

1. What is REDD+

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forest and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks (REDD+) is a global initiative to reduce carbon emissions from forests and enhance carbon absorption.

2. REDD+ and UNFCCC

Climate change is currently a global topic of discussion. As per 5th Assessment Report (AR) of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), around 24% of green house gas emission to atmosphere causing global warming is from AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector (Figure 1). The contribution of forestry sector alone was 17% of the total emission as per the 4th AR of IPCC in 2007.

REDD+ was conceived in the meetings of Conference of Parties (COP) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a mitigation mechanism to combat climate change.

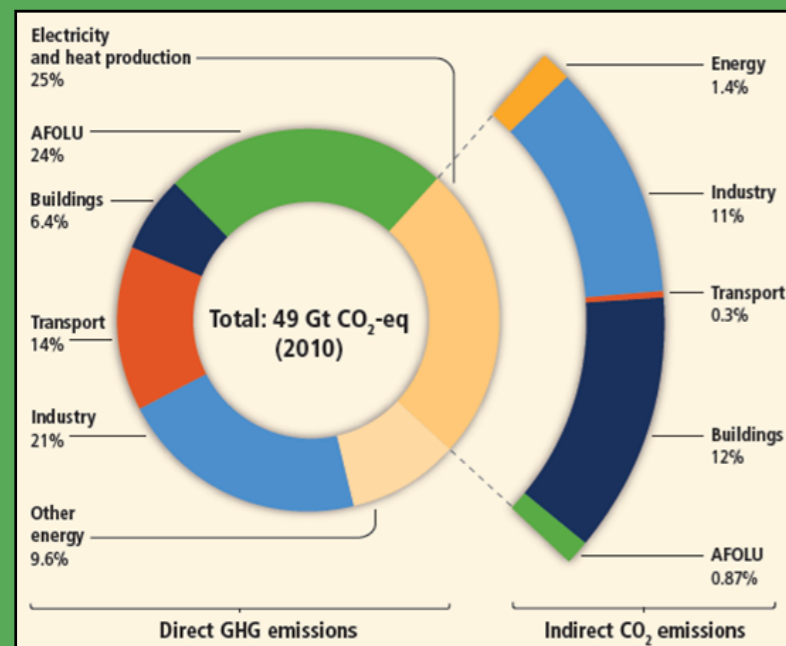


Fig. 1: Green house gas emission by sectors (IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, 2014)

The UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty formed in 1992 with the main objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Around 196 countries, including Bhutan, have ratified the convention and are therefore a party to it. The National Environment Commission (NEC) is the focal point for Bhutan to the UNFCCC. Since the treaty was formed, COPs are held annually to discuss how to achieve the treaty's aims and objectives. Two approaches are advocated to reduce the impacts

of climate change: adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation involves making changes to existing systems, structures, and ways of life to reduce vulnerability and increase the resilience of a community to climate change. It goes hand in hand with mitigation, which aims to reduce GHG emissions or enhance the removal of these gases from the atmosphere, for example through improving carbon sinks such as forests. Mitigation addresses the causes of climate change (accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere), whereas adaptation addresses the impacts of climate change.

REDD+ as a mitigation mechanism under UNFCCC is to reduce carbon emission and enhance sequestration through five activities; i) reducing deforestation, ii) reducing forest degradation, iii) conservation, iv) sustainable management of forest and v) enhancement of forest carbon stock. There are also other important co-benefits from implementing REDD+ activities that potentially include alternative livelihood provision and biodiversity conservation. If implemented effectively, REDD+ could help protect and enhance the world's forests as carbon reservoirs and maximize their potential for slowing down and reducing the impact of climate change.

REDD+ activities although mitigation mechanism have adaptation co-benefits. REDD+ can increase the adaptation of forests to climate change by reducing anthropogenic pressures on forests, enhancing connectivity between forest areas and conserving biodiversity. Similarly, forest ecosystem-based adaptation program can directly benefit climate change mitigation, through either increasing or maintaining carbon stocks.

3. Relevance of REDD+ to Bhutan

Bhutan has a forest cover of 70.45% and another 10.43% under shrubs with 51.34% of total area under Protected Area management. This is mainly attributed to the enabling policies and legislations for conservation and sustainable forest management. The implementation of REDD+ therefore has huge potential to complement the efforts of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) in conservation and sustainable management of forest resources. REDD+ may be linked with a market mechanism which allows developed countries and private companies to fund the planning and implementation of REDD+ activities in developing countries. REDD+ implementation will also deliver other benefits such as environmental services and biodiversity conservation and thereby help in strengthening Bhutan's conservation goals.

