Just Transitions within Sectors and Industries Globally

The 'Net' in Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Achieving just transitions in the forestry sector through climate policy integration and learning

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About Just Transitions within Sectors and Industries Globally

The programme examines how just transitions whilst tackling climate change and biodiversity is key to supporting inclusive economies and societies in the future. Through the programme, the Academy awarded funding to nine research projects exploring the actions required in sectors and industries globally across supply and value chains, with a focus on key economic emitters or areas of society that will help reduce and/or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. The programme was funded by the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

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Introduction

How can just transitions to societies with net-zero carbon/GHG emissions be successful in the forestry sector?

Protecting forests, halting deforestation, and supporting reforestation globally through increasing natural carbon sinks such as forests will be central in delivering on the 'net' aspect of countries' ambition to achieve 'net-zero' carbon/greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040-2060.[1] This aim however competes with agricultural business, logging, and bio-energy related interests along global value chains as main drivers of deforestation. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from a global survey of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) Partnerships as well as a review of forestry and forestry-related climate policies, this project evaluated how just transitions in the forestry and related agriculture/bio-energy sectors can be achieved. It focused on drawing lessons and learning from successful SDG partnerships to achieve a successful integration of climate action through halting deforestation and just transitions for the actors whose livelihoods are adversely affected.

The key audience includes national/transnational stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development and forestry, which include national governments, multinational companies, civil society organisations, indigenous peoples, and other actors playing a crucial role. How these stakeholder partnerships negotiate the different interests and conflicts that define a just transition is critical for successful climate-forestry governance. The wider concerns over participatory governance of forests, land rights, concern for indigenous/marginalised groups, the economic, and agricultural role of forests and conservation were also at the heart of this project. It therefore investigated the place of negotiating and situating climate change as part of the wider sustainability role of forests, and marrying these understandings as being essential to understanding a 'just transition' in forestry.

This is important as research has shown that the integration of climate change objectives with other policy areas such as energy and agriculture is difficult and not automatic,[2] but requires dialogue between the affected interest groups/stakeholders, an understanding of their underlying beliefs and priorities, and most of all mutual learning to find common ground on shared beliefs and values that are crucial for achieving a just transition that leaves no one behind.[3] If one group or a sub-set of interest groups dominates political decision-making around just transitions and the integration of climate objectives, conflict emerges such as in the case of using biofuels as contribution to the European Union's climate strategy, resulting in path dependencies and policies with negative effects on climate mitigation and adaptation that are very difficult to reverse/adjust.[4] Therefore, the focus of this project was on identifying approaches that are fit-for-purpose, i.e. capable of achieving just

1 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 2021. *Sustainable Forest Management*. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forests-management/en/; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2021). *6th Assessment Report Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/ ; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (2021). *Forests and Climate Change*. Issue Brief February 2021, Gland, Switzerland. Retrieved from https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/forests_and_climate_change_issues_brief_2021.pdf.

2 Dupont C (2016). *Climate policy integration into EU energy policy: progress and prospects*. London: Routledge.

3 Rietig, K. (2021). *Learning in Governance: Climate Policy Integration in the European Union*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

4 Rietig, K. (2018). 'The Link between Contested Knowledge, Beliefs and Learning in European Climate Governance: From Consensus to Conflict in Reforming Biofuels Policy'. *Policy Studies Journal*. 46(1): 137-159.

transitions to safeguard the livelihoods of the world's poorest while protecting biodiversity and the world's carbon sinks that are crucial for achieving net-zero carbon/GHG emissions by the middle of the 21st century, thus mitigating the worst consequences of climate change.

The aim of this project was to identify successful approaches and best-practice to allow SDG partnerships to design and implement sustainable forestry management that is fit for the purpose of just transitions, as well as to support countries in setting up Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), i.e., national climate policies, that effectively address just transitions in forestry and related sectors. It pursued the following objectives:

Objective 1

To evaluate existing forestry policies and legislation, as well as forestry-related partnerships under the UN SDGs with regard to their suitability to effectively address climate change as a super-wicked policy problem and to identify policies that meet the criteria of being able to effectively address climate change as an irreversible super-wicked policy problem that requires prioritisation. The central hypothesis, which has been confirmed by the empirical research, was that only a small number of forestry policies and forestry-related UN SDG partnerships can be considered as effective.[5]

Objective 2

To understand why some countries and UN SDG partnerships were able to design effective climate policies. To this end, we carried out in-depth case studies using interviews on why some actors designed and implemented appropriate policies/ partnerships to prioritise addressing the irreversible problem of climate change, while others opted for less effective compromise-focused policies that are unlikely to be able to address the policy problem and favour continuing with business-as-usual deforestation/forest degradation. A central hypothesis was that learning, compatible beliefs and objectives among key actors and the leadership of policy entrepreneurs played a crucial role in the policymaking process and influenced the outcome.[6]

5 Clough E, Long G & Rietig K. (2019). *A Study of Partnerships and Initiatives registered on the UN SDG Partnerships Platform*. New York: United Nations.

