Book Section:

Analysing REDD+
Challenges and choices

Editor	Arild Angelsen
Co-editors	Maria Brockhaus
	William D. Sunderlin
	Louis V. Verchot
Editorial assistant	Therese Dokken
Language editing, project management and layout	Green Ink Ltd

Any views expressed in this book are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of CIFOR, the editors, the authors' institutions, the financial sponsors or the reviewers.

Center for International Forestry Research
CIFOR advances human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that affect forests in developing countries. CIFOR is a CGIAR Consortium Research Center. CIFOR's headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia and it also has offices in Asia, Africa and South America.

Politics and power in national REDD+ policy processes

Monica Di Gregorio, Maria Brockhaus, Tim Cronin and
Efrian Muharrom

- Achieving emission reductions through REDD+ requires four preconditions for overcoming politico-economic hurdles: i) the relative autonomy of nation states from key interests that drive deforestation and forest degradation; ii) national ownership over REDD+ policy processes; iii) inclusive REDD+ policy processes; and iv) the presence of coalitions that call for transformational change.
- Formulating and implementing effective national REDD+ strategies is most challenging in those countries where international actors are the sole force driving REDD+ policy processes.
- New coalitions capable of breaking up institutional and political path-dependencies will need the participation of state elites and the engagement of business actors to affect the political agenda in a significant way.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the policy processes on the formulation and proposed implementation of national (and federal) REDD+ strategies in seven countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Nepal, Peru and

Vietnam. Using a political economy lens, we identify major constraints to effective policy making. Starting from the main drivers of deforestation and the particular contexts in each country, we first identify key features of national policy processes, including the structural conditions, the dominant policy actors and the processes that aid or hamper the development of effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ policies. While the state of international climate negotiations certainly affects national policy processes on REDD+, in this chapter we do not discuss the relationship between the two, but focus instead on the national level.

Countries engaged in REDD+ policy development are progressing at very different paces and are involved to different degrees with international partners in multilateral or bilateral arrangements for REDD+ policy design, with a particular emphasis on capacity building (Chapter 3). Their political regimes are diverse, spanning democracies to authoritarian states. As would be expected, democratic regimes present more open and inclusive policy processes (Johannsen and Pedersen 2008). In all countries, a multitude of actors from the subnational, national and international level are involved in national REDD+ policy processes (Hiraldo and Tanner 2011a). Contentious politics are at the heart of any policy process, and the REDD+ policy arena is no exception.

Each of the seven countries has seen major policy events linked to REDD+ policy formulation (Figure 5.1). The main policy outputs relate to the establishment of new institutions, procedures and capacity building linked to readiness activities – concrete policy formulation and implementation have been limited to date. The slow progress overall might reflect the delays in obtaining financing from global climate negotiations, but domestic power struggles also factor in.

This chapter uses as a political economy analysis framework based on the 'four Is' outlined in Chapter 2: institutions, ideas, interests and information, focussing in particular on the first three. We investigate *institutional* and political path-dependencies, the *interests* of actors driving deforestation and forest degradation, and the way in which their *ideas* translate into discursive practices (Figure 5.2). All these factors affect the power of dominant coalitions that enable or limit transformational change in this policy domain. We define transformational change as a change in attitudes, discourse, power relations and deliberate (policy and/or protest) action necessary to lead policy formulation and implementation away from business as usual policy approaches and toward supporting (directly or indirectly) reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (Chapter 2). We argue that four preconditions must be in place to facilitate transformational change: in terms of interests transformational change requires: i) a high level of autonomy of the state *vis-à-vis* powerful economic

interests that contribute to the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in terms of institutional and political preconditions it requires; ii) national government ownership of REDD+ policy processes; iii) inclusion of stakeholders in REDD+ policy processes; and iv) in terms of policy dynamics it requires the presence of dominant coalitions that want to break off from practices associated with business as usual (Figure 5.2).

5.2 Methods

The following analysis is based on the findings from two research modules of the policy analysis component of the ongoing Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS) led by CIFOR (see Appendix).

The first module is a *policy analysis* that investigates the political context in which national REDD+ strategies are developing and identifies possible path-dependencies and obstacles to REDD+ actions. Its main focus is on politico-economic, institutional and governance conditions in each country. The investigation in each country included desktop research, expert interviews and reviews of policy documents.

The second module is a *media analysis* of policy discourses, which investigates the composition of the policy domain, the position statements (stances) of key actors and the potential for the formation of coalitions for transformational change. We look at how REDD+ policy debates are framed in the media and compare the dominant discourse with counter-discourses (Hajer 1995; Boykoff 2008). *Media frames* are "patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organise discourse" (Gitlin 1980:7). The coding and systematic analysis of the media frames identified the key policy actors supporting the frames present in the articles, their attitudes towards REDD+ and their discursive practices. Articles from three major national newspapers from December 2005 to December 2009 are included in this analysis. The comparative analysis is based on the media data collected by the single case studies.

