and forest degradation along an environmental Kuznets curve and which have implications for Agriculture and food security in the country. The paper

concludes by recommending issues that will make REDD+ more effective and efficient in the Nigeria context.

Recommendation

Nigeria needs to develop long-term “deep decarbonization” pathways not to benefit from REDD+ alone but to limit environmental problems and avoid a business-as-usual scenario. Developing such pathways will require, investments in technology, infrastructure, financial mechanisms and regulation, and consumer behaviour changes. Likewise, the communities should be well engaged about REDD+ such that community REDD+ projects and REDD+ pilots are well funded. Individuals affected should be supported towards acquiring new skills for their sustenance more so that the benefit of REDD+ could be up to five years before people could access it.

Any process of tenure reform will also need to be carefully managed under a REDD+ strategy, as there is a risk of loss of access by communities to forest products that are critical for livelihoods. Also, there is often conflict in communities between those involved in logging and those relying on NTFPs. There is a risk that similar power imbalances could arise in REDD+, particularly because of asymmetries of information between project developers and communities surrounding issues such as carbon contracting. Consequently, due attention to social and environmental safeguards should apply to all REDD+ mechanism in Nigeria.

There may be a need for palliative measures to cushion the effect of the possible hardship that indigenous forest people could face at the earlier stage of the programme to realise the deforestation and degradation goals of the mechanism. Going by the experience in Nigeria where continuity at times could be a serious issue, REDD+ continuity may be jeopardised. New administration might lack the political will to support REDD+ in the state and the country at large. Another issue is that the benefits payment should not be politicised when the time to reward those individuals who forfeited their lands for the initiative ripe. Such should not be tied to political affiliation or political party belongingness. Ensuring the preceding will go a long way to reinforce the effectiveness of the initiative in reducing poverty by increasing rural income diversification while food security is enhanced.

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