

REDD in Papua New Guinea

Land, carbon ownership and
benefit sharing

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Introduction

- Papua New Guinea's (PNG) greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is mostly from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)
- PNG's CO₂ emissions from LULUCF in 2007 was 146.5 – 268.6 million tCO₂ (Shearman et al. 2008)
- PNG is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol. Therefore, we are required under this international treaty to reduce our GHG emissions. This is to ensure we assist in the international effort to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change
- Many people in the developed world speculate that reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests in developing countries will be cheap and easy

Introduction...

- In the case of PNG, it will not be cheap and easy to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests
- The implementation of REDD on customary land will be a daunting task for the government because natural forests and land belongs to customary land owners (CLOs), and not the Gov't
- As such the PNG Gov't will have to find better ways to implement the REDD concept so that REDD is efficiently implemented in PNG
- In so doing, the CLOs will be happy, the Gov't will be happy, carbon brokers will be happy, and REDD projects will not be jeopardized in future due to legal, social and environmental implications
- Moreover, PNG will fulfill its international obligation to reduce its GHG emissions from LULUCF. And this will portray a good image of PNG on the international arena

Land, Forests and REDD

- 97% of the land in PNG is customarily owned. Therefore, control of deforestation and degradation of forests will not be an easy task.
- Some control of deforestation and degradation of forests can be attained within timber concessions (TRPs and FMAs) with SFM practices, but that is temporary (only for 35 or 50 years). After a concession has expired and land has been returned to CLOs, control of deforestation and degradation of forests cannot be guaranteed

Land, Forests and REDD

- Currently some 14 million ha. is considered as production forests and may be some 4 – 5 million ha. is currently under PNGFA, out of the 29 million ha. of forest we have in PNG
- Nevertheless, our Climate Change Ambassador and his sidekicks have now committed the country to a national REDD program on the international level. Therefore we will have to deal with 29 million hectares of forest now (6 -7 times the current forest area under PNGFA), which will involve more work and problems

