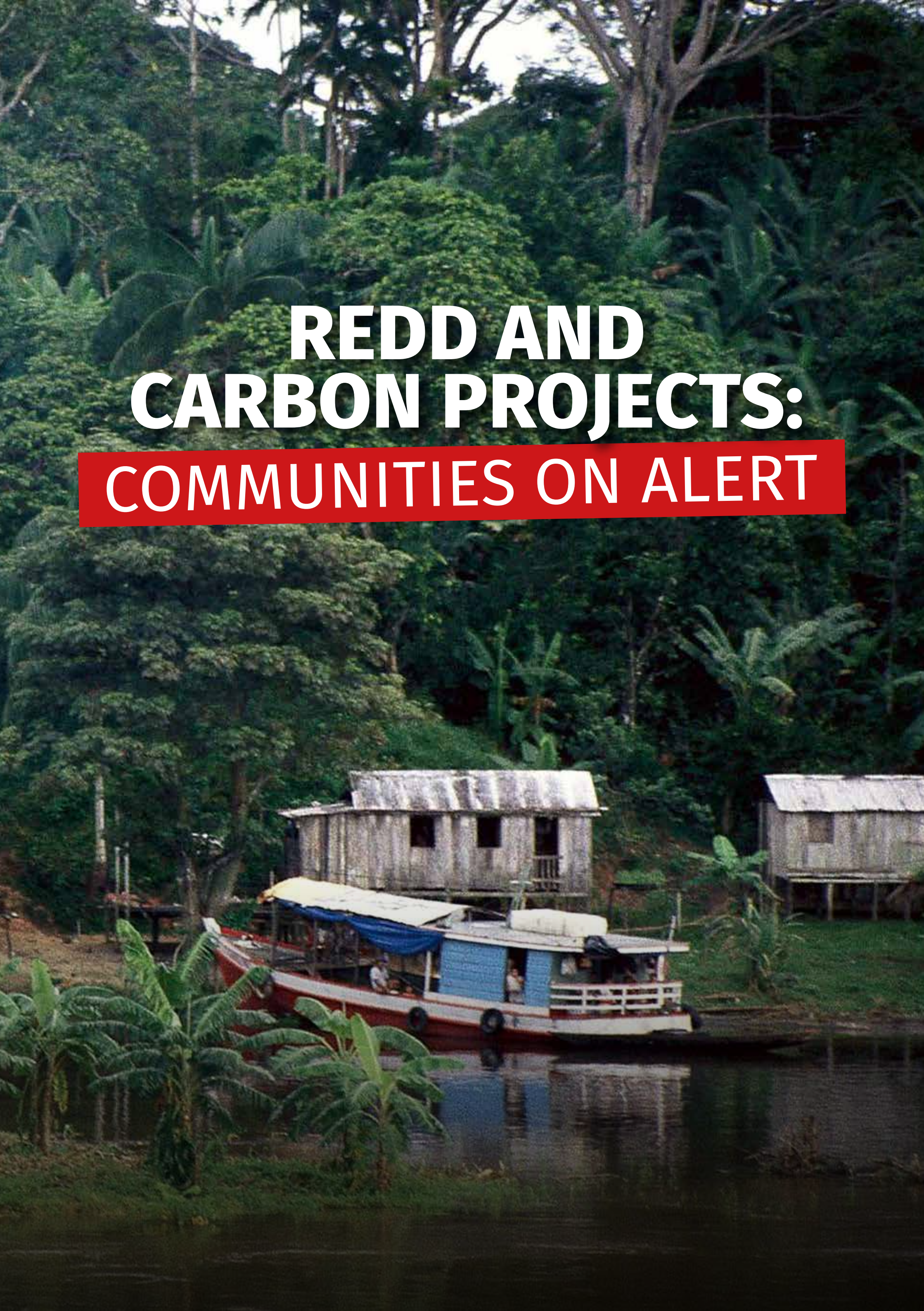
REDD AND CARBON PROJECTS: COMMUNITIES ON ALERT



REDD AND CARBON PROJECTS:

COMMUNITIES ON ALERT

REDD and Carbon Projects: Communities on Alert

This publication is also available in Spanish, French, Portuguese and Indonesian

Cover photo: “Amazonia” por Omer Bozkurt, CC BY 2.0 https://tinyurl.com/mtdn4595

World Rainforest Movement (WRM)
June, 2026

This work was made possible by the contributions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC); the Swiss organization HEKS/EPER; the Swift Foundation, from the United States; and Grassroots International. The views expressed here are the result of information obtained from various sources accessed by the WRM and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the contributors or its funders.

World Rainforest Movement
Av Bolivia 1962 BIS
CP 11500 – Montevideo, Uruguay
Ph.: +598 2605 6943
Email: wrm@wrm.org.uy
www.wrm.org.uy
@worldrainforestmovement
WorldRainforestMovement

Table of contents:

About this booklet

Carbon projects set up to stop deforestation or plant trees have been presented as a quick and cheap way to help solve the climate crisis. In reality, these projects neither help solve the climate crisis nor do they halt deforestation. Even worse, carbon projects create conflict and threaten the way of life of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities. **Many carbon projects are REDD projects**. REDD stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and the Degradation of forests.

In 2012, WRM published the booklet *10 Things Communities should know about REDD*, to alert community activists and grassroots organizations about this growing threat. Since then, communities, organizations, networks, researchers and journalists have exposed the contradictions, violence and colonial ideology of REDD and carbon markets. Despite this, more carbon projects are being set up, and carbon markets are expanding.

In this context, WRM is launching a new edition of the booklet. This new edition includes updated alerts based on communities' experiences with carbon projects and their resistance to them.

The **first part** provides information on claims and words that

Demonstration against the false solutions of the Green Capitalism in Xapuri (Acre), Brazil, 2018.

are often used in connection with REDD and carbon markets.

The Alerts in the **second part** highlight dangers associated with carbon projects and REDD programmes. These Alerts show why REDD and other carbon projects in forests are particularly threatening to communities' autonomy and regularly cause conflicts between companies and communities, and also within the communities.

The **final part** shares what communities who have successfully pushed back against carbon projects have done. It also provides a list of materials, videos and statements for people who would like to learn more about who benefits the most from carbon projects, and how communities are opposing them.

The WRM team
June 2026

PART 1

What are REDD and carbon projects?

Flare stack at Total oil refinery in Immingham, UK
PHOTO: L. GIBBON / GREENPEACE

1.1- THE 'OIL ECONOMY'

Carbon projects, and REDD projects in particular, have been presented as a solution to the climate crisis. But as the experiences presented in this booklet show, they are not a solution. On the contrary, carbon projects cause conflicts and distract from dealing with the root cause of climate change: the capitalist system of production and its dependence on burning **fossil fuels**: **coal, gas** and above all, **oil**.

The companies that profit from the extraction and export of so called raw materials, and from the unjust global trade of the capitalist system, burn large amounts of oil, gas and coal.

These fossil fuels are made up mainly of **carbon**, and burning them pollutes the air by releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO_2).

The burning of fossil fuels and the accumulation of CO_2 in the air are changing the climate. Signs that the **climate crisis** is growing include more frequent and intense droughts, floods, storms, heat waves and extreme temperatures.

To avoid even more severe climate chaos, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels must end. However, that is not what is happening.

The big beneficiaries of capitalism – corporations, industrialised countries and elites – refuse to drastically cut their fossil fuel consumption. To do so would reduce the power and profits they derive from this destructive system, especially in the Global North. There, factories, cars, trucks, big container ships, and planes consume enormous quantities of oil and gas. Ending fossil fuel burning would put this business model at risk.

That is why those who profit the most from the 'oil economy'

Drought in Brazil. Puraquequara Lake in Manaus, October 2023. PHOTO: ALBERTO CÉSAR ARAÚJO / AMAZÔNIA REAL.

Flash floods in Central Tapanuli, North Sumatra, Indonesia. December, 2025. PHOTO: YT HARIONO / AFP

have been looking for ways to delay the end of fossil fuel burning. Inventing carbon project schemes like REDD and calling them a “solution” to the climate crisis is one of the delay tactics.

1.2- REDD AND CARBON MARKETS GIVE COMPANIES PERMISSION TO POLLUTE

REDD is the English acronym for **R**educing **E**missions from **D**eforestation and the **D**egradation of forests.

REDD projects are based on the claim that climate damage from industry pollution in one place can be **"compensated"** for by preserving a forest or planting trees elsewhere – even if this place is on the other side of the world.

There are also carbon projects that claim building wind farms or providing cook stoves that use less firewood can "compensate" for the climate-damaging pollution caused by burning oil, coal or gas.

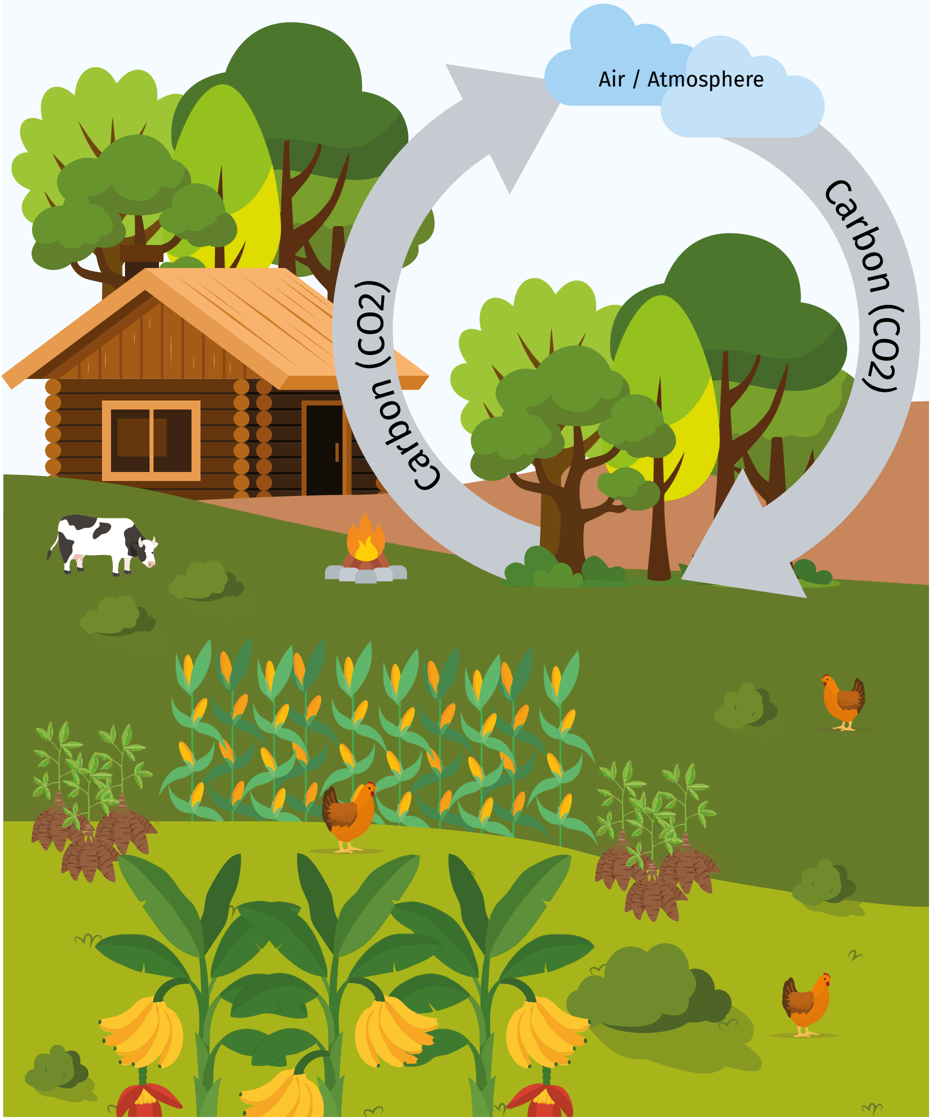
This idea of "compensating" for pollution is called **offsetting.**