6 Cashore B, Berstein S, Humphreys D, Visseren-Hamakers I & Rietig K. (2019). 'Designing stakeholder learning dialogues for effective global governance'. *Policy and Society*, 38(1), 118-147; Rietig, K. (2018). 'The Link between Contested Knowledge, Beliefs and Learning in European Climate Governance: From Consensus to Conflict in Reforming Biofuels Policy'. *Policy Studies Journa*l. 46(1): 137-159; Rietig, K. (2019). 'Leveraging the Power of Learning for Effective Climate Governance'. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 21(3): 228-241.'

Conceptual framework[7]

One of the most important, but often overlooked, steps in problem-focused stakeholder deliberations is to classify the problem against other priorities. This is a key step, as it focuses attention on identifying, and potentially limiting effects in which solving one problem might lead to making others worse. Likewise, it forces stakeholders to deliberate about what to do when such trade-offs with other problems present themselves. This effort can be assisted by drawing on Cashore's distinction of four types of problems.[8] This distinction serves as a conceptual framework for guiding the empirical analysis and allows to differentiate between policies that are 'fit for purpose' with regards to halting deforestation/increasing reforestation while advancing just transitions.

Type-1: Commons Tragedies (Win/win)

The first type of conceptualisation directs attention to specific problems where failures to address them make everyone worse off in the long run. Largely inspired by rational choice and ahistorical ontologies, scholars such as Eleanor Ostrom focused on designing the 'right' types of internal rules and procedures for developing collectively optimal solutions for ending such tragedies, including fisheries loss, deforestation, and overgrazing.[9] The critique of these 'win/win' mechanisms is that they tend to emphasise those resources in which there is an inherent economic incentive to maintain sustainable resources management, while either downplaying non-economic environmental or non-quantifiable values such as ecosystem structure and function, and/or converting such values into economic ones. The worry is that such an orientation might inadvertently shift 'payment for ecosystem services' away from ameliorating a specific problem, to adjudicating whether the problem can be addressed at all. This plays out in Type-2, where the means determines the ends.

Type-2: 'Win/lose' Optimisation

Type-2 problems are consistent with Ostrom's utility-enhancing rationale but are developed deductively as universalist approaches for helping society deliberate on how to address trade-offs between different problems. The challenge Type-2 problem orientations address is social welfare or Pareto optimality inspired by neo-classical economics and cost-benefit analysis.[10] In such analyses, economic values are assigned to different outcomes, and, following modelling and the application of discount rates, analysis identifies the most efficient and effective trade-offs for enhancing welfare. Hence, this problem conception accepts that there will be winners and losers but based on a transparent model in which social welfare is advanced.

7 This section is based on Cashore B, Visseren-Hamakers I, Humphreys D, Bernstein S, Rietig K, Sotirov M, McGinley K, Nathan I, de Jong W, Lupberger S & Denvir AJ. (2018). *Designing Transformative Multi-stakeholder Policy Learning Dialogues: an 11-Step Protocol*. International Political Science Association Conference 2018.

8 Cashore B & Bernstein S. (2021). *Bringing the Environment Back In: Overcoming the Tragedy of the Diffusion of Commons Metaphor, forthcoming, Perspectives on Politics*.

9 Cashore B & Bernstein S. (2021). *Bringing the Environment Back In: Overcoming the Tragedy of the Diffusion of Commons Metaphor, forthcoming, Perspectives on Politics*.

10 Adler M & Posner E. 2009. 'New foundations of cost-benefit analysis'. *Regulation & Governance* 3 (1): 72-83.

Type-3: 'Win/lose' Compromise

Type-3 conceptions, like Type-2, are derived top down or deductively, rather than inductively, on the belief that 'balance' and 'compromise' can be guided by science and rationality. It may also help focus efforts on understanding domestic political struggles that are key to addressing climate change and other large-scale societal problems, frequently in the form of stakeholder dialogues or consultations. The compromise approach inherent in these efforts seems reinforced by sustainability science and norms associated with sustainable development that have ascended again in the international community, most notably with the adoption of the 2015 SDGs. Type-3 approaches are often incremental in nature and the institutional arrangements that result can reflect dominant discourses and institutional path dependencies that favour some interests and values over others.[11]

Type-4: 'Win/lose' Prioritisation

Type-4 problems, adjudication of which will result from societal and stakeholders learning processes – either formal or informal – are conceptualised as 'win/lose' but in which there is a clear prioritisation of the problem in question. In these cases, society or learning processes finds that some problems simply should not be contrasted, or traded off, with others. In these cases, multi-stakeholder learning processes are important to assess, and understand, strategies for addressing the problem at hand, but are not useful if they end up shifting conceptions to Type-3 compromise away from the targeted problem in question. In other words, well intended dialogues that 'compromise away' the two degrees Celsius limit to climate change, in the name of respecting different interests, to say, 'six degrees', will be, by definition, unable to address the problem for which the dialogue was created.