5.3 Institutional context, path-dependencies and interests

The factors constraining transformational change are determined by the interplay of the institutional arrangements, past policies and consolidated interests that operate in sectors driving deforestation and forest degradation. Together these build path-dependencies that are difficult to overcome. A number of causes of deforestation and degradation have been highlighted in the literature, which span from direct causes such as large- and small-scale

International events

December 2007
COP13 in Bali

December 2007
Launch of World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

September 2007
Forest 11 meeting in New York

December 2008
COP14 in Poznań

September 2008
Launch of UN-REDD Programme

2007   **2008**

Bolivia

March 2007
Creation of REDD+ Political and Technical Committee
(Starting readiness of REDD+, R-PIN, etc.)

Brazil

June 2007
Amazonas state law of CC and PES

July 2007
The "Zero Deforestation Pact"

August 2008
Amazon Fund

June 2009
The Tocantins Letter of the "Forum of Amazonian Governors"

2007
Interministerial committee on climate change at federal level

Cameroon

July 2008
R-PIN Cameroon submission to FCPF

January 2009
Decision N°09/MINEP – Creation of REDD Cameroon pilot steering Committee

Indonesia

July 2008
Establishment of DNPI

December 2008
Ministry of Forestry Regulation 68/2008 on REDD DA

Nepal

January 2009
• Establishment of REDD Cell
• Formation of REDD Working Group

Peru

May 2008
Foundation of Group REDD

May 2009
Creation of REDD technical group within national council on CC

Vietnam

July 2008
FCPF R-PIN is approved

December 2008
NTP-RCC

October 2008
Prime Minister Decision 380/QD-T Tg on PES

Figure 5.1   Key REDD+ policy events by country

December 2009
COP15 in Copenhagen

November/December 2010
COP16 in Cancun

December 2011
COP17 in Durban

May 2010
The interim REDD+ partnership

2009

2010

2011

July 2009
Consultation workshops for the formulation of forest and climate change strategy

December 2010
Agreement between UN and the Government of Bolivia for UN REDD+ Bolivia

April 2010
World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change

2009
NPCC and voluntary commitments 80% REDD in Amazon and 40% in Cerrado

2010
Multiple actors dialogue on National REDD+ strategy

October 2009
Brazilian participation in the COP-15 (Interministerial meeting with President Lula)

2010
Regulation of NPCC and economy wide goal of 2 GT reduction of emissions by 2020

2011
National REDD+ strategy formulation by interministerial committee

September 2009
Validation of meeting document on Cameroon position in CC

December 2009
Presidential decree on (National Observatory of Climate Change) ONACC

December 2009
Feedback meeting on REPAR participation in Copenhagen Conference

May 2009
Ministry of Forestry Decree 36/2009 on carbon sequestration license

May 2010
Letter of Intent between Indonesia and Norway

May 2011
Presidential Instruction 10/2011 on moratorium of new licenses

September 2009
Indonesia 26% emission target commitment at G-20 Meeting

September 2011
Presidential Decree no. 61/2011 on National Plan to reduce GHGs

April 2009
R-PP finalisation

December 2009
Cabinet meeting in Kalapathar, near Mount Everest Base Camp

July 2010
Proposed Amendments to Forest Act 1993

March 2011
R-PP approved by FCPF

March 2010
Accepted as FIP pilot country

April 2011
National workshop "Climate Crisis, REDD+ and Indigenous REDD" and the Declaration of Quitos

December 2009
Announcement of reduction of net deforestation to 0% by 2021

July 2011
New national forest law approved (regulations and norms still pending)

July 2009
UN-REDD Vietnam programme phase 1

March 2010
National REDD+ Strategy

January 2011
Establishment of NRS and VRO

July 2011
National MRV framework is endorsed

September 2009
National REDD network and technical working group

October 2010
PFES Government decree

Institutional and political path-dependencies
- In
- Past policies supporting or clashing with REDD+
- Level of inclusion of political processes

Actors' interests
- Sectors driving DD*
- State: level of autonomy
- Civil society
- International actors

Actors' ideas
- Beliefs and ideology
- Development model

Policy process
Political coalitions, cooperation or contention to move from:

Business as usual
- State capture by DD sectors
- Low inclusiveness in policy processes
- International actors dominate national policy processes

Transformational change
- State autonomy from DD sectors
- Inclusive policy processes
- State leads policy processes

* DD: deforestation and forest degradation

Figure 5.2 Political economy framework

agricultural expansion, to more indirect drivers such as state policies and wealthy business interests within and outside the forestry sector (Rudel 2007; Brockhaus *et al.* 2012). Powerful economic incentives are often behind the most relevant drivers, usually acting in 'tandem' (Lambin *et al.* 2001).