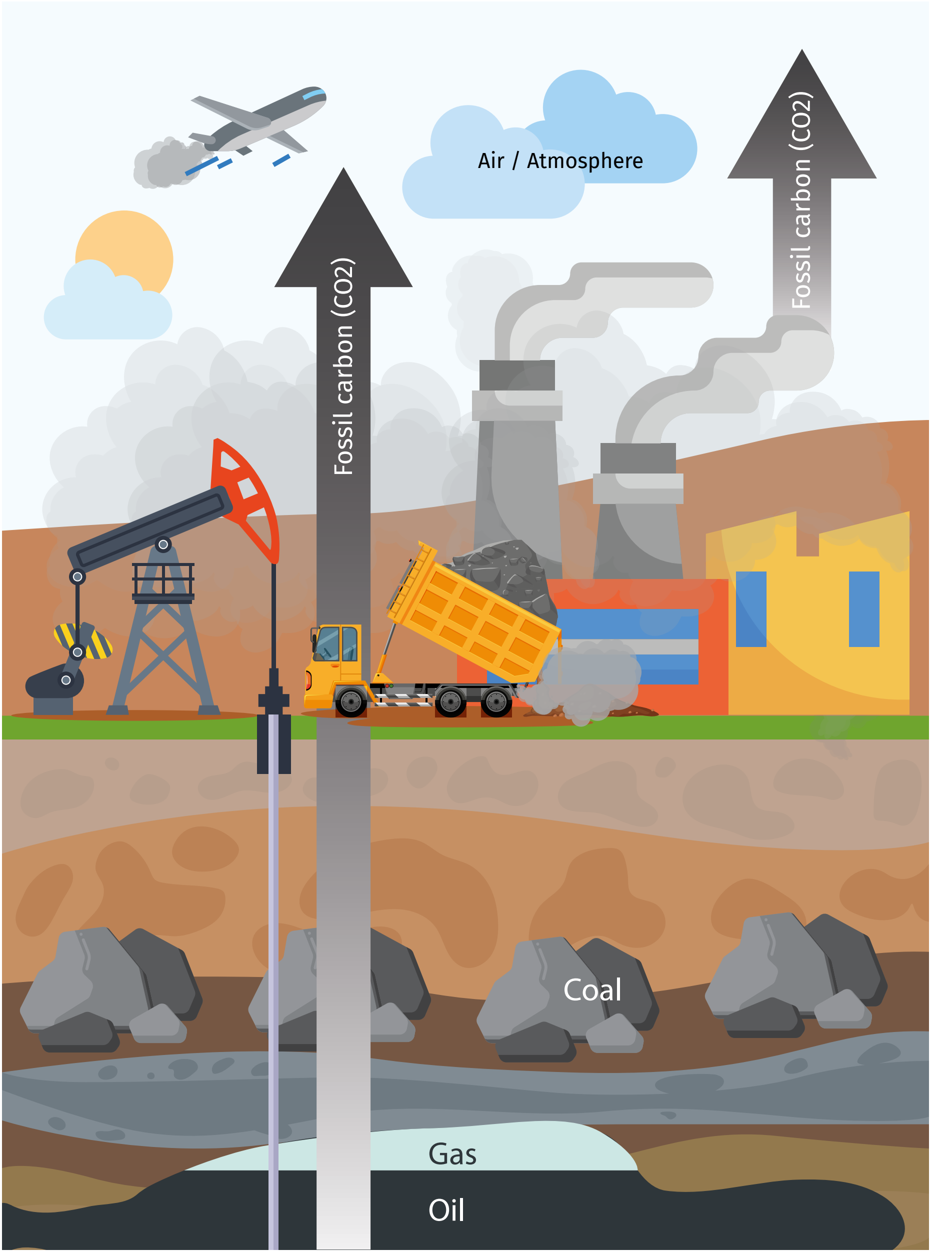
Because public pressure to stop burning fossil fuels has become too loud to ignore, those profiting from the 'oil economy' need something that they can claim will undo the damage caused by burning more fossil fuels. Something that takes CO_2 out of the air: plants, for example.

They claim that REDD and carbon projects can offset the climate damage from burning fossil fuels because the plants in the forest are made up of carbon – just like fossil fuels.(*) Plants 'breathe in' and 'absorb' CO_2.

* One way to describe fossil fuels is the remains of plants that lived millions of years ago. When they died, the plants became buried underground and did not release their carbon into the air. This carbon in the dead plants became locked underground for millions of years. That process created the fossil fuel deposits that oil and coal companies are mining today.

Difference between carbon balance above the ground and pollution from burning fossil fuels




Air / Atmosphere
Fossil carbon (CO2)
Fossil carbon (CO2)
Coal
Gas
Oil

The simplistic equation behind REDD and tree planting projects is this: as long as there are enough plants to 'absorb' the extra CO_2 (and store it as carbon inside them), polluting companies can continue to burn oil, gas or coal without damaging the climate.

But things are not that simple. The carbon cycle above ground and in the air has been thrown out of balance as a result of the extraction and burning of fossil fuels by polluting companies over the last 200 years. This burning of fossil fuels has released into the air large amounts of carbon that was previously locked underground. Plants in forests, peatlands, savannas, grasslands and mangroves **do not have the capacity to absorb these large amounts of fossil carbon.**

Those who profit from pollution know that burning fossil fuels releases far more fossil carbon than plants can absorb and store. Still, they claim that the climate damage from burning fossil fuels can be **offset** or **neutralised** if they prevent forests from being cut down, or if they plant new trees as part of a carbon project.

1.3- A WRONG AND DANGEROUS IDEA

The last two decades have shown that these projects do not do what their promoters claim: carbon projects do not help solve the climate crisis. Even worse, **governments and companies use**

carbon projects as an excuse to delay action to end fossil fuel use. The offset logic behind carbon projects is therefore not only wrong, it is also dangerous.

Another danger of offsetting is that **it turns attention away from the places where coal is mined and oil and gas are extracted and processed**. Carbon projects like REDD put the focus on forests and deforestation – and away from the suffering of communities living near oil and gas fields, refineries and petrochemical factories. Their suffering is made "invisible" by REDD and other carbon projects.

Many communities whose territories are directly affected by the extraction and processing of fossil fuels are fighting the

Part of the affected area by a Shell oil spill in Bodo, Rivers State, Nigeria. PHOTO: WRM, 2013.

destruction and pollution caused by mines, oil fields and factories that process oil, gas and coal. Companies can now say that they are offsetting their carbon emissions, but this does not stop the pollution, destruction and violence that those communities suffer.

With carbon offsetting, oil, gas and coal companies also control territories and cause conflicts in two places: first, in the location where they take fossil fuels out of the ground, and second, in the location where the carbon project is carried out.

1.4- DIFFERENT NAMES, SAME THREAT FOR COMMUNITIES

What used to be called ‘REDD’ might now be promoted as ‘nature-based solution’ (NBS), ‘carbon restoration’ (planting native trees or restoring drained peatlands or wetlands), ‘carbon removal’ (planting fast-growing trees such as eucalyptus or acacia for the purpose of removing CO_2 from the atmosphere and storing the carbon in the wood of the tree), ‘carbon farming’ (changing how crops are grown to increase the carbon that is stored in the soil or how animals are reared). The names may have changed, the logic and the risks for communities remain the same.

‘Jurisdictional REDD’ programmes (‘REDD of the government’, see ALERT 10) are also becoming more common. With these programmes, governments can profit from claims that deforestation has been reduced in a whole state, province or even the whole country. Yet it is already clear that jurisdictional REDD programmes do not change government policies that directly or indirectly cause deforestation.

Existing jurisdictional REDD plans do not include measures to stop large-scale deforestation caused by, for example, the expansion of soy and oil palm plantations or large infrastructure projects. Instead, governments create or expand policies and laws that restrict how Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities can use their forests and territories.

In this booklet, the term ‘**carbon projects**’ refers to any of these aforementioned activities; they may have different names, but they all follow the same logic.

Waorani indigenous people protest in Quito, Ecuador, against the presence of oil companies in the Amazon.
PHOTO: M. BARRIGA / AMAZON FRONTLINES, 2024.

1.5- WHO BENEFITS FROM CARBON PROJECTS?

A whole new carbon industry has been built along with REDD and carbon markets. This industry includes different kinds of companies, NGOs and consultants that all benefit financially from carbon markets and the sale of carbon credits. (To learn more about *carbon credits*, see point 1.6).

The main profiteers of the carbon compensation industry are:

1) POLLUTING COMPANIES

Oil and mining companies, airlines, and agribusiness companies like Nestlé, Danone or Marfrig are among the biggest buyers of carbon credits. Technology and surveillance companies like Microsoft and Google also buy carbon credits and provide equipment to monitor what happens in the territories where carbon projects are implemented.

2) CARBON PROJECT COMPANIES

There is always a company (or NGO) involved in every carbon project. Before it contacts a community, it has travelled around to find good locations to run its carbon projects. When it has found a place it likes, it makes contact with a community or land owner, designs the project and prepares the documents.

The company also manages the carbon project activities. Some of them also manage the auditing process of the project. Others, hire specialised companies to organise these audits. Without such audits (called ‘verification’ in the carbon business), the project cannot sell any carbon credits. Once the activities have been approved by the audit, the carbon project starts to sell carbon credits to polluting companies.

Most carbon companies are from the Global North or have connections to companies from the Global North. Some also involve elites from the Global South. Along with the auditors, these carbon companies earn big profits from carbon credit sales.

3) CARBON STANDARD AND AUDIT COMPANIES

Companies that buy carbon credits look for two things before they buy them. First, they are interested in the price of carbon credits from different projects. Second, they want to know whether they can trust the quality of the carbon credits they buy. This is why carbon projects are checked by external auditors (the 'validation' and 'verification' audits of carbon projects).

Without such audits, each project owner would use their own method to calculate the amount of carbon that has supposedly been saved. If each project used their own calculations, buyers would not trust them. The rules that carbon companies use are set by "carbon standards".

Examples of "carbon standards" include Verra's VCS (Voluntary Carbon Standard), the GoldStandard, Cercarbono, Plan Vivo or the ART-TREES standard for 'jurisdictional REDD' programmes. All of them have been involved in scandals or conflicts. In other words, their rules offer no guarantee that a project is conflict-free or that emissions have really been saved; they also cannot guarantee that a project is not operating on stolen lands.[1]

Project owners use these "carbon standards" to calculate how many carbon credits their project should receive. Then, they hire an auditor (called a verifier in the carbon market) to confirm that these calculations were done according to 'carbon standard' rules.

Those 'verifiers' play a very important role in the whole business because they decide how many carbon credits a project can sell. And who pays them for the audit? The company whose carbon project they are auditing.

4) BIG ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS

WWF TheNature Conservancy CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other big environmental NGOs – which have budgets as big as those of large companies or even small countries – have received millions of US dollars from governments to promote REDD. Most of these NGOs are also directly involved in carbon projects and sell carbon credits to polluting companies.[2] Others advise large polluting corporations on how and where to buy carbon credits. Conservation International (CI), for example, is helping US corporation Apple to find carbon credits from tree plantation projects in the Global South, including from large-scale eucalyptus plantation projects in Brazil and Paraguay.

Corporate environmental NGOs like TNC and CI also lobby the United Nations and governments in the Global South to promote carbon projects in forests. In several countries, they have even participated in the design and modification of policies and laws to facilitate these projects. They claim that deforestation can only be prevented if forests are 'worth their money'. They have also promoted this false argument among Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities.

5) DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE COMPANIES

Every carbon project needs to monitor what is happening on the land that is part of the carbon project. To help them with this monitoring, project owners often cooperate with companies that provide surveillance technologies or use equipment – such as drones, cameras, mobile phones and GPS-trackers – to better control what happens inside the carbon project area.

Google, Microsoft and companies that sell this tracking and monitoring equipment are big supporters of carbon projects in the forest and on land where peasant communities grow food. The technology companies profit in many ways: they sell their equipment; they collect data; and they get access to a lot of information about a community's territory – sometimes without the community even being aware that this information is being collected! Companies like Apple, Google or Microsoft also use huge amounts of electricity, because their data centres and so-called artificial intelligence programmes are getting bigger and faster all the time. They buy carbon credits to claim that they have compensated for their huge electricity consumption.