Hence, for a Type-4 problem, stakeholders come to recognise that there are some types of problems in which the very act of compromising with other problems renders us unable to address the problem at hand. Two key problems stand out as important Type-4 problems: species extinction and climate change. In the case of a species that is about to become extinct, the only way to address the problem is to identify a solution that ensures species viability. In this case it is simply impossible to 'compromise' if the goal of maintaining the species is to be addressed. Similarly, if we accept the projections of 4,000 leading climate scientists that catastrophic effects could occur if the planet warms above 2°C then stakeholders who seek to address the climate crisis would need to classify it as a Type-4 problem. Put another way, no amount of 'good will' and 'dialogue' among a range of stakeholders, many of whom might have their organisational, business, or personal self-interests negatively affected by climate policy, can change the scientific impacts of CO^2 and related chemicals on the natural environment. It may well be that society decides that it does not want to address the climate crisis, but this is a different approach from what is generally occurring at present: offering interventions that implicitly treat the climate crisis as Type-2 problems. The failure to engage in such an explicit distinction among problems has led to Type-1, 2 and 3 solutions being applied to Type-4 problems. The result is that innovations that might exist for addressing Type-4 solutions are not being given sufficient attention or resources – reinforcing the tragedy of 'super wicked' problems.

11 Bernstein S & van der Ven H. 2017. 'Continuity and Change in Global Environmental Politics'. In *International Politics and Institutions in Time*, edited by Fioretos O, 293-317. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Methodology

Survey of the SDG partnerships on forestry

The survey that underpins this part of the project was written with input from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and The Partnerships Initiative. It built on a similar survey to the one used in the 2019 partnerships report.[12] UN DESA distributed the survey to all registered partnerships on the UN's SDG partnership platform on 16 December 2021, with a closing date of 14 January 2022. We had about 900 complete responses in total, with the exact number varying by question. Many respondents were Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (44%), but a good variety of other types of partners responded as well. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and French. We looked in detail at a subset of forestry-focused partnerships. We identified this group of respondents through responses to questions on which SDGs the partnerships are focused on. Those who responded that they were focused on Goal 13: Climate Action, Goal 14: Life in the Water, or Goal 15: Life on Land were asked a further set of questions about the environmental and social issues they were working on. Those who identified themselves as working on forestry as an environmental issue comprise our subset of forestry partnerships.

Review of climate and forestry legislation databases

We reviewed a prioritised selection of the NDCs/climate policies/SDG partnerships held in the related databases to assess the extent to which states appear to potentially recognise climate change as a Type-4 problem in respect of their approach to forestry.[13] We have interpreted this potential recognition of climate change as a Type-4 problem as one that results in the use of policies backed up by legal mechanisms rather than by voluntary or market mechanisms; and within these policies, ones that addressed deforestation (to preserve primary forests) rather than reforestation, or that addressed species extinction. We also looked for elements of just transitions, including stakeholder participation, in particular participation from marginalised groups, and compensation to communities for potential or actual losses. Those states or non-state actors whose NDCs/climate policies/SDG partnerships meet these criteria were candidates for further investigation via interview. The NDCs/climate policies/SDG partnerships were selected for review based on the importance of forestry in their context, both to that actor and globally. For the NDCs, in each case the latest submission at the time of review was initially reviewed; if this contained insufficient information, then any earlier submissions were also reviewed.

Interviews with key actors for case studies

We zoom in on partnerships/initiatives in Brazil/Latin America, Sierra Leone/ Africa, the Philippines/Asia and New Zealand/Oceania that were followed up with interviews with the key actors. The interviews focused on the activities, scope and success of the initiatives, as well as the challenges faced with regard to just transitions, and possible lessons learned/learning among the actors that have a wider relevance for drawing conclusions about the factors that facilitate just transitions in the forestry sector.

12 Clough et al (2019). A Study of Partnerships and Initiatives registered on the UN SDG Partnerships Platform.

13 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2021). Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Synthesis report by the secretariat. FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/8. Bonn, UNFCCC. Retrieved from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_08_adv_1.pdf.

Empirical findings

The research project's key findings are that forestry and addressing forest-related climate mitigation and adaptation issues are important concerns for a wide variety of actors ranging from national governments to non-state actors as reflected by the high number of NDC/forestry-related climate policies and especially the responses from the UN DESA SDG Partnership survey. There are however a limited number of genuinely strong case studies/best practice cases (i.e. within the Type-4 problem classification of prioritising climate action) that fulfil the high bar of halting/reversing deforestation while ensuring just transitions for the local and, where present, indigenous communities.

We can identify a number of common factors for just transitions in the forestry sector identified through the extensive empirical data based on a) the responses to the 2021/22 UN SDG partnership survey, b) the forestry-related SDG partnerships on the UN DESA platform, c) the review of countries' NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC, d) the forestry-related climate legislation in the GLOBE/LSE climate legislation database,[14] and in particular e) the qualitative interviews for the case studies drawn from a)-d).