Transformational change requires a state that can operate with some autonomy from the sectors driving deforestation and forest degradation and work in the interest of society at large (Karsenty and Ongolo 2012). *Autonomy* of the state refers to the degree to which state actors can make policy decisions independently from various sectors. The form that autonomy takes is the product of the specific history of nation states. A state must be able to withstand lobbying pressure from sectors that benefit from forest exploitation and land use changes, for transformational change to occur. But autonomy has to go hand in hand with inclusive policy processes, which translate into a form of embedded autonomy (Evans 1995). The more inclusive the political system, the more likely the state will serve a broader section of society, because

demands from less powerful interests – such as civil society – find better representation in such systems (Jenkins 1995).

There is substantial evidence of lack of autonomy of the state *vis-à-vis* sectors driving deforestation and forest degradation. Collusion and corruption may be present, or simply weak forest governance, which are considered the main challenges in the development and effective implementation of policies on REDD+ (Kanninen *et al.* 2007). Illegal logging and unenforced laws are endemic in many tropical forested countries (Brack 2005). Ongoing analysis indicates strong links between forest governance and general governance conditions and their impact on the REDD+ policy process (WRI 2009).

The following analysis considers four main politico-economic and institutional conditions: i) the main drivers of deforestation, which represent interests supporting business as usual; ii) policies enabling or hindering REDD+ objectives and related institutional arrangements; iii) the autonomy of the state *vis-à-vis* economic actors driving deforestation and forest degradation; and iv) the level of inclusiveness of policy processes (Table 5.1).

The first condition refers to the *drivers of deforestation and forest degradation*. Agricultural expansion, including cattle ranching, is the main cause of deforestation, although the relative impact of large- versus small-scale and subsistence agriculture varies. This is followed by logging, mining and infrastructure development (Table 5.1). Consequently, in order to effectively tackle deforestation and forest degradation, policy makers need to identify the main policy constraints in the forestry, agricultural, cattle ranching and mining sectors and devise new incentive structures (see Box 5.1 for a discussion on Brazil). The high rents that these sectors command make it particularly difficult to redesign incentives. While the sectors that drive deforestation and forest degradation are well known, quantifying the impacts of these single sectors on deforestation and forest degradation remains a challenge in most countries.

Policies that support drivers of deforestation and related *institutional arrangements* hamper transformational change and create *path-dependencies* that are difficult to escape. In most countries tax regimes favour exploitation of forests for economic development, such as support for rural credit for cattle ranching in Brazil (although they are now lower and linked to environmental sustainability measures) and tax breaks for biofuels and plantation development in Indonesia (Table 5.1). Public funding for infrastructure development is also key to supporting the expansion of such activities. Over time these policies create institutional structures that drive up the profitability of competing land uses, effectively consolidating the power of key sectors driving deforestation and forest degradation. The challenge is to break free from such path-dependencies. In all countries there are also policies in place that can enable

Table 5.1 Drivers of deforestation, policies that clash/support REDD+ and autonomy of state actors

Country	Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation	Policies that clash with REDD+ aims	Policies that support REDD+	Lack of autonomy or possible capture by special interests	Democracy category score (index)*	Level of centralisation
Brazil	Ranching; agriculture (large- and small-scale); infrastructure; selective logging; mining; fire	Rural credit for cattle ranching (although more limited than in the past) or infrastructure development (roads and dams); poor enforcement of tenure rules	Forest Code conservation requirement on private land; improved enforcement of land use policies (including protected areas); economic and ecological zoning; efforts to certify producer legality commercial chains (beef, soy); land regularisation process and demarcation of indigenous land; real-time monitoring of deforestation	Medium–high (land speculation; illegal logging; cattle ranching; tax evasion; drug trafficking; patron–client relationships and electoral campaigns)	Flawed democracy (7.12)	Federal system
Peru	Agriculture (predominantly small-scale); infrastructure; illegal logging; mining	Tax regimes and policies supporting migration and agricultural expansion; road infrastructure projects; energy infrastructure projects (oil, biofuels and hydroelectric); support for expansion of mining; lack of environmental policies and sustainable development policies in the Amazon	Ley 29763 *Ley Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre* (New Forest and Wildlife Act) approved but not yet in force; Peru–US trade agreement; free trade agreement with China on forestry and environmental protection; trade agreement Peru–EU (REDD+, forest certification, sustainable forest management); Ley 29785 *Ley de Consulta Previa* (prior consultation law); national forest conservation programme	Medium–high (corruption of public officials and professionals); powerful cartels that favour illegal logging, coca and cocaine production and informal mining	Flawed democracy (6.59)	Centralised
Indonesia	Agriculture (large-scale including forest plantations such as oil palm, small-scale and subsistence); logging; mining	Tax dependence on forest and mining; tax breaks for forest products, farming produce, pulp and paper; mining permits in protected areas; fiscal and non-fiscal concessions for food estate and energy estate development; biofuel development; land allocation for oil palm plantations	Moratorium on granting of new licenses and improvement of natural primary forest and peatland governance (although considered a weak policy due to the influence of business on government)	Medium–high (pressure from large-scale plantations and logging, pulp and paper, mining and electoral campaigns)	Flawed democracy (6.53)	Decentralised with tensions