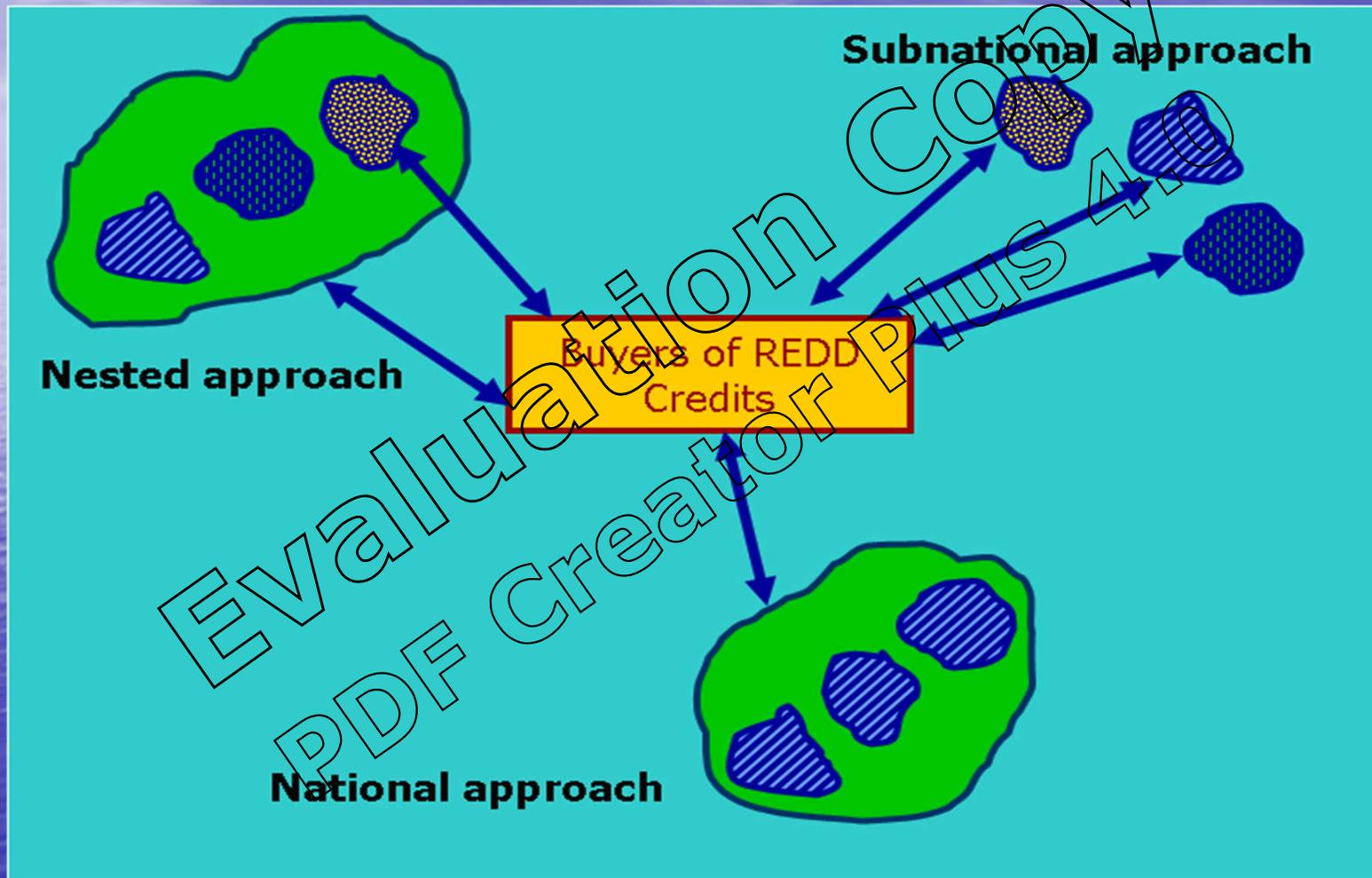
Land, Forests and REDD

- If some of the 29 million ha. of forested land is to be used for REDD, there is likely to be conflict of interest among CLOs and competition between developmental sectors for forested land for development
- **Conflict of Interest** - City CLOs may want a logging or agroforestry project, while village CLOs may want a conservation or carbon trade project. A good example is the issuance of the SPABL over a large area of forest in the Collingwood Bay Area (Oro Province)
- **Competition between development sectors** – One sector may want a piece of a forested land for its development, but another sector may also be interested in the same piece of land for its development. For example, a company may want to develop a forested land for oil palm, but DEC may want that land for conservation. So there will definitely be competition for forested lands for development

Land, Forests and REDD

- So how do we eliminate conflict of interest among CLOs and competition between developmental sectors for forested lands for development?
- A National Land Use Plan (NLUP) is an option that has to be looked at. With a NLUP, areas around the country have to be designated for different economic activities based on some opportunity cost or cost-benefit-analysis and sound scientific knowledge (both forested and non-forested land). In this way the most appropriate activity or activities are designated for an area, thus it should minimize the chances of conflict of interest among CLOs and competition between developmental sectors for development of forested lands

Scale and Implementation of REDD



Adapted from CIFOR 2008

Scale and Implementation of REDD

- Although there are pros and cons for the 3 scales of REDD implementation, the National and Nested approaches are generally accepted as adequate for addressing carbon leakage
- Although we do not have a national policy for REDD as yet, Kevin Conrad and his sidekicks have already committed the country to a national REDD program at the international level. But this is ironical because the Gov't has no legal control over customary land and forests

Scale and Implementation of REDD

- Since KC and his sidekicks have already committed the country to a national REDD program, we have no choice but to mobilize much of the 29 million ha. of forested land (customarily owned) for REDD. But how do we do that?
- In order for customary land to be unlocked for social and economic development, the NLDT report (2007) recommended for a voluntary registration system of customary land to be established under the *Land Groups Incorporation Act 1974* (recommendation 49). Since 2009 two Acts have been passed by parliament in response to this recommendation: (i) *Land Group Incorporation (Amendment) Act 2009* and (ii) *Land Registration (Customary Land) Act 2009*
- Nevertheless, the Department of Lands and Physical Planning is yet to establish a Directorate to handle issues pertaining to customary land

Scale and Implementation of REDD

- Since the mechanisms for unlocking customary land for social and economic development are not yet in place, how do we mobilize the 29 million ha of forested land (which is customary land) for REDD?
- We have in recent years seen an increase in the number of Special Agricultural and Business Lease (SPABL) granted over customary land in the name of economic development
- However, if SPABLs are granted over customary land (under the Lease Lease-Back (LLB) system) for REDD and carbon trade, we may attract the ire of the international community. This is because indigenous rights are protected under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Rights is now part of the negotiating text on REDD at the UNFCCC COPs

Scale and Implementation of REDD

- Under the LLB system customary land use is suspended for the duration of the lease period (99 years). Under this system we violate indigenous rights under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and contradict the negotiating text on indigenous rights under REDD at the UNFCCC COPs
- On the Department of Lands and Physical Planning website it states that SPABs will be for a period of 10 – 20 years and the land rights will be reverted to customary landowners thereafter. However, the SPABs that have been granted over customary land are for periods ranging from 40 – 99 years (77% of the SPABs are for 99 years). So if some of those SPABs are for REDD and carbon trade, then I am afraid something is not right and SPABs will be condemned by eNGOs and Human Rights Groups

Carbon Ownership and Benefit Sharing

- Carbon dioxide is a gas, therefore it can be considered an international commodity because it goes anywhere in this world
- Carbon is a chemical element that remains where it is found until it is given off as carbon dioxide (CO₂) or methane (CH₄). Therefore it is a local commodity.
- In PNG land and forests are customarily owned by the people. Therefore the carbon in the forest (in the living tree, dead wood, forest litter, organic carbon in the soil) is technically and legally owned by customary land owners
- At many forums and workshops, customary land owners have made it clear that they want a bigger slice of the cake. Some have even suggested that the government keeps its fingers away from their forest and money

Carbon Ownership and Benefit Sharing

- However, one must remember that in a sovereign nation one has to pay tax to the government for conducting commercial activities. Therefore, it would be better for the government to collect its 10% tax and the rest of the benefit be given to customary landowners.
- Alternatively, REDD funds could be put in trust accounts set up by parliament and then monies disbursed to customary landowners via a board of trustees. The same idea is currently implemented by the Gov't with Mama Graun Conservation Fund. Other fund types that have been proposed for PNG REDD funds include the PNG National Forest Fund (GreenPeace 2010) and the PES Fund (EcoForestry Forum 2010). Therefore, we need to look at these options and come up with the best option for the country

Conclusions

- REDD will not be easy and cheap to implement in PNG as speculated
- REDD will only succeed in PNG if the following is observed:
 - The rights of the indigenous people to the use of their land and forests is protected
 - The ownership to forest carbon is vested in customary landowners
 - A bigger share of the pie (benefits) is given to CLOs