Overall, forest policies and initiatives tend to have a strong focus on, and frequent prioritisation of, just transitions in the form of protecting the livelihoods of local communities who directly or indirectly draw a significant share of their income from the use of forest products, e.g. through timber extraction. Most of the policies and initiatives the team examined fell into this Type-1 and Type-2 category. Many initiatives had characteristics of multiple types, especially a combination of Type-2, Type-3 and Type-4 approaches. Just transitions and local livelihoods were prioritised while the policies/initiatives seek to maximise the protection of the forest through measures such as sustainable forest management, partial protection of forests, reforestation and temporary moratoriums. There is also a strong focus on the protection of the land rights of local communities and, where present, indigenous communities including inclusive stakeholder consultation approaches (Type-3). We were able to identify a number of initiatives with strong Type-4 characteristics, while it is important to recognise that ideal Type-4 initiatives are very rare.

Transferable lessons across policies, projects and partnerships are:

- Climate Policy Integration is a central objective for effective initiatives. Forestry and addressing deforestation in the context of just transitions and climate change must have a strong climate policy integration component. This means that policies, partnerships, and other initiatives need to be designed in a way that allows for focusing on the co-benefits for just transitions, while prioritising the protection of forests that would be irreversibly gone if destroyed.

- Learning is key. Mutual learning, especially through the exchange of experiences and knowledge, is a high priority for SDG forestry-related partnerships and needs to be fostered and actively supported by all actors involved. It is central that initiatives avoid wasting scarce resources (especially financial) by 're-inventing the wheel', while other jurisdictions/actors have already had experiences with

14 London School of Economics and Political Science (2022). Climate Change Laws of the World Database. Retrieved from https://climate-laws.org/.

particular policy approaches and could share their lessons learned with others who are embarking on a similar policy/project.

- Capacity building, learning and implementation require adequate long-term resources. For just transitions to be successful within forest/climate policies and projects, the long-term planning and close engagement with local (indigenous) communities is central. There needs to be a shift from ad hoc short-term projects and partnerships to a genuinely sustainable, long-term approach that ensures financial and knowledge-related resources to be available over a longer time horizon. This could be achieved through the design of long-term financial income sources and a re-focusing on establishing, improving and maintaining the necessary social and economic infrastructure of local communities in the form of education, sustainable forest management, sustainable sources of income (e.g., payments for ecosystem services, revenues from emission trading schemes/ carbon taxes nationally and internationally) and in particular the recognition of indigenous communities' rights.

These key lessons learned are relevant for policymakers to design and re-design Type-4 policies that ensure just transitions while prioritising forestry-related climate action. The following sections zoom in on the detailed key findings from the quantitative and qualitative research.

Key findings from the SDG forestry partnership survey

Evidence that partnerships are addressing a wider set of SDGs over time. In our 2021 survey, partnerships chose on average 4 goals that they were working on compared to 2019,[15] when partnerships chose on average 2.5 goals that they were working on. This might indicate that partnerships are changing how they are thinking about the SDGs – so that they understand their contributions in a broader and more integrated fashion – and perhaps also that newer partnerships are broader or more ambitious in their areas of action.

Evidence that current events affect which SDGs partnerships focus on. Partnerships in our recent survey were addressing Goal 3 on health, Goal 4 on education and Goal 13 on climate change in particularly large numbers. All three of these goals are prominent global themes currently: health and education were key sectors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the first component of the IPCC's sixth assessment report on climate change was released in 2021.

Forestry is a prominent theme for environmental partnerships, being the most prominent ecosystem type for partnerships to work on. Of 564 respondents who indicated they worked on environmental SDGs, 43% (243) selected forestry as one of the environmental issues they focused on – compared to the other ecosystem types: Oceans (37%), Other terrestrial (31%) and Freshwater ecosystems (40%). In terms of forestry as an issue, though, more respondents work on climate mitigation and adaptation (60%), pollution (58%), biodiversity (55%), infrastructure (49%), and conservation (47%).

15 Clough et al (2019). A Study of Partnerships and Initiatives registered on the UN SDG Partnerships Platform.

Findings on characteristics of forestry partnerships

Forestry partnerships are operating most across the global south. In terms of regional breakdown, 41% of forestry partnerships were operating in sub-Saharan Africa and 34% in south and South-East Asia (with 38% operating at the global level). The mostly high-income regions of North America, Western Europe, and Oceania are in the bottom five regions for operations.

Climate change is central to the agenda of forest partnerships. When asked which SDGs they were focused on, almost all forestry partnerships chose Goal 13: Climate Action (91% of 243 respondents). Interestingly, only 63% are focused on Goal 15, Life on Land, the goal that is most focused on biodiversity loss and the goal that has the most explicit mention of forest ecosystems. We do not have the data to assess whether these partnerships have Goal 13 as their primary focus, or whether in the current post UNFCCC COP26 environment they simply feel a need to 'name-check' climate change as a priority.