Bolivia	Agriculture (small- and large-scale); colonisation and soybean production; infrastructure development; (illegal) logging; mining	Political and economic incentives in agricultural sector (soybean and sugarcane agrobusiness); upcoming infrastructure projects (roads, dams); support for colonisation of the northern Amazon	Improved forest monitoring of illegal logging; increased recognition of local tenure rights; legal framework on sustainable forest management; decentralisation of forest management	Low (illegal loggers bribing forestry police and road police, but little evidence that this involves national administration)	Hybrid regimes (5.84)	Decentralised
Nepal	Agriculture; illegal logging; resettlement; infrastructure; fire	Agricultural modernisation and associated infrastructure development; hydropower development; local road construction; mining of sand, boulders and stone; lack of overarching land use policy	Subsidies for kerosene, biogas, micro-hydro, solar and improved cooking stoves; community forestry programme	Medium-high (illegal logging and smuggling to India and Tibet (China); encroachment of forestlands; corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and community leaders)	Hybrid regimes (4.24)	Decentralised
Cameroon	Agriculture (medium- and small-scale, subsistence); logging; mining	Devaluations boosting logging exports; infrastructure (roads, rails and dams); mining and large-scale agriculture projects	Law No 2011/08 on Guidelines for Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development in Cameroon	High in the logging sector (corruption driving illegal logging includes national and local elite)	Authoritarian (3.41)	Decentralised but with limits
Vietnam	Agriculture; infrastructure; logging; fire; shifting cultivation; migration	Infrastructure (roads and hydropower); self-sufficiency in food and cash crop development (rubber and coffee); National Socio-Economic Development Plan; credit schemes to alleviate poverty; land allocation; economic development as main goal of Forest Development Strategy	Decision 380 and Decree 99; payment for forest environmental services including benefit-sharing regulation (strong design, weak implementation); Law on Forest Protection and Development 2004 and Land Law 2003: legal foundation for carbon rights; National Climate Change Strategy and National REDD+ programme	Medium-high (especially at the local level and in relation to state-owned companies and land administration)	Authoritarian (2.96)	Centralised

Based on May *et al.* (2011b), Dkamela (2011), Indrarto *et al.* (2012), Pham *et al.* (2012), CEDLA and CIFOR (2011a), Forest Action and CIFOR (2011), DAR and CIFOR (2012)

* A high score on the index indicates democracy, while a low score indicates an authoritarian regime (Economist Intelligence Unit 2011)

Box 5.1 REDD+ the Brazilian way: Integrating old sticks with new carrots
Jan Börner and Sven Wunder

Implementing REDD+ requires policies that effectively change land and forest use decisions. In most settings, such changes imply foregone economic benefits for land users, at least in the short term. Apart from implementation costs, any effective REDD+ policy will thus inevitably have distributional consequences. Ideally, REDD+ would maximise both cost effectiveness and equity. In practice, however, policy makers tend to face hard tradeoffs between these two objectives.

Land ownership and forest use rights in the Brazilian Amazon are highly concentrated. The Brazilian Senate is now considering far-reaching liberalisations of currently restrictive land use legislation, in an attempt to catch up with a reality of widespread non-compliance. Effectively enforcing the current Brazilian Forest Code – for example, mandating the conservation of 80% of on-farm forests – would cost the country's fast-growing, land-expansive agroindustry. On the other hand, purely incentive-based REDD+ approaches would mean compensating landholders for not breaking existing conservation regulations, which is politically sensitive. At COP15 in 2009, Brazil therefore proposed a REDD+ approach that combines more rigid regulatory enforcement with a compensatory national programme of payments for environmental services (PES).

Finding the optimal mix of regulatory sticks and PES carrots has implications not only for equity, but also for implementation costs. Enforcing conservation laws requires costly field operations, but it can also produce fine revenues that may partially offset implementation costs. PES, in contrast, entails considerable budget outlays, which have political opportunity costs *vis-à-vis* other government spending. Adding fairness to REDD+ by compensating landholders' opportunity costs – whether legal or illegal but tolerated – thus comes at significant costs, especially if past good forest stewards (e.g. many Amazon indigenous people and traditional forest dwellers) are also to be rewarded.

