REDD+ and Conservation: Challenges and Opportunities of the Landscape Governance Approach

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Abstract : Implementation of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) program will not only lead to significant net gains in greenhouse gas reduction but also gains in biodiversity conservation. However, the looming paradigm shift in the program in the form of the proposed landscape governance approach could change this inclination. The concern lies with the fact that pursue of carbon credits by governments and private entities under the proposed landscape approach could encourage obstinate land use behaviors that are detrimental to the cause of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services. Yet, the landscape approach could also stimulate governments to develop and implement land use management policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Using two potential areas of land use under the proposed landscape approach – carbon farming in grasslands and carbon farming in plantations – this paper provides a balanced analytical review of conservation challenges and opportunities for forest governance and beyond under the proposed landscape approach to REDD+. The paper argues that such a balanced view will enable policymakers and other stakeholders to better present their arguments in their efforts to shape the course of the REDD+ program in the post-Paris Agreement era.
Keywords : biodiversity conservation, REDD+, forest governance, grasslands, landscape approach, plantations