



REDD+ Country Profile

COLOMBIA

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INTRODUCTION

Colombia is intersected by three giant eco-regions (the Central American Corridor, the Andean-Amazonian Interface, and the Pacific, Tropical Andean Interface).¹ Occupying an area of approximately 1.1 million km², Colombia possesses one of the largest continuous forest areas in the tropics, covering at least 49 per cent of the national land territory.² The country has been identified by the IUCN as one of the 10 most important countries in the world for biological diversity.

Colombia's diversity is also reflected in its many differing ethnic groups, including indigenous peoples (officially 87 recognized groups; unofficially up to 102 groups, or 3.4 per cent of the population), Afro-Colombian communities (10.5 per cent of the Colombian population, with 149 recognized collective territories), and Campesino peasant communities (11 per cent of the Colombian population are Mestizo).³ Poverty in Colombia is concentrated in rural areas, which account for 64.3 per cent of the poor. At the same time, the peasant population is responsible for producing 70 per cent of staple foods in the country.⁴

The country's deforestation rate during the period 2011-2012 alone was estimated to be 295,892 hectares.⁵ Colombia's REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) identifies the main drivers of deforestation and degradation as being the extension of agricultural and livestock frontiers, illicit crops, settlements or displacement of populations, infrastructure, and mining, among others. Land transformation in Colombia varies greatly among its different ecological and political regions. While the Andes and the Caribbean regions have been impacted mostly by the early colonization process (after AD 1500), which severely affected biodiversity and natural resources, the eastern lowland forest (post-1900) has been subjected to clearing mainly in the Amazon and Orinoco regions (see endnote 2). Forest clearing stages in Colombia typically commence with the clearing of small areas used for subsistence agriculture, while later these areas are often replaced by pastures for livestock grazing, and thereafter many of these areas are transformed to mechanized agriculture. All of these factors continue to threaten the integrity, resilience and expanse of Colombia's remaining forests. Yet because there are still substantial forested regions that are only sparsely populated, Colombia has an excellent opportunity to enact measures that can continue to sustain its rich forest heritage and contain deforestation and degradation activities.

To reduce the current deforestation rate, the country-level REDD+ readiness efforts propose a multi-sectoral, inter-institutional approach to each set of drivers, the reduction of perverse incentives associated with deforestation and forest degradation, the increase of overall policy coherence between sectors, and a nested approach.

SNAPSHOT OF REDD+ PROGRESS IN COLOMBIA

Governance

Setting the goals for REDD+, building the legal institutional arrangements to undertake it, and ensuring that all major REDD+ stakeholders can participate in its governance.

Goals

Has the country set ambitious and time-bound REDD+ goals and spelled out REDD+ guiding principles?

Accomplishments	REDD+ is well embedded in national climate change policy. The Colombian government is developing a low carbon development strategy (The Colombian Low Carbon Development Strategy) and the National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (ENREDD+), both of which are part of the National Development Plan 2010-2014 and the National Council of Economic and Social Policy (CONPES 3700).
Ongoing	The Colombian government is now in the process of developing an implementation framework for stakeholder participation in REDD+ activities in relation to the requirements that must be met by stakeholders who wish to participate in future markets or provide funds.
Planned	The Colombian government will implement four strategies in relation to climate change: i) the Colombian Strategy for Low Carbon Development (for mitigating future GHG), ii) as a subset of this, the National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (REDD+), iii) the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and iv) a financial protection strategy against climate-related disasters.
Gaps/Next steps	The NGO REDD+ Roundtable recently presented a policy brief on main legal gaps for REDD+ implementation in Colombia related to ecosystem services, carbon rights, consultation and land tenure issues. These important guiding principles will have to be developed further in order to achieve a more complete REDD+ strategy.

Institutional arrangements

Are institutions in place to manage and coordinate REDD+ (e.g. inter-ministerial coordination, participation of all stakeholders secured)?