Mixed stick-and-carrot approaches have their pros and cons. As a stand-alone instrument, PES can be enforced simply by suspending payments to non-compliant land users. PES recipients will then expect to receive at least their opportunity costs in compensation. In conjunction with pre-existing regulations, however, PES become compliance subsidies, which typically will not fully compensate land users for abiding by conservation laws. Under such a policy mix, suspending payments may not suffice to effectively encourage conservation if the regulatory threat is perceived to be improbable, e.g. in remote frontier areas. Imperfect enforcement of the complementary stick component may also induce land users to pocket PES and continue business as usual. Policy makers who effectively integrate stick-and-carrot-based REDD+ policies will thus depend on planning tools that can anticipate spatially heterogeneous implementation costs and welfare effects of synergistically operating conservation tools. In partially decentralised environmental governance systems like Brazil's, the costs of implementing environmental policies are shared between national and subnational governments. New benefit and cost sharing mechanisms will thus also be needed across administrative entities to achieve effective and equitable outcomes.

Source: Börner *et al.* (2011)

REDD+ policy formulation and implementation. They include policies on payments for environmental services; forest regulations that foster sustainable forest management; conservation, reforestation and afforestation; and government expenditures that aim to increase energy efficiency and provide alternatives to forest products. But generally these policies command fewer resources and cover very limited areas, compared to policies that support drivers of deforestation (Table 5.1).

Apart from the business sector, the state itself has economic and political interests in the exploitation and conversion of forest, as these activities contribute to economic development goals and provide financial resources for the state in the form of taxes and other levies. In order to provide incentive structures it is essential that the state holds a sufficient *level of autonomy* from economic actors driving deforestation (Karsenty and Ongolo 2012). Lack of autonomy can also be revealed by high levels of collusion between state and social actors. All seven countries face challenges in this respect (Table 5.1). Nepal and Peru face challenges in the application of forestry laws in particular at the local level where patron–client networks operate. In Brazil and Indonesia, powerful agri-businesses, cattle ranching landowners, and logging companies constantly put pressure on government to protect their sources of rents. This is evident in the attack from business interests on the Brazil Forest Code and the Indonesian Moratorium. Most lobbying occurs behind the scenes, but its effects are visible in final policy formulation, limited implementation of policies and low levels of compliance with existing policies (Coen 2004). In recent years Brazil has demonstrated an increased ability to withstand such pressure compared to Indonesia, which has a long history of cosy relations between government officials and business interests at all levels. Illegal logging licensing is also routinely used to raise resources for electoral campaigns in many of these countries. In Vietnam the main challenge relates to corruption and collusion in state enterprises, local government and civil service. High levels of capture of parts of the state by interests driving deforestation are visible in Cameroon where more than 90% of illegal logging activities involve local and national level elites. In none of the seven countries is autonomy of the state sufficient to support bold policy changes signalling a fundamental break from the traditional development model of relying on unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. State actors in Vietnam, followed by Brazil, are probably in the best position to independently support such a change. In all other cases, transformational change will require broader alliances between parts of the state and other forces able to break path-dependencies. International actors and civil society can contribute in part by pushing for such changes. Norway is one of the major international donors supporting these efforts (see Box 5.4).

Finally, the more *inclusive* policy processes are, the more likely REDD+ policies will include considerations about equity and the less likely potential

tensions and open conflict will occur among policy actors and stakeholders. Inclusiveness in policy processes is affected by the type of political regime and by its degree of centralisation. We use democracy indices and the degree of actual centralisation of the political system as proxies for inclusiveness (Table 5.1). The political regimes in the seven countries vary widely from democratic to authoritarian, as does the level of centralisation, from very centralised (Vietnam) to federal and decentralised states (Brazil, Indonesia). Overall, more authoritarian regimes such as Vietnam and Cameroon tend to be more centralised and have exclusive forms of participation in policy processes. But some regimes like Peru are both democratic and relatively centralised. More democratic states are expected to be more inclusive in policy decision making. Countries such as Indonesia and Cameroon have been subject to changing processes of decentralisation and recentralisation (Ribot 2003; Oyono 2004). Overall Vietnam and Cameroon represent exclusive political regimes, while Brazil, Peru and Indonesia are more inclusive. Bolivia and Nepal have hybrid regimes that have both democratic and authoritarian features, characterised by limited inclusiveness. The inclusiveness of political regimes will likely impact the inclusiveness of specific policy processes, including REDD+ (see Box 5.2 for a more detailed analysis of inclusiveness in the consultation process on REDD+ in Tanzania).