Forest partnerships are engaging across a range of environmental issues. Respondents (n=243) identified on average 7.4 additional environmental issues that they focus on. This reflects the holistic nature of environmental issues, and the key role that forests play in understanding environmental action.

The range of additional issues chosen is very broad. Climate adaptation and biodiversity rank as the most popular environmental goals that are chosen alongside forests, which is consistent with the overall scope and aims of this project. But even oceans and coasts, which is the least common environmental issue chosen by forest partnerships, was chosen by nearly half of them.

Forest partnerships are working on a wide variety of social and development SDGs, including poverty, hunger, health, education and gender equality. Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, actually ranks below some of these social and development goals, suggesting that perhaps forests are valued for the myriad benefits they provide, rather than simply as a source of fuel as they may have done in the past.

The social themes addressed by forest partnerships speak to the importance of 'just transition'. Of 240 respondents, 78% were working on livelihoods and poverty reduction, 71% on participation, 67% on employment, 55% on indigenous peoples and 50% on land rights.

Knowledge and expertise are the forms of support most commonly shared between forestry partnerships. In terms of support received, 79% of respondents identified the transfer of knowledge and expertise, and 75% identified shared experiences. More physical forms of support – finance, technology, and provision of other services – all scored lower, around 45%. In terms of support given to partners by the responding organisation, this pattern is repeated, with experience, knowledge and expertise again the most prominent categories.

Innovation and new solutions are identified as the key 'value added' by forestry partnerships. Innovation and new solutions were felt to be the key impact of partnering by 66% of respondents followed by additional learning (65%) and more powerful advocacy (61%). The prominence of innovation – but the less prominent performance of other ways in which partnerships might be thought to add value – is an important theme for further study.

Findings on objectives and stakeholder engagement strategies of partnerships

Public awareness raising is the activity most commonly undertaken by forestry partnerships (71% of respondents) followed by education and training (65%) and research (51%)

Partnerships with different kinds of organising partners showed marked differences. For example, advocacy for public policy is most commonly undertaken by those led by UN entities (60%), other intergovernmental organisations (55%), and NGOs (54%). NGOs undertake the most awareness raising work (77%), and academic institutions most commonly undertake research and education work (78%). Of note, perhaps, partnerships led by private sector bodies undertake advocacy, governance, awareness raising, education and, to a lesser extent, monitoring functions.

Partnerships working on forests engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders. Among more marginalised groups, women and children are engaged with most. This reflects our findings when we looked at partnerships in general. Farmers and rural dwellers, and indigenous peoples were also consulted by a relatively large number of partnerships: these groups often live in or near rural areas and so we might expect an special intersection with forestry issues. Business and industry are the least consulted of institutional sectors, though 50% of forestry partnerships still do consult with business and industry.

Forest partnerships are consulting with farmers and harvesters in particular (65% of forest partnerships) in developing their activities. Along with the reasonable degree of commitment to consulting with forest dwellers (47% of respondents), small or locally owned logging companies and recreational forest users, this suggests that the forestry partnerships are engaging with local people. Engagement with heavily commercial interests, such as logging industry associations and multinational logging companies, is considerably lower.

Remarkably, 11% of forest partnerships reported that they did not consult with forest users at all in determining their objectives. In order to explore this further, we calculated the total number of types of forest users the partnerships consulted with. Almost 40% of forest partnerships consulted with two or fewer types of forest users. It appears that there is considerable scope for improvement in the overall breadth of consultation.

Forestry Partnerships are most commonly funded by NGOs, and most commonly funded from within rather than from external sources. Though a range of donor organisations are identified, NGOs are the most prominent, identified by 53% of respondents. The most common sources are contributions from within the partnership, with 52% of respondents identifying internal financial contributions, and 49% identifying 'in-kind' or other non-financial components. Many forestry partnerships also reported that they generated financial resources themselves (39%).

Challenges and success factors

As with partnerships generally, finance is the most common 'severe' external challenge for forest partnerships (67% of respondents). The next most pressing is ensuring the participation of vulnerable and marginalised populations, with 78% see ensuring the participation of such groups as a small or severe challenge.

Forestry partnerships face serious – and potentially more serious – challenges within. At least 75% of forestry partnerships said that all the internal issues presented as options in the survey were small or significant challenges. Insufficient commitment was identified as the most serious internal challenge, with 86% viewing that as a small or significant challenge. The perceptions here are marginally worse for forestry partnerships than for all responding partnerships: in every category, 2-5% fewer respondents see 'no challenge'.

Finance, but also collaboration, commitment, and transparency are considered critical to partnerships' successes in our analysis of open answers responding to our question on key success factors.