6) NORTHERN AND OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES

Governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Australia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and European Union countries such as France, Italy, Germany and Spain have profited enormously from the oil economy. Along with the World Bank and oil companies, they are the biggest funders and promoters of REDD projects and carbon markets.

1.6- HOW IS A CARBON CREDIT CREATED?

There are different kinds of carbon projects. What they all have in common is that they make money from selling carbon credits. **Each carbon credit represents one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO2).**

Carbon credits are created by the company behind the carbon project claiming that *without* the project, *more* carbon would be released into the air and climate change would be even worse.

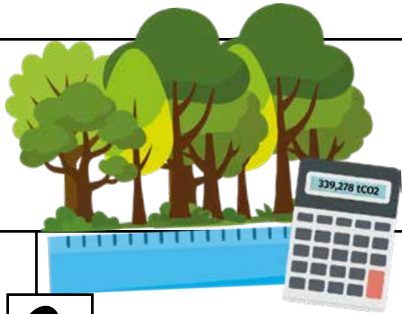
Following the rules of a carbon standard, the carbon company calculates how much more carbon would be released into the air without the carbon project. If the carbon project is a REDD project, the company will probably use the standards from Verra, Cercarbono, or Plan Vivo.

The project then sells the carbon credits to polluting companies that claim to have offset their own emissions with the carbon credits they bought.

HOW COMPANIES CREATE CARBON CREDITS AND PROFIT FROM THEM

1.

The carbon company or NGO defines the REDD project area and measures how much carbon is stored in the forest inside the REDD project.



2.

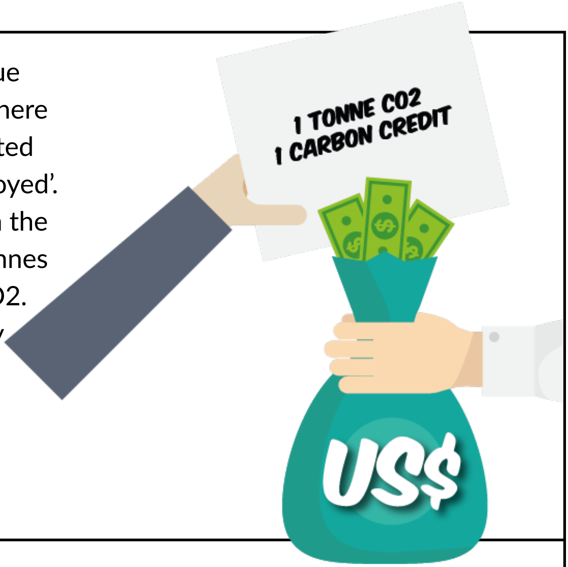
The company or organization prepares a project document where they write down their story of why the forest would be destroyed without their carbon project. The story usually blames communities for deforestation. Often, the forest is not really at risk of being destroyed. But if the company acknowledged that, there would be no carbon business to be done.

3.

The company or organization presents a project with a list of activities that will supposedly prevent the forest from being destroyed. In most cases, these activities include restrictions on how the community can use the forests. For example, the project may prohibit the community from cutting trees or using fire to prepare fields to grow food.

4.

The project owners argue that 'the carbon is still there because the project prevented the forest from being destroyed'. They measure the carbon in the forest again and convert tonnes of carbon into tonnes of CO_2. For each tonne of CO_2 they claim to have saved with their project, they can sell a carbon credit.



5.

Companies buying the carbon credits claim that their pollution does not harm the climate because the carbon they release into the air is being compensated with the carbon stored in the REDD project area.

PART 2

Alerts about carbon projects

This chapter presents 11 Alerts that summarise the most common risks and dangers that carbon projects pose to communities. The Alerts explain how and why carbon projects cause conflicts, threaten food sovereignty, undermine autonomy and put the traditional knowledge and culture of communities at risk.

WARNING SIGNS

There are usually some early warning signs that a carbon project is trying to be set up on community's lands. They include:

• Talk of 'carbon' or of carbon credits in the community, and new people who are not from the community coming to talk regularly with some individuals in the community.

• People from outside the community meet with community leaders who, all of a sudden, are going to more meetings without telling others much about these meetings. Sometimes, these meetings are taking place outside the village and, generally, women do not attend them.

• People talk about carbon, but no-one can explain well why the carbon project is taking place in your community or what the carbon project really is about.

• When meetings with the wider community are held, project promoters say that the project will bring ‘development’, jobs, and that people in the community will be paid for taking care of the forest as they have always done. But when people ask what carbon credits are, or who is paying for them, they get no straight answers and the carbon company may even start to isolate the ones who make questions, saying that they want to keep ‘development’ and jobs from the community.

• The carbon company may at first only talk about an ‘environmental project’, say that they want to help the community ‘take care of the environment’, or that they want to plant trees to ‘help save the climate’, or to restore land they call ‘degraded’. Some communities have said that they were left in the dark about the project being a carbon project, that carbon was not even mentioned in the first meetings.

ALERT 1: BENEFITS FOR POLLUTING COMPANIES AND CONSERVATIONIST NGOS, RESTRICTIONS FOR COMMUNITIES

Carbon **offsetting** was not invented by communities. Neither were REDD or the proposals now being promoted under names like 'nature-based solutions' (NbS), 'carbon removals', 'mangrove restoration for carbon' or 'jurisdictional REDD'. The names themselves are a give-away. REDD, NBS, jurisdictional REDD – this is not the language of communities.

The 21st UN Climate Conference of the Parties (COP21), in Paris, 2015. PHOTO: UNFCCC

These are ideas invented by large environmental NGOs like Conservation International or The Nature Conservancy, which work with oil and mining companies, big banks and their consultants. They promote the idea of carbon markets in the halls of UN climate conferences and at international business meetings, far away from the forest-dependent communities. **Their priority is not to end large-scale deforestation or improve the living conditions of forest-dependent communities. Carbon projects were invented so that polluting companies can continue to burn oil, coal and gas and profit from the 'oil economy'**.

The documents that have to be prepared for a carbon project are another sign that communities did not invent the idea. **These project documents are 100+ pages long and often only available in English.** They are written in the language of business and consultants in city offices and they include many technical words. In short, they have nothing to do with the realities that communities face.

The activities that a carbon company says it will implement to reduce deforestation are **usually decided outside the community and then imposed in a "top-down" manner** by the company or NGO running the carbon project. There might be a local project manager, but it is almost always a company, NGO, state official, or funder with connections to the Global North who controls the carbon credit sales. Most of the profits also stay with them.

“Wild Life Works, get out of the Ka’apor territory. Carbon market is a false environmental solution”, says the banner held by indigenous Ka’apor in Brazil, in November 2023.

Wildlife Works Carbon LLC: One of many carbon companies facing community resistance

Wildlife Works Carbon is registered in the USA and has created several carbon companies, including in countries in the Global South. It has been directly involved in REDD projects in the DR Congo, Kenya and Cambodia and has advised companies that are operating carbon projects. Conflicts with communities and community opposition to the company's involvement in the carbon projects has been documented in all the places Wildlife Works is known to be involved in carbon projects (see reports mentioned at the end of the booklet).[3]

In Brazil, Wildlife Works Carbon is attempting to set up a REDD project in the territory of the Ka'apor peoples in Maranhão state, which is causing conflict among Ka'apor villages. **The Tuxa Ta Pame Council of the Ka'apor has rejected the REDD project. In May 2025, a regional court granted an injunction temporarily suspending the REDD project and barring Wildlife Works and its representatives from organizing meetings in Ka'apor territory**.[4]

Besides carbon companies, corporate environmental NGOs like The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) are also profiting from carbon projects.

Those big NGOs are involved, for example, in operating the Alto Mayo REDD project in Peru, the Makira REDD project in Madagascar (CI), the Keo Seima REDD project in Cambodia (WCS), and the Berau Forest Carbon Programme in Indonesia (TNC); they also help sell carbon credits from these projects.[5]

NGOs like TNC and CI have also received millions of US dollars from the World Bank and development agencies from northern governments to help set up carbon markets and carbon projects. TNC, for example, was hired to create the legal-institutional framework for the jurisdictional REDD programme in the Brazilian Amazon state of Pará. In 2024, TNC reported net assets of nearly 10 billion US dollars – more than the annual GDP of countries like Sierra Leone, Togo, Suriname, Belize or Bhutan.[6]

Because the idea of offsetting has been invented far away from the realities and problems that communities face, the priorities of a carbon project are not the same as the priorities of a community. **Carbon projects first and foremost are designed to generate profits from the sale of carbon credits; they are not designed to address the real priorities or needs of communities. Those promoting the carbon project have no interest to learn about , or to respond to communities' own proposals on how to support their way of life,** they have come to the community to run a carbon project that maximises the number of carbon credits they can sell.

ALERT 2: RESTRICTIONS ON TRADITIONAL LAND USE, LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITIES' WAYS OF LIFE

To generate carbon credits, a REDD project has to change the way the land is used. In most cases, this means changing what communities can and cannot do on that land. **In REDD project areas, communities will usually not be allowed**:

• To use fire to clear land; as a result, families may not be able to prepare their fields in the traditional way.

• To cut trees to build canoes or houses, for example.

• To hunt, fish or practice agriculture in the forest.

• To gather medicinal plants, food and firewood from the forest.

Some REDD projects prohibit only some of these activities while others prohibit all of them. This has been the case in a REDD pilot programme in Indonesia and in REDD projects in Zambia and Madagascar, among others.

Carbon project rules like these hit women from forest-dependent communities particularly hard, because they prevent women from carrying out activities that are essential to their livelihoods.

REDD projects can also affect the way of life of forest-dependent communities in less visible ways, for example, by **undermining traditional knowledge**. Traditional knowledge is connected to living on the land; it is passed down from generation to generation when communities are practicing their traditional ways. Prohibiting traditional land use practises such as using fire to clear land **puts communities at risk of losing their culture, and the knowledge and skills connected with traditional ways of using the territory**.

Losing this traditional knowledge, combined with losing access to the forest, **makes communities more dependent on the money economy**. Families then need money to buy things they used to obtain from the forests, such as medicine, seeds, food and so on.

Meeting of members of forest-dependent communities in Acre, Brazil, to discuss how carbon projects affect their territories. August 2016.
PHOTO: CONSELHO INDIGENISTA MISSIONÁRIO (CIMI).

How the REDD Early Movers (REM) program in Acre, Brazil, affected community's autonomy

This is what happened in the Brazilian Amazonian state of Acre, where a jurisdictional REDD programme called REDD Early Movers (REM) reinforced already existing government restrictions on the use of fire in traditional agriculture:

“In 2010 when the government of Acre took on the REDD+ policy, it decreed ‘zero fire’ and brought in the ‘green grant’ – a quarterly payment to compensate people for the fact that they could no longer open up farmland in the forest. This was an irrecoverable cultural loss because it was always the women – both indigenous women and the women extrativistas(**) – who worked the land.

Once this ban was enacted in 2010, many women stopped using the land in the way they did before. And food is one of the basics of life; without food nobody can live or be happy. The women used to plant vegetables and sell them. Today, people rely on purchased food, such as polished rice that comes from another state (Mato Grosso). The ‘green grant’ is charity (...) and right now, ICMBio (the federal government agency responsible for the management of Extractive Reserve – RESEX) is distributing big sacks of industrialised products inside the

** Extractivista / Extractivismo. Not to be confused with extractive industries, extractivismo in the Brazilian context describes a way of life pursued by a variety of traditional communities. The harvesting of non-timber forest products, often in combination with subsistence agriculture, defines extractivismo. Rubber tapping, the extraction of latex from rubber trees growing inside the forest is one example. The palm fruit açai and Brazil nuts are other examples of products that form the basis of extractive economies.

Reserve.

This profoundly affects women's lives, because women stop teaching their children this culture. The culture of producing what one consumes with high quality and without agrotoxins, in the community itself."