5.4   Policy discourse and coalitions for change

The media can be seen as a mirror of ongoing policy processes, and *media analysis* is used here to identify the dominant policy discourses and the extent to which such discourses are shared across actors. Transformational coalitions use discursive practices that challenge business as usual scenarios and call for changes in institutions, policies and incentive structures of the traditional economic development model, which is based on exploitation of forest resources. However, the mirroring of policy processes by the media is only partial. Not all actors use the media as an outlet to influence policy and public opinion; business interests are particularly media shy and prefer to lobby the government in more discrete ways (Coen 2004). The same is true for scientists, although research institutes are represented more than businesses in the media.

REDD+ media coverage in the seven countries took off after the Bali Road Map was launched at COP13 in 2007. Since then, media articles have increased in number, but the level of coverage differs substantially among countries. Between December 2005 and 2009, three major newspapers in Indonesia and Brazil contained around 190 and 250 articles, respectively, discussing REDD+, while in the other countries coverage remained at under 15 articles (Cronin and Santoso 2010; CEDLA and CIFOR 2011b; Kengoum 2011; May *et al.* 2011a; Pham 2011; Forest Action and CIFOR 2012; Libelula and CIFOR 2012).

Box 5.2 Linking knowledge to action: REDD+ policy making in Tanzania

Salla Rantala

Drawing from different types of relevant knowledge in ways that increase the effectiveness, efficiency and equitability of policy making is a pressing challenge for countries as they prepare their national REDD+ policies. Policy makers are increasingly dependent on brokers of the complex scientific knowledge related to climate change and the required regimes to address it. At the same time, policy outputs often reflect political bargaining processes between various policy actors that differ in their resources and capacities, rather than linear processes of evidence-based policy making.

In Tanzania, the government-led REDD+ Task Force has welcomed contributions by civil society, research institutions, local governments and international partners to national REDD+ strategy development. Organisations with a strong mandate to disseminate information relevant to REDD+ shared their experiences in engaging with the policy process. While formal means often included workshops and training, the most frequently mentioned successful entry points to influencing policy were finding the right organisational allies within and outside of government for joint advocacy efforts, as well as subtle diplomacy with individuals high up in the line of command across different sectors. There was also considerable consensus regarding the need to showcase real local success stories in order to convince policy makers. The most salient challenge to linking relevant knowledge to REDD+ policy making was the high cost of getting the attention of key officials. Conveners of information-sharing events have to compete for the target participants' limited time. Faced with an overwhelming choice of events, officials may end up basing their choice of attending an event on the resources available for expenses such as allowances, rather than on the information content of the event.

This challenge illustrates how the channels of resources and information in policy making may be intertwined. Other barriers mentioned by interviewees in Tanzania relate to the capacity and willingness of decision makers to consider recommendations that diverge from their pre-existing views, as well as the sluggishness of the bureaucratic system in responding to evidence. Limiting interaction to junior officials and executive branches of government instead of the 'real decision makers' was also said to account for some of the failures in effectively linking knowledge to action.

5.4.1 Ownership

In order for governments to lead sustained change in the national REDD+ policy domain, they need to be in control of policy processes and display the political will to implement these strategies. Analysing the extent to which national state actors are active in shaping policy discourse in the media can provide an indication of the degree of government ownership of REDD+ policy processes. The data presented here refer to the counts of policy actors (Table 5.2) and their REDD+ discursive practices, as mentioned in the media frames.

In four of the seven countries, state actors dominate media discourse. While in Bolivia most state actors understand REDD+ as an offsetting mechanism and unilaterally reject it, national state actors in Vietnam and Indonesia show strong pro-REDD+ attitudes. Policy discourse in Brazil is dominated by national level state actors (26%), but a high diversity of stakeholders is represented in the media, notably international environmental nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), research institutes and domestic civil society actors. Indonesia also presents a high diversity of actors, especially international NGOs. A peculiarity of decentralised Indonesia is the relatively high number of subnational actors, which mirrors ongoing negotiations between central and local government regarding the control over REDD+ resources and policy decisions (Cronin and Santoso 2010; see also Box 6.2). Brazil and Bolivia – a federal and a decentralised state, respectively – are the only other countries where subnational actors are present in media reports.

Nepal shows a high presence of civil society actors in the media, which far exceeds that of state actors. Intergovernmental bodies and international research institutes follow. But while they work in conjunction with government in most countries, they completely dominate policy discourse in Cameroon and in Peru. In fact, Cameroon presents the weakest level of government control over policy discourse. It seems that REDD+ strategies are predominantly pushed by international actors, and similar conditions are evident in Peru. While in part this might indicate a lack of state capacity to engage with complex technical issues such as REDD+, it can also be an indicator of slow progress in policy processes and lack of political will to devote resources and efforts to the formulation and implementation of a national REDD+ strategy. In Cameroon, this suggests that sustained and effective policy action around REDD+ might become limited in the near future. Nepal presents a different profile, in which civil society has more representation in the media than the government and is the main supporter of REDD+ policies (see Box 5.3).