Learning

Knowledge and experiences are very commonly shared in forest partnerships. 85% of organisations convening forestry partnerships passed on that knowledge and experience to others. The first indicates the presence of a 'web' of learning through which organisations are interconnected, reinforcing the earlier findings that knowledge was a key resource transferred between partnerships.

This exchange leads to impacts - 69% said it made a difference to the activities they undertook in pursuit of their objectives. However, evidence for more significant and structural impacts of learning is much more limited. The core components of the partnership are changed to a much lower extent – its public policy advocacy (46%), its beliefs (46%) and objectives (40%). A smaller proportion still (37%) had changed the structure of their organisation in response to the transfer of knowledge and expertise

The results for experiences – allowing us to look at experiential learning – are only slightly different, but these differences might still be important. Respondents indicated that experiences were passed on less to other organisations – 72% (versus 85%); and less likely to change an organisation's activities – 58% versus 69%. In fact, experiences were felt to be marginally less influential across almost all areas. However, experiences made a slightly greater difference to changes in beliefs – 48% versus 46%.

Conclusion

Overall, we find mixed evidence of partnerships engaging with forestry in a Type-4 frame. A range of partnerships are undertaking the kinds of work which might constitute more stringent, 'Type-4' approaches to the role of forestry.

- 91% of forestry partnerships consider themselves to be working on SDG 13, with 67% of forestry partnerships addressing climate mitigation.
- Biodiversity (71% of respondents) and conservation (61%) are other important themes for forest partnerships
- Amongst partnerships practising forest management, new forest creation/ net forest increase (85%), subsistence forest maintenance (76%) and managing biodiversity (72%) are widely undertaken, with commercial management (40%) being far less prominent.
- 55% of forest partnerships are advocating for public policies and 71% of respondents indicated they were engaged in education and training work with stakeholders

- 65% of forest partnerships are engaging with farmers and harvesters, and 47% with forest dwellers.

However, what we cannot tell from our survey data is whether the approaches taken in these instances are stringent enough to constitute a genuine 'Type-4' approach: this is an area for further qualitative research.

Key findings on national-level policies

There is evidence of best-practices with regards to encouraging, facilitating, and managing just transitions in the forestry sector through national-level policies and an increasing awareness of this necessity to ensure local support and avoid negative economic as well as political consequences through rising unemployment, poverty and political (non-)violent protests.

Policies/initiatives often use hybrid approaches that combine different problem types within a climate policy integration approach that seeks to balance economic interests with environmental protection, thus combining Type-4 aspects with Type-2 (economic priorities) or Type-3 (local community involvement) policies. These can include, for example, strengthening implementation of deforestation reduction efforts (as opposed to eliminating deforestation), sustainable utilisation of non-wood products by local communities and the identification, development and implementation of best practices and local wisdom in utilisation of natural forest resources. These actions focus on just transitions, in finding alternatives to forestry usage by communities and developing local practices, thus resembling Type-3 (win-lose/compromise). Frequently policy objectives fall into the Type-4 category especially with regards to command-and-control style approaches, however the enforcement aspect can be weakened through lack of institutional capacities and accountability structures as well as corruption and clientele politics favouring specific interest groups.

There is an increasing recognition by countries that projects, initiatives and, in particular, policy targets need to be revised and become more ambitious over time. This is especially the case with NDCs (e.g. Liberia updated its NDC to include mitigation targets for forests in addition to adaptation targets). This includes targets to reduce or stop deforestation within a certain time frame such as within the next 8 years.

There is an unspecific framing of the policy objectives especially in the case of NDCs/ legislation on the national level with regards to their details. References are made to Type-4 aspects that prioritise maintaining forests through the establishment of, e.g., protected areas (Guinea-Bissau) or moratoriums on deforestation (Indonesia), but do not specify which share of the countries' forests will be protected or how long the moratorium is to be in place. A notable exception is Liberia, which states in its NDC that the national deforestation rate is to be reduced by 50% by 2030 through establishing 5 protected areas and improving the transparent enforcement of forest laws.[16]

There is also a lack of specifics on policy implementation, i.e., how ambitious Type-4 policies could/should/will be implemented following the setting of ambitious targets. This raises questions about the stability of the policy measure beyond the current government's term, a change in economic priorities or whether there will be sufficient political support for the replacement of short-term policy measures, e.g., once a moratorium automatically expires after 5 years such as in the case of

16 UNFCCC (2022). Liberia NDC. Retrieved from https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Liberia%20First/Liberia%27s%20Updated%20NDC_RL_FINAL%20(002).pdf

Guinea-Bissau.

Developing/global south countries cannot achieve just transitions while stopping deforestation without international support. Meeting policy objectives and project aims requires long-term financial support through sustainable partnerships and funding mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services from, e.g., emission trading, carbon taxes and carbon offsetting schemes. By maintaining and increasing forest cover while foregoing short-term economic benefits, these countries/ partnerships provide a global public good that also benefits global north/OECD countries.