DERCY TELES DE CARVALHO, *EX-PRESIDENT OF THE XAPURI RURAL WORKERS' UNION AND AN ADVOCATE FOR "EXTRATIVISTAS" (BRAZIL)*[7]

ALERT 3: COMMUNITIES ARE BLAMED FOR DEFORESTATION

That forest carbon projects like REDD impose restrictions on traditional land use, livelihoods and ways of life (see Alert 2) is no accident: **to create carbon credits, companies must show that the forest would have been destroyed without the project.**

The key question then is: **who is named as 'agent of deforestation', as the one who would destroy the forest if the carbon project is not implemented?**

In documents of 100+ pages, project owners identify who – in their view – are threatening the forest, and what the carbon project will do to stop that threat (see PART 1). Sometimes, industrial agriculture, logging or mining are mentioned as threats; but the project documents have no proposals for how to stop this large-scale destruction. However, **what these documents always identify as a threat to the forest is communities' traditional agriculture**.

Carbon companies call traditional practise "slash-and-burn agriculture" and list what the project will do to stop it. Carbon projects, particularly soil carbon projects in Eastern Africa, also blame traditional animal grazing practises for degradation of forests and soils. The activities taken by the carbon project then disrupts traditional pastoralist grazing practises and have already caused numerous conflicts.[8]

REDD projects also claim that **the communities would not be able to protect the forest by themselves**, and that it would even be causing deforestation. This is why **carbon projects always change how communities can use forests inside project areas**.

In the Luangwa Community Forests Project in Zambia, the project owner restricted people from cutting trees and collecting wild honey inside the 'REDD area';[9] in Kenya, state forest rangers and police have destroyed the huts of Sengwer communities on Mount Elgon several times – in what is widely seen as preparation to operate a REDD project in the area.[10]

In other projects, communities may not face restrictions at first; project rules may not be enforced right away or they may affect only part of the territory. Community members might then think that there is nothing wrong with supporting the project. But sooner or later**, there will be restrictions, because it is only by changing how the forest is used that the project generates carbon credits**. For example, families may not be allowed to move their fields to parts of the forest that are currently fallow, where the forest has started to regrow.

So, what about promises that REDD benefits communities, or that carbon projects recognise and pay communities for the work they do to protect forests?

In reality, that is not what companies and NGOs write in REDD project documents! There, they tell a different story: that communities cannot protect the forest without outside 'help'; that "slash-and-burn agriculture" or communities' use of mangroves, for instance, are threats that the carbon project will stop – and that by doing so, the project will save the carbon stored in trees.

What carbon project documents say about communities

REDD project documents often call traditional use of fire 'slash-and-burn' agriculture. This negative description ignores the positive effects of shifting cultivation on soils and biological diversity; it is also the entry point for REDD project owners, like Biocarbon Partners in Zambia, to claim that communities destroy the forest.[11]

1.1.7 Without-Project Scenario: Community (CM1.3)

The without project community scenario is described in section 2.1.5, 2.1.11 and 2.2.3. Without the project communities will continue to rely on subsistence agriculture and other unsustainable practices unable to escape from the cycle of poverty. Deforestation will continue with subsequent loss of biodiversity further eroding the ability of the ecosystem to provide benefits to communities.

The Valparaíso REDD project in the Brazilian Amazon state Acre uses similar language[12]:

There are 35 communities living on the project property, all of which live in close proximity to the Valparaiso River. These small scale and subsistence farming communities are the agents of deforestation and clear a portion of forest for land to engage in small scale farming and ranching for their livelihoods.

No matter what REDD proponents say about the benefits of carbon projects for communities, their project documents always describe communities as a threat to forests. They claim that without their project, the carbon would not be in the trees any more, but in the air, where it would contribute to climate change. **This story is part of the REDD logic; the project only gets to sell carbon credits if it can show that its activities prevent deforestation**.

ALERT 4: SURVEILLANCE, VIOLENCE, AND OUTSIDE CONTROL

A **carbon credit** created from a forest or soil carbon project, or from tree plantations or mangroves restoration projects, **is a promise** that carbon will be stored in trees or in the soil inside the project area, at least for the duration of the project. **During this time, the seller of the carbon credit has to be able to prove that the carbon is still there.** That is why all these projects use some form of surveillance to monitor what members of the community are doing on the lands inside the carbon project:

Cameras and drones are some of the surveillance devices used in carbon project areas.

CAMERAS AND DRONES:

Carbon projects may install cameras in the forest or use drones to fly over the carbon project area. Some may even install towers and mount cameras higher up for better surveillance – or to monitor a larger area. These cameras and drones can also collect additional information about the territory. The community may not even be aware what additional information the project operator is collecting.

MONITORS:

Some carbon projects use 'community monitors' to enforce the carbon project rules. These are people from the community who are paid by the carbon project to denounce other community members who are not following the carbon project rules.

ARMED GUARDS:

Armed guards patrol in many REDD project areas; examples are the REDD projects in the Southern Cardamom (Cambodia), Alto Mayo (Peru), and Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon (Kenya) REDD projects.[13] This has resulted in many conflicts between the armed guards and community members; for example, guards have confiscated grazing animals where the carbon project rules do not allow grazing. There are also many reports of villagers being harassed or even arrested. The charge: engaging in activities which the REDD project operator has declared to be ‘illegal’, such as cutting trees to build a house or canoe, or clearing fields to grow food inside the forest.

Herders in Marsabit, Kenya, are facing the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon project.
PHOTO: ILRI / G.WAMWERE-NJOROGE / FLICKR

Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon: Violence against herders

A herder in Kenya who used to graze his animals on lands that are now claimed to be part of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon project explains the tactics used by the project proponent, NRT, to maximise carbon credit sales from the project:

> *"We ourselves moved away because of the conflicts. People were murdered and livestock was stolen, so we left. When people and their livestock leave an area, grass grows back on the pastures. New carbon credits can then be sold. [...]. So NRT is selling CO_2 certificates, but not by controlling grazing patterns, as they claim, but by displacing people through conflict."*
>
> **ABDIFATTAH DAYOW**, *HERDER (KENYA)*[14]

Women at risk

Carbon projects, particularly those employing armed guards to patrol the carbon project area, also **expose women and girls to sexual violence**. Project operators never mention this danger, but reports on the Kasigau Corridor REDD project have documented how women were sexually abused and exploited for years by male project employees. Women can face not only sexual abuse but also pressure to keep quiet about the abuse. They may be pressured to not give the project a 'bad reputation' and risk a reduction in carbon credit sales. Such impunity for perpetrators only further increases the risk of sexual violence.

ALERT 5: CONTRACTS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR MANY DECADES, UP TO 100 YEARS

All carbon projects involve legally binding contracts. In fact, the sale of a carbon credit is a contract that includes obligations on the project long after the credit has been sold and the money has been received.

The main reason why carbon project contracts include obligations over many decades, or even up to 100 years, has to do with what carbon credits are used for: to allow a polluting companies to claim that the climate damage from burning fossil fuels has been 'compensated' by someone protecting carbon in forests, tree plantations, grasslands or other areas. Because fossil carbon damages the climate for a long time, the carbon standards demand that carbon projects last at least several decades, and up to 100 years.

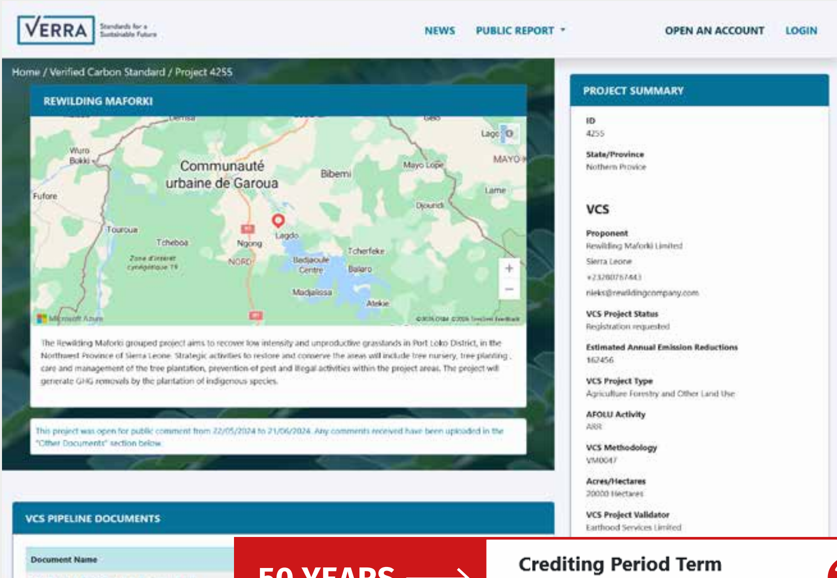
REDD promoters often hide this and other important details of the contracts. Aware that many communities do not want to lock up their territories for many decades, carbon companies often fail to disclose the true project duration to the community.

REDD projects typically last at least several decades, even up to 100 years. A 100-year contract would put a community's territory under external control for more than a generation. Tree planting projects that sell carbon credits also tend to involve contract obligation over many years because only big trees that have grown for some decades store significant amounts of carbon.

Because few communities are willing to sign contracts for such a long time, more recent contracts include shorter project durations, but then make them renewable. The result would again be very long periods of time for which the forest is locked up in the carbon contract.

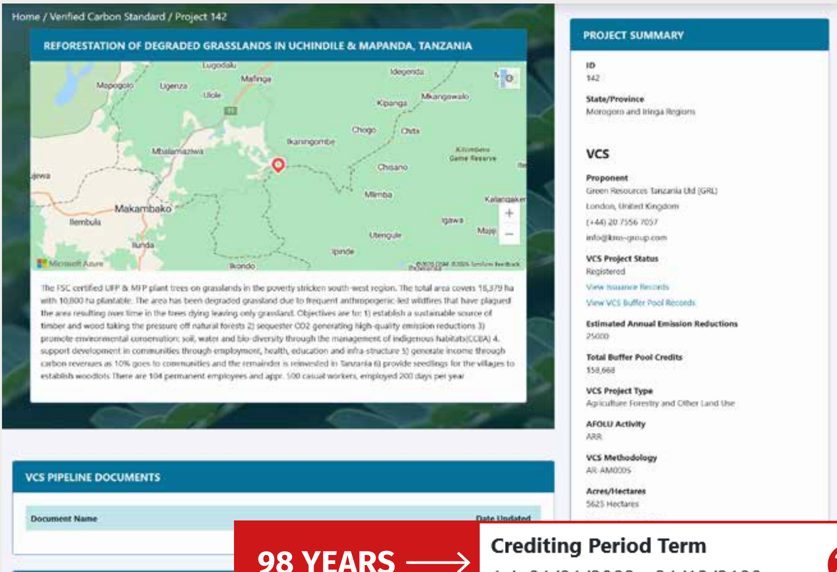
Land locked up for decades

The “crediting period term” is the time during which the project generates carbon credits. The project may last even longer because crediting periods are sometimes allowed to be renewed. The following examples show the “crediting period term” of projects in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Brazil and India.