Accomplishments	The highest instrument of coordination for REDD+ is the National REDD Roundtable involving the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS). The REDD+ National Board (Mesa Nacional REDD+) is scheduled to coordinate at a technical level the National REDD+ Strategy once R-PP implementation takes effect. This group includes, in addition to the environment, agriculture and planning ministries, the Ministry of the Interior. Colombia's institutional arrangements are formalized by CONPES 3700.
Ongoing	The REDD+ National Board will be part of the National Climate Change System, whose decree is in the process of being finished. The REDD+ National Board will be supported by a series of advisory groups whose role is to help prepare decisions from technical, social, environmental, regional and economic perspectives. It is in these advisory groups that indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities and Campesino communities have their seat and representation. Colombia is preparing a multi-sectoral inter-institutional approach to address each set of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation that it identified in its R-PP to increase the overall policy coherence between sectors.
Planned	The Regional Climate Change Nodes will work as regional platforms for REDD+ readiness at the subnational level, in accordance with the nested and phased approach Colombia is pursuing. The REDD+ National Board includes the mechanisms to ensure appropriate institutional representation and assignment of roles and responsibilities from all key cultural sectors affecting the drivers of deforestation.
Gaps/Next steps	Further information is needed to show how planning and management responsibilities will be shared with regional and local authorities, and how sectors will be integrated into REDD+.

Legal

Does the country have a legal framework that supports the implementation of REDD+ (e.g. special focus on land rights/tenure rights, carbon rights assigned)?

Accomplishments	Colombia's constitution recognizes Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) before the implementation or approval of any legislation, administrative measures, public policy or economic/infrastructure projects that would potentially affect them. In addition, Article 329 of the Colombian Constitution of 1991 guarantees that the territory of indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians is non-transferable, and is collective property.
Ongoing	The government is working to develop transitional legislation, including minimum requirements to develop REDD+ activities in the country; the obligation to conduct a national registry, including voluntary projects to avoid double counting; and regulation for prior consultation for REDD+ activities. Now, IDEAM has a platform to register projects but is still under development and is a voluntary process.
Planned	Colombia drafted a proposed resolution to create a registry of the voluntary carbon projects that were submitted to a public consult from stakeholders on June 2012. MADS will carry out a census of early demonstration initiatives (pilots), and will disseminate information that includes precautions and recommendations to prevent irregular contracts or arrangements between local communities and project developers.
Gaps/Next steps	Colombia is currently developing its national approach to safeguards through a participatory process with WWF support. The proposal will be presented at the National REDD+ Roundtable once it is confirmed. Land tenure laws need to be revised and ownership clarified for existing carbon rights. The REDD+ Roundtable is currently developing a consultancy to clarify and make recommendations on these issues to the government. The method for the consultative process of the National REDD+ Strategy is still unclear, including what should be included in the process, when, how and with whom.

Tracking REDD+ Progress

Successful REDD+ implementation will depend on the country's ability to track and report on the state of the forests and REDD+ progress against a reference level.

MRV

Advances in putting in place a measurement, reporting and verification system for REDD+.

Accomplishments	The country has benefited from the protocols and carbon stock and deforestation data generated by the IDEAM under the project "Scientific and Institutional Capacity Building to Support REDD Projects in Colombia" with the support of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Yet there is still no agreement on interpreting the data (pending issue).
Ongoing	Currently, the IDEAM, in coordination with the MADS, is developing the second phase for the abovementioned project, including: 1) articulating a technical framework for the implementation of a deforestation and carbon monitoring system for Colombia, involving the participation of key actors and roles that support this implementation; 2) proposing a technical framework for the system operation; 3) developing a proposal to incorporate forest degradation monitoring into the monitoring system; 4) continuing deforestation and carbon stock monitoring at the national level; 5) including the development of an early warning deforestation strategy at the national level; and 6) analyzing financial cost and institutional arrangements needed to guarantee the permanency of the MRV system.
Planned	The strategy will implement a national monitoring system with regional and local accounting that will ensure consistency among the different levels and will ultimately lead to a national monitoring and accounting system. Colombia will present a technical proposal for a deforestation and carbon monitoring system based on digital image processing with a multilevel hierarchical approach that combines the diverse capabilities of optical sensors, radar and laser, integrated with the forest field data available. Co-benefits will be monitored based on future work of the National Bureau of Statistics (DANE) for social and socioeconomic indicators, and environmental and biodiversity-related indicators by the Alexander von Humboldt Research Institute.
Gaps/Next steps	Define how community-based MRV will operate. FCMC has an agreement with IDEAM to address the main challenges of this process. It would be ideal to define this with the active participation of communities.

