

WORKSHOP REPORT

Techniques for Socio-Environmental Conflict Resolution in the Context of REDD+

**Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
Panama City, Panama
May 10-11, 2011**

A workshop jointly organized by:

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) – “Packard Project”

Environmental Leadership & Training Initiative (ELTI)

Centro de Conocimiento para la Resolución de Conflictos en las Américas y el Caribe (CERCA)

Mediation Center – Supreme Court of Justice of Panama (CSJ)

Background: Since 2009, ELTI has partnered with STRI, McGill University, CERCA, CSJ, the Dobbo Yala Foundation, the National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP) and the Organization of Embera and Wounaan Youth (OJEWP) to deliver seven workshops and conferences on the climate change mitigation mechanism, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). REDD+ aims to financially compensate land owners for avoiding forest loss and offsetting carbon dioxide emissions. The mechanism is expected to generate a valuable stream of funding for forest conservation and sustainable forest management in the tropics. REDD+, however, has sparked heated debates globally on contentious issues such as land, forest and carbon tenure, the distribution of benefits, and application of social safeguards, among others.

Initially, the focus of the training events was on building the capacity of Panama’s indigenous peoples, comprised of seven ethnic groups, to engage in national and international REDD+ discussions. Through this process, they drafted a series of demands and criteria that must be met by the government and other relevant actors, including the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the United Nations Collaborative Programme on REDD (UN-REDD), if they are to take part in the implementation of the REDD+. Although Panama’s indigenous leaders have yet to adopt a formal position on REDD+, they have been empowered to participate in shaping the future of the mechanism in Panama. In the most recent trainings, the *colonos* –more recent land settlers who make a living off farming and logging– were also invited to participate. These groups are actively transforming forests both on indigenous territories, and in private and state lands, particularly in the Darién region, and they will likely play a key role in determining the future of REDD+ implementation activities.



Recognizing that all relevant groups to the REDD+ process in Panama have different expectations, needs and interests, which will likely result in conflicts, STRI launched the project *Establishing an New Intercultural Society for REDD +: a Case Study in Panama*. This effort aims to promote functional spaces and mechanisms for dialogue and action on REDD+ by equipping these groups with knowledge about the technical, social, political and economic dimensions of REDD+, and tools for conflict resolution. This workshop was the first step in bringing together representatives from all sectors involved in REDD+ in Panama to learn about the mechanism and techniques in alternative conflict resolution.

Objectives:

- Review the status of climate change science and policy, and explore the implications and interactions of global warming and tropical forests.
- Review the evolution and status of climate change negotiations and the REDD+ mechanism.
- Learn and practice alternative, socio-environmental conflict resolution techniques that will be applicable to REDD+-related conflicts in Panama.

Workshop format: The workshop took place over two days at STRI's facilities in Panama City. The first day consisted of plenary sessions, during which instructors covered the topics of climate change, tropical forests and global warming, REDD+ and conflict resolution techniques. The second day was dedicated exclusively to practicing various conflict resolution techniques including active hearing, formulation of questions, paraphrasing and the use of neutral language. Participants were divided in two groups and asked to analyze two case studies involving conflicts over carbon rights in Papua New Guinea and land rights in the Chaco region of the southeast Bolivia and northwest Argentina. These case studies were used to illustrate the type of conflicts that may arise with REDD+ design and implementation and possible tools to reduce and manage these conflicts.



Coordinators and Course Instructors: The event was organized, facilitated and taught by Mr. Jorge Ventocilla (STRI –Packard Project), Javier Mateo-Vega (ELTI), Catherine Potvin (McGill/STRI), Al Amado (CERCA), Ricaurte Soler (CSJ) and Manuel Sánchez (CSJ). Logistical support was provided by Yohany Candanedo (ELTI), Saskia Santamaria (ELTI), Carmen Arias (CERCA) and Lady Mancilla (STRI –Packard Project).

Participants: The workshop was attended by 41 representatives from the National Environmental Authority (ANAM), the Ministry of the Presidency's Darien Development Program (PRODAR), the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the Ministry of Social Development, the Supreme Court of Justice, the office of the Deputy Governor of Darien, indigenous communities and organizations, farmer groups, conservation NGOs, and United Nations agencies.



Outcome & Course Follow-up: The workshop brought together a mix of individuals who typically do not interact, or who are at odds, to a forum that allowed them to engage in a neutral setting. Relationships among the various groups were established. Also, a subset of the participants agreed to be a part of a Consultative Council on Conflict Resolution and REDD+. This council will meet 10 times over the next year to identify and reflect upon the types of conflicts that may surface with the design and implementation of REDD+, and develop a conflict resolution system in the context of the mechanism in Panama. ELTI will continue to collaborate with its partners in delivering training on the subject for relevant actors. These efforts will contribute towards setting a functional stage for ongoing REDD+ discussions and plans to take place.



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