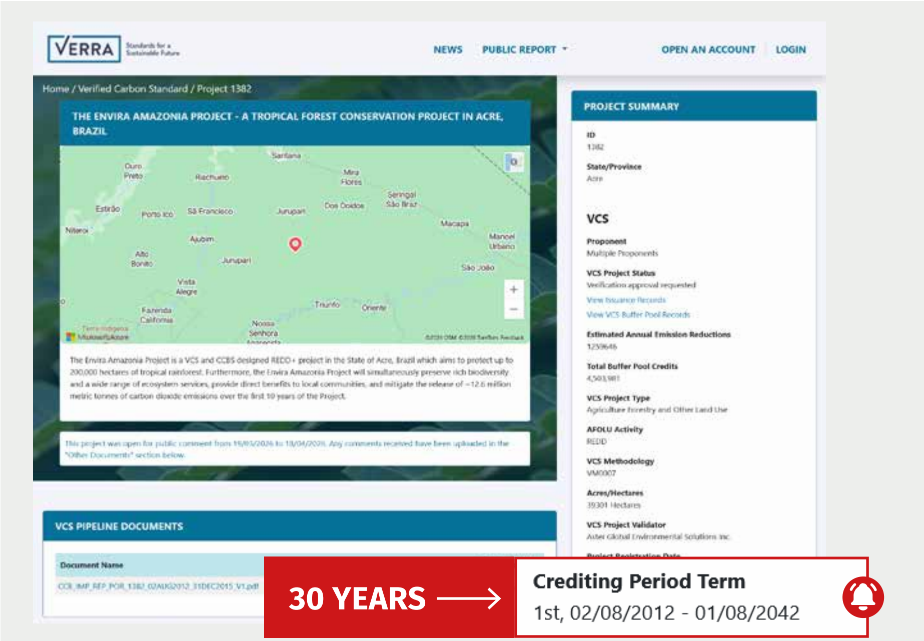
50 YEARS →

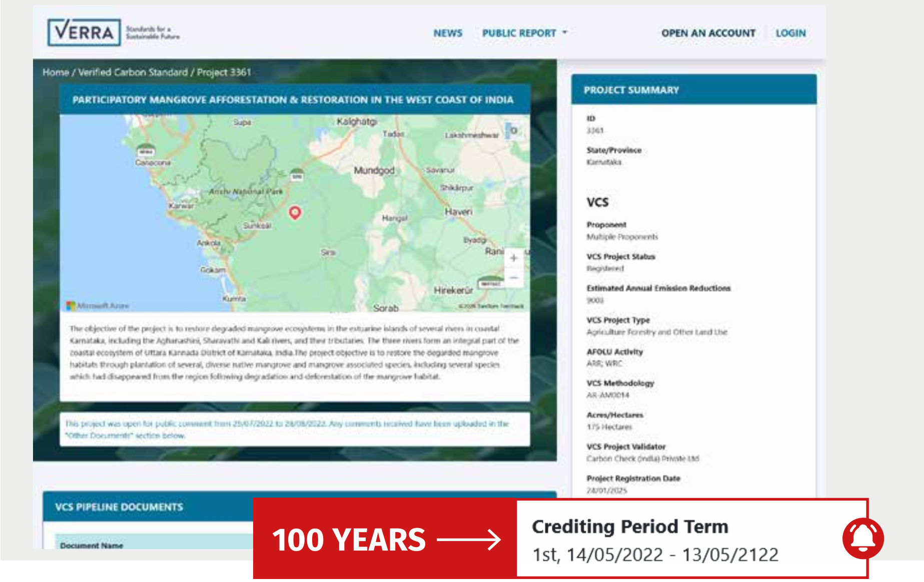
Crediting Period Term
1st, 25/06/2022 - 24/06/2072



98 YEARS →

Crediting Period Term
1st, 01/01/2002 - 31/12/2100


VERRA
NEWS
PUBLIC REPORT
OPEN AN ACCOUNT
LOGIN
Home / Verified Carbon Standard / Project 1382
THE ENVIRA AMAZONIA PROJECT - A TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION PROJECT IN ACRE, BRAZIL
PROJECT SUMMARY
ID
1382
State/Province
Acre
VCS
Proponent
Multiple Proponents
VCS Project Status
Estimated Annual Emission Reductions
Total Buffer Pool Credits
VCS Project Type
AFOLU Activity
REDD
VCS Methodology
Acres/Hectares
VCS Project Validator
VCS PIPELINE DOCUMENTS
Document Name
30 YEARS
Crediting Period Term
1st, 02/08/2012 - 01/08/2042


VERRA
NEWS
PUBLIC REPORT
OPEN AN ACCOUNT
LOGIN
Home / Verified Carbon Standard / Project 3361
PARTICIPATORY MANGROVE AFFORESTATION & RESTORATION IN THE WEST COAST OF INDIA
PROJECT SUMMARY
ID
3361
State/Province
Karnataka
VCS
Proponent
Multiple Proponents
VCS Project Status
Registered
Estimated Annual Emission Reductions
VCS Project Type
AFOLU Activity
VCS Methodology
Acres/Hectares
VCS Project Validator
Project Registration Date
VCS PIPELINE DOCUMENTS
Document Name
100 YEARS
Crediting Period Term
1st, 14/05/2022 - 13/05/2122

ALERT 6: CARBON PROJECTS ARE A THREAT TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Gathering medicines and foods such as wild honey from the forest, using fire to clear land for food production, or cutting trees to build a canoe or a house are activities that are usually not allowed inside carbon project areas. The prohibition of these practises undermines the food sovereignty of forest-dependent communities in many ways:

• It interferes with forest peoples' **autonomy** to decide where and how to plant or collect their food and medicine.

• It changes what **kind of food** families eat.

• It weakens **traditional knowledge and practises**.

• Traditional knowledge and practices that are crucial for communities' food sovereignty may not be passed on to the **next generations**. Considering that carbon projects last several decades and up to 100 years, there is a real risk that, ultimately, knowledge about traditional uses of a community's territory is lost.

Pu Kong villager Bun Hean (second from left, front) awaits imprisonment after Ministry of Environment rangers arrested him helping clear a plot of land 40 meters inside the Sre Preah Community Protected Area, in Cambodia. Unlike his neighbours, he could not run away due to arthritis in his legs.
PHOTO: JACK BROOK / MONAGABAY, 2024.

The threat to a community's food sovereignty **may not be immediately apparent**. When the carbon project is presented to the community, the carbon company or NGO may say that families can continue to use forest gardens or fields in the forest that have already been cleared. But **they will usually not allow families to open up new forest gardens or fields**. Over time, this undermines the traditional method of shifting cultivation, which lets the soil and vegetation in old fields recover while cultivation is moved to another place in the forest.

Carbon project in Kalimantan, Indonesia, prevents women from collecting foods and medicines in the forest

The Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (KFCP), in Indonesia, began in 2008 as a pilot project funded by the Australian government to demonstrate that REDD was a quick and cheap way to reduce carbon emissions. Australia's forest carbon experiment in Indonesia failed. The indigenous Dayak communities' struggle against the carbon project led to the cancellation of the project. However, a local regulation continues to restrict communities from using fire in their traditional way[15], even after the Australian government officially declared the KFCP to be 'closed' in 2014:

> *"In our village, women were prohibited from entering the forest, which had the effect of prohibiting them from growing food. We could not plant rice, because burning – which is our traditional form of growing food – was prohibited...this also affected the men who traditionally hunted in the forest. This affected us because we are very dependent on the forest."*
>
> **HERLINA SUKMAWATI,** *INDIGENOUS DAYAK LEADER (INDONESIA)*[16]

Not only forests, but also savannahs, grasslands and wetlands are turned into carbon-exclusive zones

Some carbon projects operate in both forest and savannah areas. Initially, the carbon company may only prohibit cutting trees in the forest, but over time, it may also enforce rules on how communities grow their food in the savannah areas.

In recent years, **tree planting** carbon projects have also taken over more and more land that peasant communities need to grow food. Those so-called carbon removal projects target wetlands, savannahs and grasslands. In other words, these projects plant fast-growing trees in areas that are particularly important for food production or as a source of protein (fish, clams, shellfish etc). These carbon removal projects – which are usually some kind of tree plantation – are a growing threat to communities' food sovereignty (see ALERT 9).

ALERT 7: DIVISION AND CONFLICT IN COMMUNITIES

Carbon companies know that they will face opposition to their carbon project from at least part of the community. That's why **they come with a strategy on how to get the carbon project accepted**.

The strategy often involves **dividing the community and creating conflicts**, getting key community voices on their side with **promises of money, jobs and other benefits** and **hiding important information**.

CREATING CONFLICTS TO DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY:

• When they first arrive, carbon companies or NGOs promoting a carbon project rarely present the project to the whole community in an assembly or a public community meeting; instead, they introduce their project proposal to just a few individuals, usually men.

• They try to convince those individuals to champion the project within the community or even push them to sign a carbon contract on behalf of the community – before the community is even aware of the carbon project.

• They send people who are trusted by the community to help promote the project inside the community.

• If necessary, they interfere with the community's decision-making processes. They support community members who are in favour of the carbon project, and sideline those who oppose it.

• They use the argument that opponents of the project are 'against development', or are being 'manipulated by outside NGOs that oppose markets'.

• They marginalize or exclude women from discussions about whether to accept or reject a project because women are often on the frontlines of opposition to carbon projects. The reality for women is that their opposition to carbon projects is ignored both by project proponents (who are often male) *and* in internal decision-making processes that favour men over women.

• If a carbon project actually goes ahead, conflicts are bound to continue. Project owners may insist that the community create a new 'project committee' to manage the promised community 'benefits' from the carbon project. New motorbikes, big TV

Women discussing in a village in the Port Loko district, Sierra Leone. They have often been excluded from decisions on land, including regarding carbon projects. PHOTO: SILNORF AND HEKS, 2024.

screens and newly renovated houses may indicate who in the village sits on the committee. Women, and others who are oppose the project are usually not a part of such committees; and when they are, their proposals for how to use the money are regularly dismissed. Committees like these also tend to undermine the authority of traditional community governance.

• The same carbon companies that impose rules on communities usually care little about whether the financial benefits from carbon projects – if there are any – are distributed fairly inside the community. The reality is that the little carbon money that may arrive in communities is usually very unevenly distributed within the community.

PROMISING MONEY AND OTHER BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY:

• Carbon companies usually promise money or other benefits if a community accepts the carbon project. Promises may include funding for the building of boreholes, houses or schools, bursaries for children to go to school, cultural projects like a festival, or employment for youth as 'forest monitors'. Very few of these promises will be fulfilled. Or they will only benefit a few in the community, creating suspicions and conflict.

• They may say that the project exists in order to recognise the community's efforts to protect the forest and help solve the climate problem. In reality, the carbon project exists because the carbon company expects to make a profit from it. And instead of helping solve the climate crisis, it will make the crisis worse because it allows polluting companies to continue to burn fossil fuels.

• They may say the project is an opportunity for 'poor' communities to earn money by doing nothing different from what they are already doing. In reality, the carbon project will impose restrictions on how the community can use their territory that has been turned into a ‘carbon accounting area’. If the community will receive any money from the carbon credit sales, it will not be nearly enough to compensate for the loss of income caused by the restrictions on the community’s use of their lands.

• They often promise to help with securing land titles. This is a very powerful **false promise**! So far, not a single carbon project where the carbon company has actually secured land titles for the community has been reported. On the contrary, there are several examples where the carbon project has made the land title situation worse for the community, especially if they did not have proper land title documents yet.

• In many cases, they offer to ‘help’ with the design of community consultation protocols, especially in Latin America, where such protocols have become popular tools for communities to define the “free, prior and informed consent” process and how they expect outside companies to provide information to them.

• They organize courses on ‘climate smart agriculture’ – saying this will reduce the need for families to expand or use fire to prepare their fields.

REDD project area in the municipality of Portel, in the Brazilian Amazon state of Pará.
PHOTO: WRM, 2022.

Do carbon projects really help communities secure land titles?

This is a common promise in REDD projects, especially in many countries of Latin America, where Indigenous Peoples and peasant communities continue to face a big struggle because government authorities do not recognise their land rights or do not provide them with legal documentation and land titles. For communities facing this reality, the promise that the REDD project will help them secure the title papers is a very powerful – though usually false – promise.

In the municipality of Portel, in the Brazilian Amazon state of Pará, the REDD project owners promised to help communities secure land titles. In reality, that is not what happened.[17] Instead, the people running the carbon project registered peasant families' land in an environmental register set up by the government. But the certificate from the environmental land register (Cadastro Ambiental Rural, Rural Environmental Cadaster) **is not** a land title. Worse, the project registered only a fraction of the land that families traditionally used for their traditional activities. This would have limited their future use to the land registered in the environmental registry. Instead of receiving land titles, families would have lost rights to a large portion of the land they traditionally used. Fortunately, however, **the project was stopped by legal action.**

HIDING IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Carbon companies and NGOs never talk about how the project will restrict a community's use of their own territory. They do not mention that collecting firewood will no longer be allowed inside the carbon area or that families will be restricted or prohibited from growing food in the forest, hunting or fishing.

- They rarely explain to communities that the promised money comes from polluting companies such as oil companies that use carbon credits to justify their pollution elsewhere.

- They do not disclose how much money they will make from selling carbon credits – because that would show how little the community gets!

- They use languages or words that communities don't use or know:

• The **documents in which carbon projects are described in detail** are documents of hundreds of pages, written in English and in very technical language; they are not prepared for communities but for investors and auditors.

• At community **meetings**, carbon project representatives may use words that people don't know or make no effort to explain in simple words what the project is about. If people ask questions that are critical of the project or about the profits, there is no straight answer.