Key findings on local-level projects and partnerships

There is widespread variation in the scale, commitment and scope of partnerships for forestry and achieving the SDGs more broadly.

Clear project and partnership objectives are needed to provide overall guidance and cohesion within the partnership. These can relate, for example, to increased biodiversity conservation by sustainable forest use, increased community independence, replicability of actions and validation of traditional knowledge (such as in the case of Bem Diverso/Brazil, see below).

Partnerships frequently have an economic dimension with the objective of providing sustainable sources of income to local communities while protecting the existing forest and/or reforesting. To be successful, they require strong support of the local community that is to benefit, its involvement into the planning, decision-making and implementation of the project to foster local ownership, the support of relevant local government and a conducive sub-national/national policy framework. Such frameworks are essential so that all actors involved have clarity about their rights, responsibilities and roles. Partnerships need to be set up with the aim of becoming self-sustaining over time and the necessary governance structures need to be established from the beginning.

To redirect activities towards sustainable use of forest products and agroforestry systems, communities need technology, training (e.g., of the community on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management), market access, financing and credit to start/facilitate the livelihood-providing activities for local farmers/ indigenous communities, as well as support through local, sub-national and national level government and means of influencing decision-making across these levels for conducive policy framework conditions.

Recommendations

In summary, our central policy recommendations based on the research findings are the following for national-level policies and local-level/non-state actor led projects and SDG partnerships.

National level policies

Countries need to develop and set up specific and detailed policies on the national level that prioritise maintaining existing forest cover and increasing reforestation over short-term economic interests. This sends important signals to commercial forest users and local communities that existing practices need to be revised and adapted in time to avoid negative impacts on livelihoods.

This can be achieved through

1) **Setting clear and measurable objectives** such as stopping deforestation or reducing deforestation by a certain % within a relatively short time frame of less than ten years and clear interim targets (e.g., reduce deforestation by 50% by 2025, stop deforestation by 2030);

2) **Review existing forestry and climate legislation** to update/strengthen policies and remove legal obstacles towards stronger protection of forests;

3) **Offering local communities and other relevant stakeholders** who benefitted from deforestation low-cost, easy to adopt/use **alternatives to deforestation** including training and provision (e.g., electric cook stoves and PV panels to replace cooking with charcoal/firewood, sustainable tourism, payment for ecosystem services/protection of the forest). This is crucial to secure local support and buy-in for just transitions that provide additional benefits to the current practices which contributed to deforestation, allowing local communities to replace existing income with sustainable, more profitable income streams and co-benefits for health;

4) With the consultation of local communities and other stakeholders, **develop detailed and specific policies that are suitable within the national and local contexts** to reduce/stop deforestation, such as long-term moratoriums, protected areas/national forests and reducing the annual permitted volume of timber extraction. The focus should be on policy measures that are hard to reverse and increase the local support/number of beneficiaries, thus creating vested interests to maintain and strengthen Type-4 policies;

5) **Set up effective monitoring, reporting and verification mechanisms** as well as enforcement options that reward compliance and deter non-compliance/ undermining of the policies through, e.g., corruption. This requires the strengthening of suitable institutions as well as re-thinking/revising institutional design and incentive structures;

6) **Integrate regular revisions of the policies with stakeholder consultations/ involvement** to allow for reflection of past successes/ challenges, lesson drawing and mutual learning across local communities/sub-national jurisdictions and adapt the policies accordingly based on best-practice;

7) **Establish regular best-practice exchange and mutual learning opportunities** with international counterparts through regular transnational partnerships, experience exchanges, and sharing of lessons learned as well as establish an international support structure including dedicated financial and administrative resources;

8) In the case of global north/OECD countries, **strengthen international institutions and provide long-term sustainable financial support to help maintain forests in the global south** (e.g., through setting up payment for ecosystem services schemes and dedicate a % of revenues from emissions trading or carbon taxes to forest protection in the global south).

Partnerships and projects

1. Prioritise forest preservation and ecosystem sustainability

    a. **Embed** forest preservation in the logic of the project;

    b. **Use science and research** to inform planning and monitoring;

    c. Strengthen and extend **local ownership** needed for sustainability;

    d. **Invest in open communication** – challenges can be overcome by talking to stakeholders to learn and fully understand all perspectives. Trust is crucial and can be developed through this approach, e.g., through regular visits to the local communities to maintain awareness of what was happening and assist the local communities to make changes as needed with communicators able to speak to all age groups, including young people and children;

    e. **Limit real estate/infrastructure development** and prioritise geotourism conservation/sustainable tourism/other sustainable uses;

    f. **Develop comprehensive strategy** for forest protection: Bringing back the forest needs to go beyond tree planting activities. It involves strategic planning for forest restoration, long-term tree nurturing, support infrastructure, and mitigation of threats to forest growth (i.e. illegal logging, quarrying, treasure-hunting, grazing animals, slash-and-burn).