Reference levels

Has the country developed on national or subnational reference levels? What approach was adopted (e.g. historical, historical adjusted)?

Accomplishments	While no reference levels have been developed yet, Colombia is working to first develop regional reference scenarios and protocols and will then harmonize the criteria for calculating the regional reference scenarios to enable the development of the national baseline to be able to move from IPCC Tier 2 to Tier 3 over time.
Ongoing	Climate Focus and Winrock International have begun to work on a two-year project funded by the German Environmental Ministry's International Climate Initiative to pilot nested REDD+ accounting in Colombia. The project will help Colombia develop a national REDD+ register, support national and local governments to develop and test jurisdictional reference levels (RLs), and support the policy and legal framework for REDD+. Currently, the IDEAM, MADS and National Natural Parks are testing in a pilot area in the northern part of the Colombian Amazon, with the financial support of Norway.
Planned	Develop technical protocols for building regional reference levels for Colombia. Planned actions in the coming year include: building a regional reference level for the pilot area; testing spatial econometric models to identify deforestation projections at the subnational level; and developing project emission trend scenarios for the pilot area.
Gaps/Next steps	Need to establish regional reference levels for the country with focus on the Amazon and the Pacific regions. Develop project emission trend scenarios for each region and a national accounting system.

Getting REDD+ Done

Achieving REDD+ that is (a) undertaking intervention strategies that address the country drivers of deforestation and (b) mobilizing the financial resources to pay for it.

Addressing drivers of deforestation

What are the main strategies and programmes to reduce deforestation (e.g. increase protected areas, support shift to sustainable agricultural practices, increase law enforcement)?

Accomplishments	The Forest Management Decree 1791 of 1996 grants the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CARs) within their respective jurisdictions the authority to plan forest management activities within their jurisdictions. Forest management planning includes preserving forests, marking forest boundaries, and creating protective, productive, and productive-protective forest areas subject to specific exploitation rules.
Ongoing	None, or no information at this time.
Planned	The REDD+ national plan lays out strategies to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation, covering the following areas: energy (wood-based), agriculture (zoning plan, sustainable agriculture), forest (improvement of legal logging framework), governance (registry, fund system, online information tools), development of national and provincial land-use plans, land tenure (reform land tenure, participatory mapping, capacity-building), and demographics (improve understanding of demographic changes, education).
Gaps/Next steps	The matters of corruption and illegality (e.g. land tenure, illegal logging and timber extraction), which are considered to play a role in driving deforestation and forest degradation, will need to be addressed in moving forward with a final R-PP and implementation activities. Corruption is partly being addressed by the Global Network Pact (p. 26 & p. 166 of 2011 R-PP). However, other sectors of corruption may require more documentation and mitigation measures in the final R-PP. To date, there has been very poor participation of different sectors in national REDD+ discussions. It is key to have them involved in discussions.

Finance

What resources is the country counting on to pay for REDD+ implementation (e.g. multilateral, bilateral, own country resources, voluntary and offset carbon markets)? How much has been committed, transferred and disbursed?

Accomplishments	The government intends to implement the R-PP from 2011 to 2014 and has outlined the approximate budget for this and the possible sources of funding. The estimated total budget for R-PP implementation is US\$27 million.
Ongoing	The Colombian government is working with UN-REDD and UNDP, among other potential funding institutions, to expand possible funding opportunities. For example, in June 2013, Colombia presented its R-PP and National Programme at UN-REDD's policy board meeting, and US\$4 million in funding for Colombia was then approved by UN-REDD. GIZ has also added resources to support the National REDD+ Strategy. Additional information can be found in the most updated Colombia R-PP.
Planned	Anticipated sources of funding: FCPF: US\$3.6 million; UN-REDD: US\$4 million; National Government Contribution: US\$1.4 million; Other Sources: US\$9.7 million. (These funds are yet to be defined and are uncertain.)
Gaps/Next steps	None, or no information available at this time.

REDD+ for People and Nature

Ensuring that the country REDD+ strategy (a) has in place adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable social groups and preserve tropical forest environments and that (b) beyond doing no harm, they also offer new income and livelihood opportunities to indigenous peoples, local communities and the rural poor.

