

REDD+ in Zambia

What is REDD+?

Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), is a method designed to reduce global emissions caused by deforestation, and creating a financial value for the protection of carbon stored in forests. REDD+ is designed to offer incentives (performance-based payments) for developing countries and local communities to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low carbon paths to sustainable development. By providing performance-based payments for forest protection and sustainable natural resource management, REDD+ is often referred to as a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanism. The “+” in REDD+ designates REDD+ projects that go beyond simply reducing emissions (by protecting forests from deforestation and forest degradation), by additionally promoting conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks through community engagement.

The REDD+ project model is designed to provide performance-based payments as benefits / rewards / incentives for successful management and protection of threatened forests and natural resources. REDD+ projects are designed to protect threatened areas of intact forest that community, government and other key stakeholders are willing to protect. REDD+ projects must be verified against international (and national) standards, to ensure they are successful in protecting areas of threatened forest, and bringing positive impacts to local stakeholder communities. Since REDD+ projects are performance-based, it is necessary that projects are verified on a regular basis, to confirm that forest protection is taking place. Currently, BCP seeks verification of the REDD+ projects that we implement against the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) Standard.

REDD+ In Zambia:

REDD+ has been identified as a potential mechanism to sustainably

and meaningfully address (reduce) Zambia’s high rate of deforestation, while simultaneously promoting local conservation, forest resources management, sustainable community development and poverty reduction.

Zambia is one of 16 countries in the world engaged in the UN-REDD Program, which aims to prepare countries for future REDD+ implementation. There is currently only one verified REDD+ activity in Zambia: the Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project (LZRP), which was launched by BCP in 2012, and was verified against the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) in 2014. Under the USAID-funded CFP, BCP is working closely with key government, community and other implementing partners to expand REDD+ activities in Zambia. Specifically, the CFP aims to protect a minimum of 700,000 hectares of threatened, intact forests through REDD+, thereby involving and benefitting upwards of 10,000 households through the development of enterprises that create incentives for improved forest management, forest protection, and reduced emissions. The CFP is not implemented by UN-REDD, and the REDD+ projects launched under the CFP are not UN-funded projects. However, REDD+ activities implemented under the CFP will be launched in compliance with the National REDD+ Strategy for Zambia.

What is REDD+ NOT?

- REDD+ projects are NOT land-grabs: BCP does not need title or ownership to land to implement REDD+.
- REDD+ projects do not cause forced evictions: No one should be forcibly relocated from their land in order to implement a REDD+ project.
- REDD+ projects are not charity projects: if protected areas are not protected, then the payments / benefits will be reduced, and may stop, if the project is not successful.



What are the “Benefits” of REDD+ to communities?

REDD+ projects provide performance-based benefits that are linked to the protection of threatened areas of forest, and sustainable natural resources management. BCP's REDD+ projects are designed to provide both SHORT and LONG term benefits to project stakeholders, as described below.

Short-Term Benefits:

- Investment in key priority needs identified by local communities (including: key social services and/or infrastructure)
- Involvement of implementing partners that can support livelihoods improvement projects, that are designed to address poverty and lack of sustainable alternatives (economic activities, energy sources) as major drivers of deforestation. Supported livelihoods interventions are designed to provide sustainable alternatives to deforestation-dependent livelihoods, reduce poverty, improve local food security, and provide new / sustainable alternative sources of income. Projects and partners are to be selected by local community stakeholders. Example projects include:
 - o Income-generating activities / Small-business development
 - o Improved / Conservation Farming Training Programs
 - o Small Livestock Projects
 - o Savings and Loans programs
 - o Skills Training Programs
- Development of sustainable business opportunities that create markets for products derived through protection and/or sustainable management of natural resources; for example, businesses based on sustainable Non-Timber Forest Products, such as honey.
- Development of markets for sustainably produced energy solutions, such as sustainable “Eco-Charcoal” production.
- Training and Empowerment to local Institutions to effectively manage and protect natural resources.
- Employment opportunities.

Long-Term Benefits:

- Sustainable sources of community income based on markets that create incentives for conservation and/or sustainable natural resources management (for example: REDD+ projects that provide performance-based payments for forest protection, or other enterprises based on sustainable extraction of natural resources, such as Non-Timber Forest Product harvesting or sustainable energy products like Eco-Charcoal).
- Long-term conservation and management of local natural resources, to benefit future generations.
- Development of other sustainable sources of income based on natural resource management, including tourism opportunities and Non-Timber Forest Product based businesses.
- Reductions of emissions that contribute to global climate change.
- **Recognition and empowerment of local community stakeholders as owners and beneficiaries of their own natural resources.**



Who Is Involved In REDD+ Implementation?

REDD+ projects are not implemented by BCP on behalf of local communities. Instead, under the USAID-funded Community Forests Program (CFP), BCP is working closely with key stakeholders and implementing partners including local communities, Forestry Department (FD), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), and other GRZ representatives—in order to collaboratively develop, implement and manage REDD+ projects taking place on a variety of types of land (including: customary land, GMAs and Forest Reserves).

Who are Community Stakeholders?

Community stakeholders are those communities who are affected by the implementation of a REDD+ project that protects areas of forest that they have access to. Community stakeholders must consent to REDD+ implementation, in line with the principles of obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Community stakeholders will play an important role in decision-making about REDD+ projects supported under the CFP, including: consent to REDD+ project implementation, land-use planning, identification of key priority needs and services, promoting local awareness and sensitization about REDD+ and involvement in monitoring and protection activities. For each new REDD+ project, BCP works closely with local Government, Traditional Leaders (ex: Chiefs, Indunas and Headmen) and community institutions (ex: CRBs, VAGs, Cooperatives) to identify “community stakeholders” through a transparent, documented process.

Deforestation in Zambia:

Although Zambia is currently one of the highest forested countries in Africa, it also has one of the highest deforestation amounts per year in Africa, estimated at 250,000 – 300,000 hectares of forest lost per year according to a 2008 assessment conducted by the Zambian government. Zambia also has one of the highest emissions-per-capita from deforestation rates in the world. The major drivers of this high rate of deforestation include: smallholder agricultural expansion, infrastructure development and unsustainable charcoal production.

If the current pattern of deforestation continues in Zambia, then it is predicted that Zambia's forests and natural resources will be significantly reduced and threatened within the next few decades. Additionally, local communities in Zambia are highly dependent on deforestation-dependent livelihoods (ex: subsistence “slash and burn” agriculture) and energy sources (ex: charcoal). Zambia also has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. As such, if this pattern of significant depletion of natural resources continues, along with social patterns of high local dependency on natural resources for livelihoods and substantial population growth, then Zambia is not only predicted to face an environmental crisis in the near future, but also, this impending environmental crisis is also anticipated to have serious negative impacts on the human population in Zambia.