• The **contracts** that carbon companies push communities to sign may have many traps and use words that may mean different things to the project people and the community.

Laguna de la Bolsa, in the Gran Cumbal region, Colombia.
PHOTO: A. BERMÚDEZ LIÉVANO / CLIP, 2023.

Deception and intimidation
In Colombia, a carbon project secretly sold carbon credits without the community even being aware that a carbon project existed on their territory. In 2022, the

Pastos Indigenous Peoples from the Gran Cumbal region found out that someone from the community had signed a contract behind the community's back. The project was already selling carbon credits when the community took legal action against it.[18]

Sadly, this sort of outside interference from carbon companies and NGOs can damage relations within a community. Differences of opinion about the carbon project can easily turn into outright divisions and conflicts that will remain for a long time. This weakens a community's ability to organize and come together in the future to fight off threats to their territories. To avoid this, more and more communities are deciding to reject carbon projects outright and not engage in any consultation process about such projects on their territories.

ALERT 8: CARBON PROJECTS HIT WOMEN PARTICULARLY HARD

Carbon projects affect women directly and profoundly in several ways:

- By prohibiting traditional use of the forest:

By restricting or forcing changes to how a community can use the land, carbon projects make it more difficult for women to find land on which to grow food, or to gather foods and medicines from the forest. These activities are the responsibility of women in many forest-dependent communities.

The carbon project may not always immediately enforce bans or restrictions on what communities can do on the land. But sooner or later, project rules will be enforced in a way that alters traditional land use practices and the community's access to the declared carbon project area. This, in turn, will increase women's workload and concern about how to feed their families.

In face of REDD and other extractivist projects, indigenous Dayak women in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, have collectively organized to defend their territory and culture.
PHOTO: SOLIDARITAS PEREMPUAN, 2021.

- By excluding women from decision-making:

Carbon projects are also a very male business that deals with what is still considered a domain of men in most parts of the world: control over land. Women are often excluded from discussions about whether to accept or reject a carbon project on community land, even though such a decision will have far-reaching consequences in women's lives and livelihoods.

Women from several REDD project areas have talked about how carbon company representatives, when they first arrived in their community, went to speak with 'the community leadership'. In rural communities, this is still usually a man, or a committee of men. Companies do this because they know that women tend to be more reluctant to agree to land deals that put a community's use of the land at risk. Women may not even be aware, then, that a community leader has accepted a carbon project or signed a carbon contract.

This has happened, for example, in Sierra Leone, where the company Carbon Done Right started the Rewilding Maforki carbon project in 2021. The project involves planting trees to store carbon in a big area that families use to grow food. A report published by the organizations SiLNoRF (Sierra Leone) and Heks (Switzerland) shows that "with a few exceptions, most women were either not involved at all or participated in meetings as mere listeners and were never asked for their consent".[19]

Women at the forefront of resistance to carbon projects

Women are often excluded from decision-making because they usually lead the opposition to carbon projects. In Colombia, women in Afro-descendent communities along the Mayorquin, Raposo, and Anchicayá Rivers became suspicious when the carbon companies that had come to the community started to use drones to map the community territory. The two companies, Tangara Forest SAS Zomac and Biofix, had approached communities in 2018. They arrived with offers of projects geared towards children and the elderly. After the women raised questions about the use of the drones, the community started to look for information, and they found out that the two companies were already promoting a REDD project on 14,200 hectares within their territory. One of the companies even claimed to own land that was legally titled to the community.[20]

Picture taken from a drone in the Tanganara REDD+ project area, in Colombia.
PHOTO: GLOBAL CARBON TRACE

- By increasing the risk of sexual abuse and harassment:

As shown by the example of the Kasigau Corridor REDD project in Kenya, where (armed) male guards patrol land to enforce the land use restrictions imposed by the carbon project, women and girls are exposed to sexual harassment and abuse. Women living inside the lands that the owners of the Kasigau Corridor REDD project declared to be a carbon project told investigators that they had been humiliated and faced degrading treatment by guards patrolling the project area.[21]

ALERT 9: MORE MONOCULTURE TREE PLANTATIONS

In recent years, tree planting has become popular among carbon credit buyers. As a result, carbon projects that plant monocultures of fast-growing trees on grasslands, savannahs and in mangroves are occupying more and more land. The carbon industry calls them 'carbon removal projects.'

These tree planting carbon projects turn areas that are particularly important for food production or as a source

Carbon tree plantations covering a savanna area in Vichada, Colombia.
PHOTO: JORGE LUIS ROCHA / MUTANTE, 2025

of protein (e.g. fish, clams, shrimp from mangroves) into plantations that sell carbon credits to polluting companies. The projects also put pressure on the plant and animal species that have adapted to the open habitats of savannas and grasslands that have very sparse tree cover.

Carbon companies and governments declare these open savannahs to be ‘degraded’ and in need of ‘restoration’. In the age of carbon, ‘degraded’ means ‘lacking trees’, and ‘restoration’ means ‘adding trees’. The result: grasslands and savannas are turned into monoculture plantations; the plant and animal species that are adapted to these open lands disappear; and communities lose land that is particularly important for food production.

The argument behind those carbon removal projects is that planting trees helps ‘remove’ CO_2 from the air, because the young trees ‘breathe in’ and absorb CO_2 as they grow. Tree plantation owners claim that without the carbon project, no trees would have been planted, and the carbon absorbed by the trees would have remained in the air. Many projects use fast-growing trees, such as eucalyptus or acacia, because they absorb more CO_2 and therefore generate carbon credits more quickly than native tree species – which don’t grow as fast and need more time to store the same amount of carbon.

Two types of projects: small and large-scale

Carbon companies generate credits through two types of tree planting projects. Both reduce the area of land available to communities:

1) Small-scale: Carbon companies and NGOs like EcoTrust in Uganda or TIST in Kenya sign up peasant families through smallholder schemes to plant trees on their own lands.

2) Large-scale: Tree plantation companies, like Suzano and BTG Pactual in Brazil or Miro Forestry in Sierra Leone and Ghana, declare their industrial tree monocultures - intended for the production of timber, pulp and other purposes - as carbon projects.

Both types of carbon projects have caused conflicts ever since they started over 25 years ago. At that time, they were called 'carbon sink' projects. Now, they are called 'carbon removal' projects. The name has changed, but the threats to communities remain the same.

Smallholder schemes: a threat to families' autonomy

Carbon companies and NGOs operating smallholder carbon tree planting projects rarely insist that both male and female members of the participating household sign the carbon contract. They also tend to hand the carbon payments (if there are any payments) to the men who signed the carbon contract, while women have to shoulder the extra burden of looking after the carbon trees – on top of growing food for their families. This not only increases women's workloads, it also affects a family's food sovereignty.

Furthermore, it affects women's income because less land is available to grow food, and women have less surplus food to sell at local markets. Thus, for women, tree planting projects that sell carbon credits too often mean less land to grow food, less income from selling surplus food, and more work – because in addition to feeding their families, they have to look after the carbon trees.

How tree planting carbon projects undermine families' food sovereignty and exploit a community's labour

In **Ecuador**, a Dutch company called Face Foundation (now 'Face the Future') convinced a community to join their carbon project and plant pine trees in the Páramo highlands. The trees burned down several times. The community only received money for the first planting, but the carbon contract said they had to replant the trees – without being paid. In the end, the community lost money because they had to pay people from neighbouring communities to help them replant the trees.

In **Uganda**, the NGO Ecotrust signs up peasant farmers to plant trees on part of their lands. Many families have joined the carbon schemes because Ecotrust promised that tree planting would be good business. In reality, families have not received payments, or in some cases have been paid much less than they were promised. People also say that the money does not compensate for the food they cannot grow any more, because the trees are taking up the land.

"I started planting trees for Ecotrust's carbon project. I fulfilled my part of the agreement – I planted the trees they asked me to plant. In exchange, they promised me money to take care of my children. Since I planted those trees I have not earned a single dollar, but I have children to take care of and feed. It got to a point where I could not guarantee food for my children, and so I decided to cut down the trees and plant bananas. When I cut the trees and planted food, they started to threaten me; they called me on the phone in the afternoons and at night."

KYAMPEIRE ROSSETT, *PEASANT WOMAN WHO SIGNED UP FOR THE ECOTRUST TREE PLANTING CARBON PROJECT IN UGANDA.*[22]

Carbon markets push expansion of tree monocultures

As mentioned above, carbon removal projects can also be industrial tree plantations. In Paraguay, the Luxemburg-based Arbaro Fund is selling carbon credits to companies. One of its clients, Apple, claims that these credits help make its smartwatch Apple Watch CO_2-neutral. Even though Arbaro is a company whose purpose is to manage tree plantations mainly for timber, its owners claim that the eucalyptus tree plantations in Paraguay (as well as in Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Ecuador) would not have been set up without the extra money from selling carbon credits.

The Colombian department of Vichada is rife with tree monocultures aimed at generating carbon credits. The world's largest oil trader, Trafigura, is involved in one of these projects. Managed by the Colombian company Inverbosques, the Brújula Verde tree planting project occupies 30,000 hectares, much of which are occupied by eucalyptus plantations to generate carbon credits for Trafigura.[23]

In the Republic of Congo, the French oil company Total took over savannah land on the Bateke Plateaus and set up carbon plantations on communities' customary lands; as a result, families did not know where to find land to grow their food. Following community resistance and the publication of several

The Batéké carbon sink (BaCaSi), the carbon project abandoned by Total in 2025.
PHOTO: SOURCEMATERIAL

articles in the media, Total abandoned the carbon project on the Bateke Plateaus in 2025.[24]

In Gabon too, communities and civil society organisations came together to oppose a carbon project that involved tree planting. A company called Sequoia Plantations has been trying to set up acacia plantations on thousands of hectares on the Gabonese part of the Bateke Plateaus, and to increase its profits by selling carbon credits. In their joint campaign, communities and civil society organisations exposed how the acacia plantations, if planted, would cause ecological damage. Among other issues, they would threaten an important source of protein for the communities: the savannah grasshopper populations. The struggle is ongoing without a resolution yet.[25]

All of these carbon removal projects have caused, or continue to cause, conflict. They create few permanent jobs, and most employment opportunities only occur at the start of the project, when the trees are planted. The benefits they provide, if there are any, do not replace what families lose when they can no longer grow their own food.

ALERT 10: 'REDD OF THE GOVERNMENT': EMPTY PROMISES AND THREAT TO COMMUNITY AUTONOMY

In recent years, more governments have been announcing "REDD" programmes themselves. The carbon market calls them "jurisdictional REDD", or "J-REDD", because these programmes cover forests in entire administrative areas ('jurisdictions'), such as a province or state, or even a whole country. Community activists often call them "REDD of the government".

Some insist that "REDD of the government' *programmes* are different from REDD *projects*, that they are better regulated, and that the money goes into a government fund and not to private companies. Some argue, therefore, that these programmes should not be criticized like REDD projects.

Those who promote "REDD of the government" also insist that these programmes *do not have to* use carbon credits, that they could use other sources of money (and they do in some cases). Some programmes receive money from rich countries like Germany or oil nations like Norway for showing 'results' in reducing deforestation – without Germany or Norway using the carbon credits to compensate their emissions. That is why

Representatives from Mercuria oil company; the government of Misiones province (Argentina) and Verra presenting the Misiones Jurisdictional REDD programme during the 26th UN Climate Conference (COP26), in Glasgow, Scotland. November 2021.
PHOTO: GOVERNMENT OF MISIONES, ARGENTINA.

they are also sometimes called “results-based payments” or “payments for environmental services”.

In reality, many ‘Jurisdictional REDD’ programmes are **at least partially funded through the sale of carbon credits**. For some ‘J-REDD’ programmes, selling carbon credits is the **only** source of funding.

Initial experiences with ‘jurisdictional REDD’ show that:

• Just like REDD projects, these ‘programmes’ are about changing land use in areas inhabited by forest-dependent communities.

• These programmes can include the same private sector REDD projects that have caused conflict in the past.

• The way in which governments use the money they receive from 'jurisdictional REDD' is not transparent.