Overall, governments in Brazil, Indonesia and Vietnam have strong ownership of national level REDD+ policy processes and are proactively supporting policy action on REDD+, although in Indonesia and Vietnam this is undertaken in

Table 5.2 Actors shaping the policy discourse (percentage of total actors expressing a position on REDD+ in media)

Actor group	Indonesia	Brazil	Bolivia	Vietnam	Nepal	Cameroon	Peru
State (national)	45	26	50	67	17	8	12
State (subnational)	7	2	3	0	6	0	0
Corporate	3	4	10	6	6	0	0
Intergovernmental	8	7	9	27	6	17	25
Research (international)	5	11	0	0	6	42	25
NGO and environmental NGO (international)	16	17	10	0	0	0	25
Research (national)	6	13	3	0	12	25	0
Civil society actors (national and environmental NGOs)	10	20	15	0	47	8	13
TOTAL% of organisations	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total number of organisations	**219**	**113**	**60**	**32**	**17**	**12**	**8**

strong alliance with international donors. An analysis of Norwegian media mirrors this, as the debate is also largely shaped by the Norwegian government and domestic environmental NGOs (for the view from a donor country, see Box 5.4). In Nepal, government control is more limited and REDD+ is discussed mainly by forest user associations in the media. In Cameroon and Peru, the voice and position of government is almost absent, indicating a low level of national ownership of REDD+ policy processes. International actors may be pushing for REDD+ policy formulation, but REDD+ policy progress is likely to suffer from this absence of national ownership.

5.4.2 Absent voices and hidden discourse

State autonomy *vis-à-vis* agents driving deforestation, government ownership of policy processes and a positive attitude toward REDD+ are preconditions for policy advances; but these conditions are by no means sufficient to ensure effective and equitable formulation of national REDD+ strategies. Transformational change requires policy actors and coalitions to be able to lead policy discussions in new directions compared to business as usual scenarios, thereby breaking away from institutional and politico-economic

Box 5.3 Constraints to effective REDD+ policy making in Nepal

Bryan R. Bushley and Dil Bahadur Khatri

Since the late 1970s, Nepal's forestry sector has undergone a process of steady decentralisation toward increased local autonomy and community-based forest management, and a more inclusive national policy making process. In recent years, however, government and forestry officials have attempted to restrict the autonomy of forest user groups and capture more economic value from forests through legislation, directives and discretionary measures. Simultaneously, the government, international NGOs, donors and civil society have embraced REDD+ and are engaged in policy making and piloting processes.

Yet, REDD+ discourses and policies have been influenced by interactions among a limited set of actors in the government, donor/international NGO and civil society sectors, with a few noticeable trends. First, the exchange of information and resources related to REDD+ is controlled by a few international and national NGOs implementing specific pilot projects, whereas government organisations are most influential in terms of shaping specific policies. Second, the participation of civil society actors in policy formulation is limited to the involvement of relatively few actors, whereas the interests of some marginalised groups, such as women and *Dalits* (low-caste 'untouchables'), are underrepresented. Third, there has been no direct involvement of private sector entities in piloting or policy making processes. Despite these deficiencies, new configurations of actors are emerging around piloting and awareness-raising efforts and advocacy campaigns for the rights of forest-dependent communities.

There are also a number of specific policy constraints that could threaten the long-term viability of REDD+ in Nepal. First and foremost is the lack of a clear legal basis for the establishment of carbon rights. Related to this is the issue of weak and ambiguous land tenure rights, especially for forest-dependent communities. Without either of these, it will be difficult to garner strong internal or external financial and political support for REDD+. Lack of clarity and consensus on adopting a fund-based *vs.* a market-based approach to REDD+ is also a major constraint. Another significant barrier is the lack of an inclusive, just and marketable benefit-sharing mechanism. A benefit-sharing pilot was carried out in three REDD+ piloting sites, with a minority (40%) of the criteria for benefits based on carbon stocks and a majority (60%) based on various social factors, such as the proportion of indigenous people, women, and disadvantaged groups in each community. But such an approach has no basis in existing carbon markets, may not be viable in a global carbon-trading scheme, and excludes other land managers besides community forest user groups. Finally, there is a need for an overarching democratic governance framework that would improve benefit-sharing mechanisms, oversee monitoring, reporting and verification, and address conflict resolution related to REDD+ implementation.

In Nepal, it appears that REDD+ may be reinforcing the centralising tendencies of the state while marginalising other important stakeholders. However, new modes of collaboration are also emerging, with the potential to transform existing institutions of forest governance. If these collaborations can successfully address the constraints outlined above, they may contribute to the realisation of a more effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ mechanism.

path-dependencies (Laumann and Knoke 1987). Inevitably, they will face resistance from conservative coalitions defending the *status quo*. Whether such transformational change occurs depends on which coalition will ultimately gain dominance in policy circles. Dominance usually requires buy-in at least in part from state elites and business interests. Coalitions can be based on common interest, ideological beliefs or a common discourse (Hajer 1995; Sabatier 1999; Benford and Snow 2000; Di Gregorio 2012).

