

Workshop on Practical Approaches to Ensuring the Full and Effective Participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+: Assessing Experiences and Lessons to Date

*Weilburg Castle, Weilburg, Germany
10 - 12 September 2013*

Key Messages from the Weilburg Workshop

Experts* call for deeper engagement of governments, multilateral organizations and bilateral donors with Indigenous Peoples, in which REDD+ is based on a broader recognition of, and respect for, indigenous rights

This is the central message from a recent expert workshop held at Weilburg Castle, Germany, which discussed the question of: “How can we encourage and enable full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+ decision-making?” Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (or “REDD+”) is an international mechanism to encourage developing nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase removals from the forest sector.

The Workshop was hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD Programme (UN-REDD). Over 80 people attended the Workshop from Indigenous Peoples’ communities and civil society, academia, international and non-governmental organizations, REDD+ governments and development partners.

The overarching call by indigenous** and non-indigenous experts* participating in the Workshop for a deeper and more sustained engagement with governments, multilateral organizations and bilateral donors, was accompanied by the following key messages:

- 1. Many workshop participants emphasize the need for a common understanding that the legal and political framework for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+ decision-making is the recognition of, and respect for, the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, as embodied in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including the recognition and implementation of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to lands, territories and resources, as well as the right to free, prior and informed consent. A common understanding of the differences and linkages of participation, consultation and FPIC among all stakeholders is needed.**
- 2. National governments have the primary responsibility to recognize and implement international obligations to provide for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples through the establishment of legal frameworks, mechanisms and bodies, which should be designed collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples.** The limited resources,

knowledge and capacity of national governments in participatory processes remain an obstacle to the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+. Past failures to recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights should be addressed.

3. **Multilateral organizations and bilateral donors are encouraged to use their leverage more effectively with national governments** to ensure the protection of collective rights as embodied in international and national agreements, including UNDRIP, within national REDD+ programmes.
4. **A greater commitment is required from national governments, multilateral organizations and bilateral REDD+ donors to provide long-term institutional support to Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions**, and to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are fairly represented on national REDD+ decision-making bodies. Indigenous Peoples have a corresponding responsibility to self-organize and identify their own representative institutions and to be accountable to their own communities.
5. **FCPF and UN-REDD Programme are requested to revise, harmonize and simplify existing stakeholder engagement guidelines, in a participatory way, in accordance with UNDRIP.** The harmonized guidelines should enable Indigenous Peoples to exert real influence in decision-making, and must be made operational.
6. There is both an "information overload" and an "information deficit," which can create barriers to the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+ decision-making. **Information should be provided, on a continuous basis, on both the benefits and risks of REDD+, as well as information on Indigenous Peoples' rights to enable consultation and participation to take place in a more equitable and open manner.**
7. **There should be a wider dissemination of well-documented lessons learned, experiences and good practice for all stakeholders and at all levels on practical approaches for ensuring full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in REDD+,** taking into account relevant experience in other contexts. This should include documentation of the role of Indigenous Peoples in conserving their forests through local wisdom, traditional knowledge and practices.
8. **Full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples requires time and money to happen successfully.** To date, the investment of resources in REDD+ readiness processes has been inequitable, with a tendency towards supporting the Measurement, Reporting and Verification of carbon. Governments, multilateral organizations and bilateral donors should prioritize budget support for Indigenous Peoples' capacity development, consultation and participation. This support also should help ensure that REDD+ decision-making processes are gender inclusive.

The Weilburg Workshop also discussed some of the more contentious issues surrounding participation in REDD+ decision-making, such as whether non-indigenous forest-dependent communities should have the same rights to participation as Indigenous Peoples. Many of the experts, including Indigenous Peoples participants, were of the view that non-indigenous forest-dependent communities should be identified at the national level in order to determine which rights should be accorded to them.

The Workshop recognised that REDD+ can be a catalyst for improved dialogue and relationships between Indigenous Peoples and national governments. REDD+ provides a unique window of opportunity to support the efforts of national governments to recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to full and effective participation in decisions that affect them and for all parties to embark upon a much deeper and sustained engagement.

* For clarification, the term “experts” refers to the [invited participants](#) at the Workshop other than the organizers.

**For clarification, the Indigenous Peoples participants who were present at the Weilburg Workshop do not purport to speak on behalf of all Indigenous Peoples.

For a summary of the discussions, input papers and pictures of the Weilburg Workshop, please click [here](#).

For further information, please contact: [BMZ/FCPF/UN-REDD](#)