4. Relation of REDD+ to other programs for addressing climate change

	REDD+	NAMA (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action)	NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action)	NAP (National Action Program)
International convention	UNFCCC	UNFCCC	UNFCCC	UNCCD
Scope of mechanism	Mitigation	Mitigation	Adaptation	Combating land degradation
Objective	Reducing emission and enhance GHG sequestration from forests	Reduce emissions from various sources	Address the risk of climate induced disasters & adapt to impacts of climate change	Improve & reclaim degraded land
Target sectors	Forestry, Agriculture, Livestock, Mining, Planning, energy, Transport, Infrastructure	Transport, Energy	Infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, water resources, energy & health	
Stakeholders				
Donors	UN-REDD Programme, FCPF (World Bank), GEF, SFM/REDD+, other bilateral support	GEF, GCF	GEF, LDCF	GEF, LDN
Implementation framework	National REDD+ Strategy			Voluntary targets to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality

5. What can Bhutan expect from REDD+?

REDD+ has the potential to generate additional investment for sustainable management and utilization of forest resources through a future international climate change agreement. The level of this investment will depend on Bhutan's success in implementing policies and measures that address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and the barriers to the '+' activities (conservation, sustainable management and enhancement of forests). Countries are currently negotiating the future climate change agreement through the COP under the UNFCCC, which is expected to be agreed in 2015 (COP21, Paris).

6. When will REDD+ become a reality?

REDD+ is part of a future international climate change agreement that is currently being negotiated. Countries aiming to participate and benefit from the future REDD+ mechanism are implementing readiness activities to become REDD+ ready. Readiness includes the development of a national strategy and policies and measures for addressing drivers of deforestation

and forest degradation through a transparent, participatory and equitable process. REDD+ implementation, specifically results-based activities, can lead to results-based payments if the future climate change agreement which is expected to come into effect by 2020 is agreed and signed by all countries.

Countries undertaking REDD+ readiness will benefit immensely from the Readiness phase. Bhutan is using financial resources provided by global REDD+ partners like UN-REDD and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) to implement the REDD+ Readiness which is part of its Eleventh Five Year Plan program. The activities are essentially geared towards establishing the national forest monitoring system which will enable monitoring of changes in forest cover and carbon stocks over the years. Other main activities include capacity building of technical staffs and stakeholders, strengthening policies and measures to ensure sustainable management of forests. Following are the benefits of REDD+ readiness implementation:

- Bridging of the forestry data and information gap and improvement of the knowledge base; and
- Improvement of forest governance through institutional strengthening and capacity building thereby ensuring effective service delivery and efficient utilization of resources.
- Increased awareness on the linkages between forest conservation and climate change issues

7. Approach to REDD+ Implementation

As per guidance from UNFCCC, REDD+ should be implemented in three phases. Phases 1 and 2 (Figure 2) are called REDD+ Readiness, where national REDD+ strategies and measures are developed and implemented (at interim potentially at sub-national levels). It also includes capacity building and institutional strengthening including piloting and demonstration of selected REDD+ activities. In phase 3, countries should implement REDD+ at the national level, with the following key elements in place:

- National strategy or action plan;
- National forest monitoring system;
- Forest reference (emission) level and
- Safeguards information system.

In the final phase, countries need to demonstrate that they have been able to reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks, and payment will be made only after MRV of carbon emission reduction and increase in carbon stock has been carried out.

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the UN-REDD Programme are global programs supporting countries to prepare for REDD+ by providing technical,

institutional and policy support to align their policies with that of guidance on REDD+ available from UNFCCC.