Social and environmental safeguards

What safeguards is the country applying to/implementing (FCPF, UN-REDD, REDD, SES)? Are there safeguard information systems in place?

Accomplishments	<p>Colombia has prepared a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) Roadmap in response to the World Bank's guidelines, detailing five regional workshops (Pacific, Amazon, Andean, Antioquia and Caribbean) and one national SESA workshop, including the format and the identification of stakeholder groups. The first draft of the SESA Roadmap was disseminated on June 12, 2012, to a broad range of stakeholder groups. SESA work is currently ongoing in the Amazon and Pacific regions.</p> <p>Colombia organized a series of pre-SESA information dissemination workshops with Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific Region in the departments of Chocó, Nariño, Cauca and Valle del Cauca between September and November of 2013. A workshop with Afro-Colombian women's groups took place in August 2013; and workshops with indigenous peoples, government agencies, academia, research institutes, private sector and NGOs were planned through the end of 2013.</p> <p>USAID's Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program, with WWF support, launched the project "Defining of a national scheme of safeguards for REDD+", as part of the participatory construction of the REDD+ National Strategy. Further, Germany is supporting through the GIZ outreach, dissemination, early dialogue, and the communication strategy designed to conclude SESA work leading to the formulation of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), as well as the safeguards identification process.</p>
Ongoing	Safeguards will be developed at the national level and implemented at the regional level, including monitoring and support for local jurisdictions. A SESA and ESMF will be undertaken as part of the REDD+ strategy development process. Their scope will be decided under the leadership of MADS and National REDD+ Roundtable.
Planned	Colombia will need to complete the SESA Roadmap in the three remaining regions of the Andean, Antioquia and Caribbean.
Gaps/Next steps	Environmental and social safeguards need to be developed at a national level with a multi-stakeholder approach. WWF-Colombia, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, the FCMC and GIZ, is working on the development of social and environmental safeguards at this time.

Benefit sharing

Is there a finance mechanism in place that secures fair distribution of benefits to indigenous peoples, local communities and the rural poor?

Accomplishments	No policy on revenue sharing developed/approved at this stage. The FCPF R-PP acknowledges that in order to progress on a REDD+ strategy, the official position on carbon rights and benefit distribution needs to be agreed to among stakeholders.
Ongoing	The R-PP notes that pending topics for consultation with civil society organizations will include equitable sharing of benefits and conflict resolution, adding that land tenure, just and equitable distribution of resources, and mechanisms to settle conflicts are key social, economic and cultural factors to consider when developing the ESMF.
Planned	None, or no information at this time.
Gaps/Next steps	Benefit sharing and distribution has not yet been addressed in national discussions. Will be part of R-PP implementation.

WWF (PLANNED) ACTIVITIES UNTIL 2015 & PARTNERS

WWF-Colombia has planned to carry out the following REDD+-related activities through 2015:

- Support to COICA and OPIAC (Amazon indigenous organizations of the Amazon Basin and the Colombian region, respectively) in their technical and policy capacities.
- Policy recommendations for the formulation of the National REDD+ Strategy as well as the construction of the R-PP country document.
- Engagement with other NGOs and institutions working on REDD within the country by means of work in the context of the NGO REDD+ Roundtable.
- Legal analysis and facilitation of discussion workspaces for the implementation of REDD+ in the country, including publication of a policy document on legal gaps for REDD+ implementation in Colombia.
- Follow-up to a PDD draft to evaluate the feasibility of performing a REDD+ project for the voluntary markets with the Chigorodo indigenous community (Uraba region in the northwest part of the country).
- Development of a bottom-up approach to safeguards in the context of Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region (with support of WWF and Fondo Patrimonio Natural).

END NOTES

1. Forests of the World, <http://forests-of-the-world.com/Forests/Colombia/>
2. Sánchez-Cuervo et. al. 2012. Land Cover Change in Colombia: Surprising Forest Recovery Trends between 2001 and 2010. PLoS ONE. 7(8)
3. REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal, May 2013
4. REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal, September 2011
5. IDEAM 2010

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WWF's Forest and Climate Programme works to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests as carbon stores is secured by green economic development that benefits people, the climate and biodiversity in transformational ways.
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