2. Organisation and stakeholder engagement

    a. **Use a national framework with local flexibility**: local autonomy and adaptation within a project that has national coherence increases its chances of replicability in other forests as it is an adaptable framework, rather than one rigidly focused on just one geographic/cultural context;

    b. **Support** local communities to understand what they are committing to;

    c. **Trust** is essential for the project to take hold;

    d. **Incorporate iterative learning** and responsiveness to change as the project progresses, develop an iterative model of planning and decision-making;

    e. **Develop core values** and desired outcomes that will guide all aspects of the project;

f. **Engage youth** to prepare the next generation to prioritise environmental conservation;

g. **Deliberately seek replicability.** If project success was limited, more work on the problem is necessary to find something simpler that could be used elsewhere (e.g. across a country, cross-regional, in areas with similar environmental, social or economic characteristics);

h. **Maintain coordinator independence** in relation to the different stakeholders;

i. **Develop strong personal relationships** within the collaboration;

j. **Policy entrepreneurs/strong leadership** within the initiative through dedicated and driven individuals is key to facilitate gaining internal and external support.

3. Just Transitions

a. **Recognise indigenous people's knowledge** and methods;

b. **Build on awareness of local culture** and history;

c. **Seek activities that support both local economic development and reforestation.** For example, workshops can focus on the question of *What can support local livelihood and support the forest?* This consistent framing of reforestation/protection of trees as an economic benefit to the community can enable the prioritisation of forests to gain acceptance in areas with high poverty rates;

d. **Secure livelihood support for the early years of the project.** Given that it will be several years before, for example, trees bear fruit and nuts that can generate revenue, projects need to consider securing financial resources that allow paying people who are tending the trees for the first few years. This provides a source of needed income as the trees come to maturity;

e. **Consider people as part of the ecosystem:** It requires a strategic/philosophical approach that says that we can work toward the positive benefits for climate change through these conservation and reforestation efforts, but it cannot be done sustainably by 'putting the forest under a dome' and ignoring the people who live in and near the forest.

4. Learning

a. **Reflect on previous experiences** and **draw lessons** for current/future project/partnership **design, governance and activities**;

b. **Honour both traditional and western scientific knowledge.** Making space for hearing and integrating indigenous peoples' knowledge and western science advances both forms of knowledge and creates a strong base for action. Knowledge exchange is the key to mutual respect for both ways of knowing;

c. **Incorporate what the community wants to learn in workshops.** While environmental preservation may be core to the project, it could also integrate training and workshops topics identified by the communities. In addition to economic livelihood and environmentally-focused training (reforestation, sustainable consumption etc.), workshops/trai-nings could include advocacy, gender issues and HIV Aids awareness;

d. **Encourage peer-peer learning at the community level** through, e.g., learning centres, in which local people teach each other. This is key to multiplying the understanding and mainstreaming the approach;

e. **Focus on developing the self-confidence of the local people** as, for example, in the case of Brazil, traditional people were hesitant and thought they might not be successful. As the project viewed them as people who already live more in a 'sustainable world' than the more developed communities, this was an important learning for them – that they were ahead of the rest of the world in their deep understanding of natural cycles and sustainability.

5. External and governance framework conditions

a. **National government support**. A crucial success factor for partnerships/ initiatives is the legislative and executive support from the national government in the form of, e.g., granting the status of a national forest/ protected area;

b. If they provide support, **initiatives need to be aware of such policy frameworks to be able to leverage them** as much as possible;

c. **Long-term legislative stability**: framework conditions through policies and legislation need to be in place for decades, not only years. There needs to be a mechanism in place that makes the protected status very hard to reverse by future governments with e.g. commercial exploitation or property/ infrastructure development agendas;

d. **Strong social media presence**: This can help to avert external threats to the project from commercial exploitation and land development. Awareness-raising and public pressure through e.g. widespread national media coverage can allow national/sub-national level decision-making bodies to take on the issue and initiate an investigation that can be used to aid legislation to further protect the area;

e. **Seek partnerships beyond local level across the country/ internationally**.

Conclusion

This research project has examined how just transitions can be achieved in the forestry sector while prioritising the protection of forests as crucial carbon sinks in the fight against climate change (mitigation) as well as adapting to its unavoidable consequences. By applying the Type 1/2/3/4 problem framing, we were able to differentiate between Type-1/2 policies, projects and partnerships for sustainable development that have a primary focus on economic development with limited

co-benefits for climate policy integration and unsustainable forestry management practices on the local level (i.e., resulting in depletion of the forests and thus the livelihoods of local communities), and those Type-4 policies/projects that take a sustainable long-term approach of prioritising the maintenance and reforestation of carbon sinks while at the same time providing long-term livelihoods to local communities including, where present, indigenous communities. The key findings and lessons for policymakers as well as leaders of projects/initiatives at the local level point towards the central importance of integrating climate objectives with economic and biodiversity/conservation objectives, mutual learning and the provision of finance as well as stable policy frameworks to ensure that projects become self-sustaining.

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