• Just like REDD projects, 'J-REDD' programmes will not end deforestation any more than private sector REDD projects did. They, too, fail to address the real drivers of deforestation: global production system reliant on cheap commodities produced on deforested lands.

Experiences in different countries

One example comes from the South American country **Guyana**. The first buyer of carbon credits from the Guyana 'J-REDD' programme was the US-based oil corporation Hess (now Chevron), which is making millions of USD from extracting oil off the coast of Guyana.

The jurisdictional REDD programme in Guyana has run into controversy for selling carbon credits to the oil company Hess,

In December 2022, Guyana's authorities and Hess Corporation announced an agreement for the oil company to purchase carbon credits directly from the Government of Guyana. PHOTO: GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA.

and for having sold the credits without adequate consent from indigenous communities whose territories are used to generate the 'jurisdictional REDD' carbon credits.[26]

Another point of criticism is that the 'J-REDD' credits were generated through an accounting trick, and that the government is selling phantom credits – i.e. credits for carbon stored in trees that would have been protected anyway. Guyana is a country with a lot of forest and very little deforestation. So, how can the government of Guyana sell millions of carbon credits through REDD if there is not much deforestation to reduce? The answer is that the government was allowed to pretend that deforestation in the country was higher than it actually was! It then calculated the alleged reduction in deforestation compared to this inflated deforestation. The carbon credits are the result of this accounting trick: they represent reductions that did not occur.

Similar manipulations are likely to happen in other 'jurisdictional REDD' programmes. The oil company buying the carbon credits, meanwhile, gets to claim that its oil extraction is not causing damage to the climate because it has bought 'jurisdictional REDD' credits from the government of Guyana.

In the **Brazilian Amazon state of Pará**, the state government is facing legal action by the federal prosecutor after it signed a 'memorandum of understanding' to sell carbon credits from its 'jurisdictional REDD' programme. The programme is facing criticism for many reasons. Among these are: its failure to uphold requirements for prior consultation with communities; its inclusion of federal lands over which the state government has no jurisdiction; and its attempt to make health and education services – which the state has a legal obligation to provide – dependent on J-REDD funds.

Social movements and organisations in the state have strongly opposed the government's suggestion that the money from the state´s J-REDD programme is needed to ensure the well-being and dignity of Indigenous and other forest-dependent communities. These movements insist that public policies such as healthcare and education are rights that the state has an obligation to provide, not something that depends on the money that dirty oil companies might be willing to pay for carbon credits.[27]

'J-REDD' programmes also **allow central governments to regain control over forests**. Through these programmes, governments increase restrictions on how communities can use the forest; meanwhile, the monetary benefits that the government promises in return for the community's acceptance of the 'J-REDD' programme rarely arrive at the community.

A study of the REDD Early Movers jurisdictional REDD programme in **Colombia** – funded by the German, Norwegian and UK governments – found that the programme failed to tackle the drivers of deforestation. In the study, the programme is described as "a technocratic initiative that was formulated in Bogota and which underestimates complex social conditions in the Amazon".[28]

Another academic report cites an Indigenous leader of the Nɨpodɨmakɨ (Uitoto) people in the Colombian Amazon: "For us right now, the current boom in programmes being renamed as ‘nature-based solutions’ risks more colonisation of our territories and further discrimination and marginalisation – like we suffered during the times of the *caucheria* (natural rubber extraction), church missions, international trade in animal skins, the gold rush and drug trafficking. Now it is the ‘green economy’ coming down on us.”[29]

In the **Brazilian state of Acre**, communities have raised concerns about the lack of accountability over how funds paid to the government of Acre through the ‘REDD Early Movers’ (REM) programme were spent. REM is one of the first jurisdictional REDD programmes. When the programme was launched in 2012, some of its funders – Germany, and later the UK and Norway – insisted that REM was not about carbon trading but was a “results-based payment”. However, in 2024, the government of Acre announced that it was going to sell the carbon credits not used in the REM programme.

Meanwhile, deforestation in Acre has gone up, which shows that REDD in Acre did not stop the drivers of deforestation. It also did not bring the promised benefits for communities, but enforced the government’s ‘*fogo zero*’ regulation that prohibits the use of fire to prepare fields in the forest. “(Indigenous Peoples) didn’t even get help demarcating indigenous lands that were pending for demarcation”, Leticia Yawanawa, an indigenous leader from Acre, warns. “The resources and jobs went to people from the outside who worked in offices, not to the indigenous communities. There have been no benefits for indigenous women, who are not represented in the REDD project."[30]

Because of experiences like these, many communities are concerned about and distrustful of governments getting involved in carbon trading; they are also sceptical of claims that communities will benefit from this.

ALERT 11: CARBON MARKETS ARE NOT DESIGNED FOR COMMUNITIES TO EARN MONEY BY SELLING CARBON CREDITS

In countries where community rights are recognised by the state, new REDD project contracts may recognise the community as “owners” of the carbon. The contract might include a clause stating that the community hands the rights to sell the carbon credits over to the REDD project company and, in return, the community will be given a percentage of the profits.

The contract might say ‘the community receives 60 percent as benefits’ – but 60 percent of what? Of the overall income from the sale of the credits, or of the net profits? The answer to this question makes a very big difference!

The company usually does not explain that, according to the contract, the community receives a percentage of *net profits* – of what remains after the REDD project owner deducts all the costs of running the project.

The carbon project company will usually not share the documents showing how high these costs actually are, and it can easily manipulate this calculation – for example by including very high salaries for the directors of the carbon company. 60 percent of the net profits may then be very little money for a community. Worse, the project owners likely will not tell the community how much money the carbon credits were sold for, so that the community has no way of challenging the company's calculations.

What's more, if anything goes wrong with the carbon project, and the community is identified as the project and/or the carbon owner in the contract, the people behind the project may say that the community is liable for damages or money that needs to be repaid. This is similar to what happened to the community in Ecuador that was forced to replant trees that had burned – since the contract specified that they were responsible for maintaining the trees (see ALERT 9).

It may sound promising to hear that the community owns the carbon credits or receives a portion of the carbon credits to sell – but this is a trap. Carbon credits are not like food, crafts, furniture or any other product that can be sold in a market, in a specific location. Instead, they require access to a complex structure of international financial markets.

PART 3

Community resistance

What communities can do when a carbon company proposes a project on the community's territory will depend on the individual situation. There are, however, similarities in the strategies and tactics that communities have used to successfully push back against carbon projects encroaching on their lands.

The most important thing is to **make noise** so the company cannot claim that the community is supporting a carbon project when, in reality, there is community opposition to it.

What 'making noise' means in practise will depend on the specific situation. Some communities have put up 'No carbon' signs or banners alongside the roadside or inside the project area to remind those passing by that the carbon project is not welcome; others have written Open Letters to the carbon company and to government authorities demanding that the project on their territory be stopped.

Some have published notices or statements and have distributed pictures of community members holding banners saying 'No' to the carbon project. Some have made contact with journalists or international allies so their opposition to the project is heard in the countries where the carbon credits are sold.

Upon discovering the sign “Forest Carbon Area” by SaraCarbon company, Marudi Indigenous communities, in Sarawak, Malaysia, placed a wooden board over it, declaring: “This is the villagers’ customary land. No trespassing”, firmly asserting their land rights.
PHOTO: SARAWAK REPORT, 2025.

Where communities have access to judicial support, requesting this support or filing a case in court when community rights are violated by the carbon project (which is almost always the case!) has been helpful to stall carbon projects, for example in Brazil and Colombia.

Making noise is important because it will be much more difficult for a carbon company to sell carbon credits from a project that is known to cause conflict in the community or that

is openly opposed by community members.

Community resistance has also shown that to protect territories against the encroachment of carbon projects, it is important to:

1. Be alert to early warning signs that a carbon project is being talked about in the community (see also page 32) and find out as much as possible about what carbon credits are and why carbon projects have caused so many conflicts.

Communities that have successfully fought back against carbon projects on their lands found out as much as they could about the specific project; they asked around to find out the **name of the company** and the people behind the project; they insisted on the company telling them **where the money to set up the project would come from**, who would buy the carbon credits and above all, **for how many years (decades!) the carbon project would place restrictions on community use of their territories**.

They also found trusted allies to help them find answers to questions that the community had about the carbon business so that people could understand what carbon projects are about. **The more people in the community understand what carbon projects are really about, the easier it will be for a community to reject them.**

Demonstration in Feijo, Acre, Brazil.
September 2017.

2. Refuse to accept the project before the community really understands what carbon credits and projects are about.

Companies will try to hurry communities to accept the project on their territory and sign a contract. However, **communities that have successfully pushed back against carbon projects on their territories have refused to be hurried!** No matter what the people behind the project say: It is important to insist on the communities' rights to not be rushed into such an important decision that will change the way of living in the territory for many decades to come.

To learn what they needed to know about carbon markets and carbon, community leaders and activists have used different means, depending on what worked best for their community. They have, for example:

• Reached out to communities that have already experienced the consequences of carbon projects on their lands. Some have invited activists from those communities to come and share their experience.

• Found trusted allies with whom they could discuss questions and learn together what carbon credits are and how carbon projects work. Some invited trusted allies to community meetings, others organised online meetings where community members could identify what questions they would need to ask and what information to request from the company before taking any decision.

•Sought legal advise about the contracts presented by the carbon company **before** signing them. Communities have found that clauses in the contract go against their own values. Or that the contract is not fair (it never is for the community!), that the carbon company has all the rights, and the community has all the obligations or is burdened with big risks; some found that the community was going to be trapped in the contract for many decades while the carbon company could terminate the contract at any time. It is therefore important to **be aware of traps in the contract.** For example, if trees burn down, the contract may oblige the community or individual farmers who signed a carbon contract to replant these trees at their own cost, no matter whether he had any responsibility for the burning down of the tree or not.

Sharing information about carbon markets, carbon credits and about the specific project with as many in the community as possible is also important. Radio programmes might be a possibility to do that, or watching a film about community experiences with carbon projects (see the 'Recommended materials' section below for some examples). Some have also used community theatre to share why carbon projects cause so many conflicts.

3. Document community opposition to the carbon project.

For communities, it has been useful to document that they have **not** given consent to the carbon project. For example, by keeping pictures and letters in which they have said 'no' to the project or where information has been requested from the carbon company. It has also been important to document

In 2021, communities in Nyanga province, Gabon, released a Declaration in which they call for the suspension of a "nature based solution" project called Grande Mayumba. The banner says: "NO to the false conservation solutions that deprive communities of their rights to land and their natural resources"

examples of how the company has given inadequate or biased information to the community, for example if they only talked about benefits, not about restrictions on the use of the territory or if the carbon company did not properly explain for how long the community will be facing those restrictions.

It might be important for communities to issue **a public statement making it clear that any carbon contract that would affect the lands of the entire community will be invalid unless it is approved in a community assembly.**

This can be important because carbon companies have made agreements with individuals from the community who signed the contract without most of the community even knowing about it. Later, the company may claim that ‘the community’ has signed the contract or that ‘the community’ agreed to the project.

If carbon contracts have been signed without the knowledge or behind the backs of the whole community, this is also important to document and to publicly denounce. Communities have also described how leaders have been tricked or forced into signing agreements.

4. Insist that the carbon company leaves copies of all project documentation with the community.

It is particularly important that the community has time to analyse the contract(s) prepared by companies. These contracts are never truly negotiated between the community and the company; the company comes with a prepared contract and there is little possibility for the community to make changes to it!

The company might say that someone ‘will drop the contract off later’ or that the person ‘does not have a copy with them right now’, or find other excuses not to leave the documents with the community. **It is always a warning sign if the company refuses to leave copies of these documents.**

Communities that have successfully pushed back against carbon projects have insisted that no contract will be signed before the community as a whole has had time to analyse it without the company being present.

5. Interfere with the process that creates the carbon credits.

Before a carbon project can sell carbon credits, it has to pass through a certification process that always involves public comment periods and auditors visiting the project area.

Experience has shown that those hired to audit the carbon project will try to explain away any comments raised during the audits that the carbon project is violating community rights or that the community does not want the project – and eventually approve the carbon project. However, comments that are submitted during the certification process are usually published by the certification scheme. Some communities have used this as an additional way to document their opposition to the carbon project **publicly**.