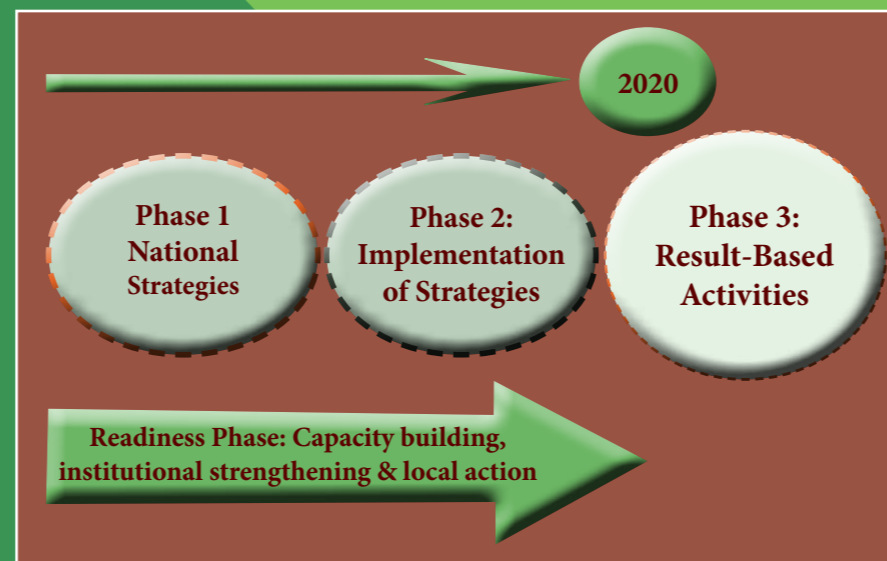


Fig. 2: Phases of REDD+

8. REDD+ Readiness Program of Bhutan

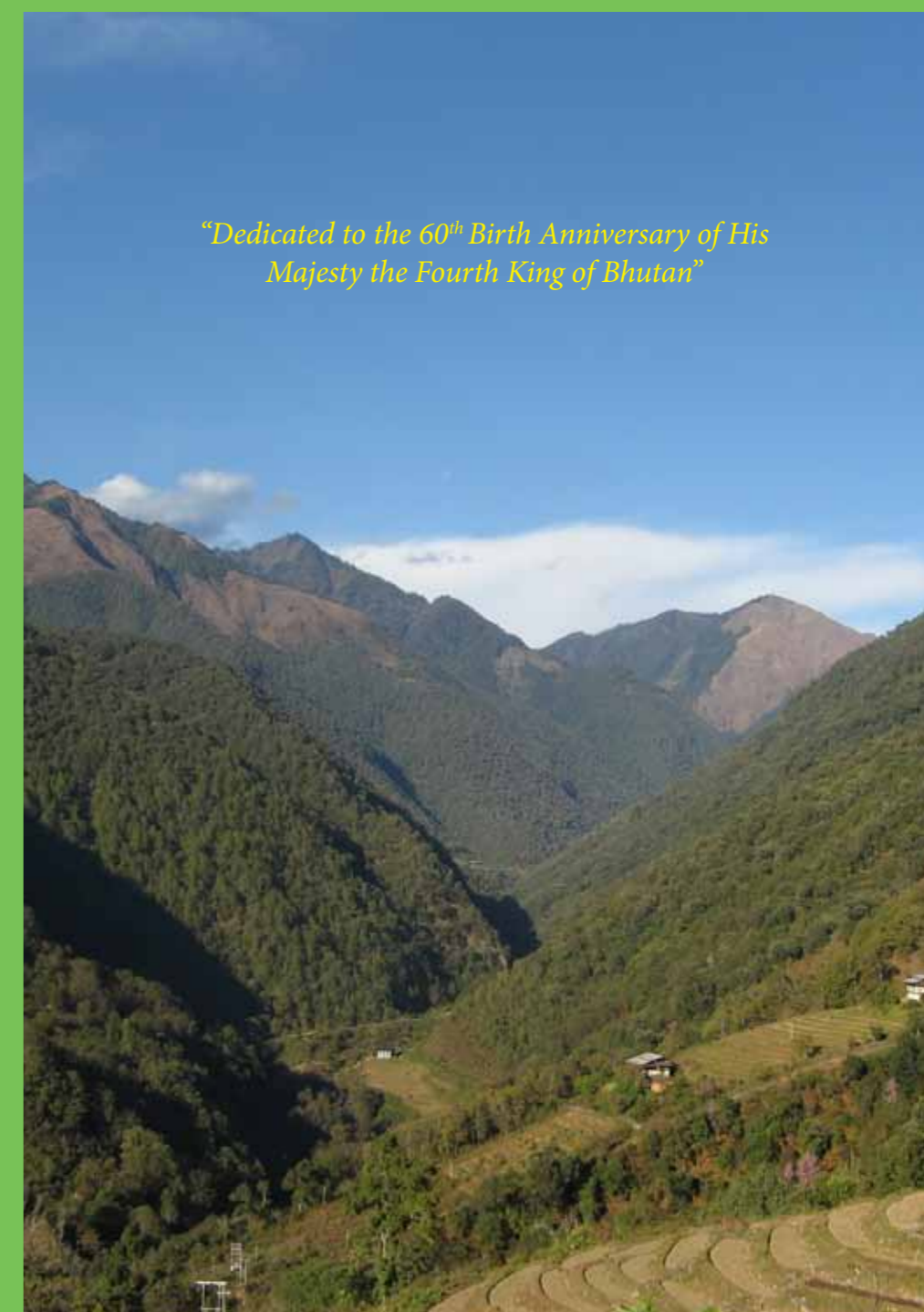
Bhutan's REDD+ program started in 2010 with support from UN-REDD Programme. Since then, several seminars and workshops were conducted at the national as well as district levels, which helped in delivering message on REDD+ to relevant stakeholders. UNDP Bhutan also supported in capacity building and awareness programs. A scoping study for REDD+ was also carried out to study the feasibility of REDD+ Bhutan in December 2010 with technical assistance from SNV Bhutan. In 2013, Bhutan prepared its REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) with support from UN-REDD (UNDP, FAO, UNEP) programme and its country offices which was submitted to and approved by the FCPF of World Bank in December 2013.

The main outcome of REDD+ readiness programme is to develop Bhutan's National REDD+ Strategy and implementation framework including National Forest Monitoring System, Forest Reference (Emission) Level, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) mechanism, and Safeguard Information System (SIS) for REDD+.

For more information please contact:
Watershed Management Division
Department of Forests & Park Services
at 02-323568 / 323539
www.moaf.gov.bt/dofps.gov.bt



Department of Forests & Park Services
Ministry of Agriculture & Forests
Royal Government of Bhutan



"Dedicated to the 60th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan"

**Bhutan's REDD+ Program:
Status and Way Forward**

Watershed Management Division
March - 2015