Final remarks

Collective experience with carbon projects for more than 20 years has shown that the beneficiaries of REDD and other carbon projects are rich countries, polluting companies, elites, and a group of climate crisis profiteers – not communities. Half of the world's CO_2 emissions come from the fossil fuels produced by just 36 companies, including ExxonMobil, Saudi Aramco, Total and Shell.[31] The products and services they produce first and foremost benefit countries in the Global North and a small global Elite. And they use carbon credits to greenwash their polluting activities and continue with them.

Large conservationist NGOs like TNC and CI, carbon companies, technicians, consultants, carbon standard operators, and auditing trading companies are also profiting; without them, the carbon credit trade would not exist. Experiences with REDD have also shown that people who promote it among communities usually hide important information about what carbon projects are really about. It is a tactic to get the community to accept the carbon project.

Project representatives will usually not explain that a company might use carbon credits to continue exploiting the territories where they extract oil, gas or coal, or where they carry out other types of polluting activities that affect the health of nearby communities. What would those communities think of carbon projects? For them, carbon credits look more like pollution credits that undermine their struggles in defence of community territories and lifespaces.

This great injustice at the heart of carbon credit trading cannot be resolved with technical improvements, project standards or safeguards. The injustice itself is part of the logic of carbon offsets and the trading of carbon credits.

The good news is that resistance to carbon projects and trading of carbon credits is growing all over the world. Communities are organizing to protect and retain or regain control over the territories they inhabit and collectively use. Learning from other communities about what really happens when carbon projects start operating in a community's territory is an important step in this struggle. Knowing that the struggle is shared by other communities means that there is an opportunity to learn from them and strengthen one's own resistance. It means that by coming together and organizing, it is possible to stop this threat to communities' territorial control and ways of life.

Recommended materials

Documentary:
NO to REDD and Carbon Markets, WRM, 2024
https://tinyurl.com/38r4dvr3

Indigenous Declaration in La Hormiga, Putumayo, Colombia, April 2026 (in Spanish)
https://tinyurl.com/3275najw

Tupac Amaru Declaration, Perú, September 2025 (in Spanish)
https://tinyurl.com/34ykr85b

Declaration of Rejection of REDD in Territories of Indigenous Peoples, and Peasant, Traditional and Afro-Descendent Communities of Latin America, Brazil, July 2024
www.wrm.org.uy/node/20725

Bana / Mayumba Declaration "NO to the Great Mayumba project", Gabon, November 2021
www.wrm.org.uy/node/15049

Fight false solutions to the climate crisis, Hoodwinked in the Hothouse
https://climatefalsesolutions.org/

Tree Plantations for the Carbon Market. Why, how, and where are they expanding?, WRM, 2024
www.wrm.org.uy/node/20683

15 Years of REDD: A Mechanism Rotten at the Core, WRM, 2022
www.wrm.org.uy/publications/15-years-of-redd

REDD-Monitor website (in English)
https://reddmonitor.substack.com/

Comic REDD+ on the ground. Perspectives on carbon forestry from Cross River, Cartoon Movement, 2023 (in English)
https://cartoonmovement.substack.com/p/redd-on-the-ground

Exposed: How Carbon Credit Deals Are Forcing Kenyans Off Their Land for Just $2 And 40 Year Lease. Learn, unlearn, relearn. The Lynn Ngugi Show. (In English and Swahili).
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp84odR9T30

Total au Congo-Brazzaville : les dessous d'un projet de compensation carbone (in French)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b36Vznakkc

Congo : des pygmées expulsés par le projet Bacasi ? (in French)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lDdPt3aF20

References

1) Publications that have highlighted scandals and conflicts related to carbon projects, including those using the certification standards from VCS, GoldStandard, Cercarbono or the ART-TREES, include:
- Collection of articles in English: REDD-Monitor: https://reddmonitor.substack.com
- In Portuguese: Carbono turvo: https://sumauma.com/category/carbono-turvo
- In Spanish: El CLIP. Carbono opaco:. www.elclip.org/carbono-opaco
- In French: https://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/tag/compensation-carbone

2) To name just a few examples:
- The Nature Conservancy has been directly involved in the Alianza México REDD+ (www.alianza-mredd.org), and the Berau Forest Carbon Programme in Indonesia (https://tinyurl.com/4b5v5ps2). See also: WRM, 2024: *How Jurisdictional REDD in Indonesia threatens forests and benefits NGOs: the case of East Kalimantan* (www.wrm.org.uy/node/20721)
- Conservation International is involved in the Alto Mayo REDD project in Peru (www.conservation.org/projects/alto-mayo-carbon-project), the Chyulu Hills REDD project in Kenya (www.conservation.org/projects/chyulu-hills-carbon-project), and the CAZ REDD project in Madagascar (https://tinyurl.com/5xcccfp4) About these projects, see: REDD-Monitor, 2023, *Violent evictions at the Alto Mayo REDD project* (https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/violent-evictions-at-the-alto-mayo), REDD-Monitor, 2020, Fortress conservation: *Disney's offsets are paying for heavily armed park rangers in Conservation International's Alto Mayo REDD project in Peru* (https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/fortress-conservation-disneys-offsets) and Mongabay, 2018: *Forest communities pay the price for conservation in Madagascar* (https://tinyurl.com/2ra3dtp9)
- Wildlife Conservation Society is involved in the Makira REDD Project in Madagascar (https://makiraredd.wcs.org) and the Keo Seima REDD Project in Cambodia (https://cambodia.wcs.org/Keo-Seima-REDD). About this last project, see: Survival International, 2024: "*We are stuck like chicken in a cage". Blood Carbon: how carbon offset schemes are devastating Indigenous peoples and their forests in Cambodia* (https://tinyurl.com/ynvrjzu2).

3) Reports and media investigations documenting conflicts linked to REDD projects in which the company Wildlife Works is involved include the following:
- Mongabay, 2018: *Report finds projects in DRC 'REDD+ laboratory' fall short of development, conservation goals* https://tinyurl.com/2dtbefbt.
- SOMO, 2023: *Offsetting human rights. Sexual abuse and harassment at the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project in Kenya* www.somo.nl/offsetting-human-rights (Wildlife Works statement to SOMO's report: https://tinyurl.com/38fsy42b)
- Human Rights Watch, 2024: *Carbon Offsetting's Casualties. Violations of Chong Indigenous People's Rights in Cambodia's Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project* https://tinyurl.com/2p8xedf (Wildlife Works' reaction: https://tinyurl.com/mrybj7j7)

4) - In English: REDD-Monitor, 2025: *Federal court in Brazil rules against Wildlife Works' REDD project on Indigenous Ka'apor territory* https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/federal-court-in-brazil-rules-against
- In Portuguese: Salve a Floresta, 2025: *Juíza suspende projeto de CO2 da Wildlife Works na floresta amazônica* https://tinyurl.com/3ka9nd2k
- In French: *Sauvons la forêt, 2025; Le peuple Ka'apor défend sa forêt en Amazonie* https://tinyurl.com/2s3vn74a

5) Idem 2

6) Wikipedia: List of countries by government budget https://tinyurl.com/2ze49z9r

7) WRM, 2022: *10 Years of REDD+ in Acre and its Impacts on Indigenous Women and Female "Extrativistas"*, in *15 Years of REDD: A Mechanism Rotten at the Core* www.wrm.org.uy/node/20385

8) Two REDD projects that have caused conflict for how they interfere with pastoralist ways of life are the Northern Rangeland Trust REDD project in Northern Kenya (See Survival International, 2023: *Blood Carbon. How a carbon offset scheme makes millions from Indigenous land in Northern Kenya* https://tinyurl.com/2usapxk8), and the Longido & Monduli Rangelands Carbon Project (LMRCP) by Soils for the Future Tanzania Ltd and The Resilient Tarangire Ecosystem Project (RTEP) led by The Nature Conservancy, in Tanzania (See: Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA), 2025: *Soil Carbon Credits: Another Wave of Land Alienation in Northern Tanzania?* https://tinyurl.com/5cwe7yvn).

9) REDD-Monitor, 2023: *The Luangwa Community Forests Project, Zambia: "The project shouldn't issue any credits because it's not really reducing deforestation* https://tinyurl.com/2mystsrv

10) Kurang, Abdoulie; *REDD+ and dispossession of Sengwer community,* 2020 (https://tinyurl.com/ufdta252) and REDD-Monitor, 2025: Sengwer homes burned down again in Embobut forest, Kenya (https://tinyurl.com/vmz5d53e)

11) BioCarbon Partner VCS project description of the Luangwa REDD Forest community project in Zambia (https://tinyurl.com/2m4jtfxs), page 207.

12) This quote is taken from the description of the Valparaíso REDD project in Acre, Brazil (https://tinyurl.com/3tu4w549), page 4.

13) Reports noting the presence of armed guards in these projects include:
- Mongabay, 2024: New report details rights abuses in Cambodia's Southern Cardamom REDD+ project https://tinyurl.com/5n92nj7d
- REDD-Monitor, 2020: *Fortress conservation: Disney's offsets are paying for heavily armed*

park rangers in Conservation International's Alto Mayo REDD project in Peru https://tinyurl.com/3pczvc5e
- DW, 2025: *Global carbon offset sector under scrutiny. Judges have declared a Kenyan carbon project partially illegal* https://tinyurl.com/55epretx

14) REDD-Monitor, 2024: *ORF documentary visits the Northern Rangelands Trust project in Kenya: "We have not seen any money from CO_2 funds"* https://tinyurl.com/52kymd75

15) WRM, 2024: *Indonesia: Dayak Women Defend the Forest of Tambun Bungai* www.wrm.org.uy/node/20701

16) WRM, 2024: *Documentary: NO to REDD and Carbon Markets* www.wrm.org.uy/node/20727

17) WRM, 2022: *Neocolonialism in the Amazon: REDD Projects in Portel, Brazil* ww.wrm.org.uy/node/20458

18) CLIP, 2023: *The indigenous reservation that sold carbon credits without the knowledge of its inhabitants* www.elclip.org/resguardo-indigena-cumbal-bonos-de-carbono

19) Silnorf and Heks, 2024: *Carbon done wrong. Controversial carbon credit project in Sierra Leone threatens people's land rights* https://tinyurl.com/2k4wjtxr

20) Idem 16 and Rutas del Conflicto and Centro Latinoamericano de Investigación Periodística (CLIP), 2025:
The private carbon project in the Colombian Pacific that overlaps with Afro-Colombian lands https://tinyurl.com/57npp6pe

21) SOMO, 2023. Idem 3

22) Idem 16

23) Mongabay, 2024: *Experts question benefits of Colombian forestation project led by top oil trader* https://tinyurl.com/3d98ehc2

24) CCFD-Terre Solidaire, 2025: *La compensation carbone au prix des droits humains? Le cas du projet BaCaSi de TotalEnergies au Congo* https://tinyurl.com/yn8yz23u

25) WRM, 2024: *Gabon: Controversy over a eucalyptus monoculture project in the Bateke Plateaux* www.wrm.org.uy/node/20700

26) REDD-Monitor, 2025: *Crooked Carbon Business: Architecture for REDD+ Transactions, Guyana* https://tinyurl.com/4a7h3ndj

27) Agencia Brasil, 2025: *Mercado de carbono ameaça vida indígena, diz Alessandra Munduruku. Ativista critica contrato internacional assinado pelo governo do Pará.* https://tinyurl.com/bd847et3

28) RODRIGUEZ DE FRANCISCO, Jean Carlo and others; *Post-conflict transition and REDD+ in Colombia: Challenges to reducing deforestation in the Amazon*, 2021. https://tinyurl.com/bdz2244x

29) ANDOKE, Levy and others; *Amazonian visions of Visión Amazonía: Indigenous Peoples' perspectives on a forest conservation and climate programme in the Colombian Amazon*, 2023. https://tinyurl.com/5xjrf48p

30) Idem 7

31) The Guardian, 2025: *Half of world's CO2 emissions come from 36 fossil fuel firms, study shows* https://tinyurl.com/ysjxys96 (The study is available here: https://tinyurl.com/3rchtvx8)

WRM

www.wrm.org.uy