It is not just dominant voices in the media that reveal the position of policy actors – voices that are absent can be as telling. The above analysis indicates that business views and business–state relations are barely explored in the media. This is the case even in countries such as Brazil and Indonesia, where the role of the business sector is quite significant. In general, business tends to lobby policy makers behind the scenes (Coen 2004). This is a universal phenomenon, and more so where such lobbying is perceived as problematic by the public. When such pressure entails illegal activities, secrecy becomes even more important. We have already seen how corruption and collusion between state and legal – as well as illegal – business interests is a major concern in most of the countries studied (Table 5.1). Such collusion forms low-visibility coalitions which can be very powerful in resisting transformational change and can influence not just the implementation, but also the formulation of policies.

There are, however, indications that even if such coalitions tend to operate discretely, their voices can be reflected in the media. Support for a business as usual scenario by state actors, in conditions where state autonomy is low, is a likely indicator of the existence of such dominant coalitions. The reluctance of government to take strong action with respect to REDD+ when this might threaten established rents linked to deforestation and forest degradation is a case in point.

Apart from identifying key actors, the media analysis helps to characterise the REDD+ policy positions of these actors. Their single policy positions have been aggregated into broader categories to identify coalitions for transformation change, and those resisting such change. The results of the analysis are presented next.[1]

5.4.3 Business as usual coalitions and coalitions for transformational change

In the media, powerful coalitions supporting key sectors driving deforestation and forest degradation are evident in both Brazil and Indonesia. Indonesian actors stress the need for REDD+ policies to compensate the opportunity

---

1   Given the opposition of government toward REDD+ and the absence of positions that seek transformational change, Bolivia is omitted from the analysis that follows.

Box 5.4 A media-based analysis of the REDD+ discourse in Norway
Laila Borge

In 2010, the well-known climate scientist James E. Hansen said that the main effect of Norway's funding of forest protection would be a clearer conscience for members of that oil nation. Norwegian environmental minister Erik Solheim quickly retorted in a letter to *Aftenposten* (the leading Norwegian newspaper): "Norway supports efforts to prevent deforestation because this is the quickest and most cost efficient way to achieve deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. (...) Norway has shown international leadership with its climate and forest initiative, and we have made several other countries support this important work". This latter view has been the most widely expressed in the Norwegian media.

In 2007, during the international climate negotiations in Bali, Norway pledged NOK 15 billion (US $2.6 billion) towards efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. The Government of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative was established in 2008 to implement that pledge. The initiative had broad political support and the Norwegian media were overwhelmingly optimistic about the initiative. Rainforest protection was presented as a simple, inexpensive and effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Several commentators also pointed out that, by funding forest conservation, Norway could quickly become carbon neutral.

Critical voices have grown louder in recent years, mainly from the research community and civil society. No one denies the value of the initiative's purpose, but many question whether it is possible to measure and control its effects and point out that most of the money has not yet been released. The Norwegian government is also being criticised for financing projects that destroy rainforests through the Government Pension Fund. Some media have brandished some unintended negative consequences of REDD+. In addition, the Norwegian government is criticised for buying its way out of less popular domestic CO_2 reductions.

Overall, however, the Norwegian media have remained positive, and Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative is seen as the most successful of the government's efforts to reduce emissions. The Norwegian debate is largely shaped by the government and domestic environmental NGOs. The Brazilian government has also been quite visible in the Norwegian press. The most cited actors are the (former) Norwegian Minister of the Environment and Minister of Development Cooperation, Erik Solheim, and the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg.

costs of large-scale businesses related forest conversion and warn that REDD+ should not undermine economic development. Given the low level of autonomy of state actors illustrated earlier, such statements are consistent with a situation in which part of the state apparatus sides with business interests that profit from rents from ranching, plantation development, logging and mining. But opinions of state actors are not uniform. For example, in Indonesia, the conservation branch of the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Environment recognise that REDD+ policy development will require extensive policy and institutional reforms.

There are also divisions on REDD+ policy design that hamper coalition work. In Brazil, both state actors and international environmental organisations are divided about the possibility of financing REDD+ through market mechanisms. The same debate is visible in Nepal, where indigenous organisations and domestic environmental groups are in favour of market mechanisms but voice concerns about the lack of inclusion of local users in REDD+ policy decisions. They call for procedural changes in policy decision making. But state actors do not engage with issues of social inclusion in the media.

In Vietnam, the debate about compensation refers to the regulations requiring domestic state-owned enterprises (hydroelectric plants) to reward forest users for providing forest-related environmental services, since the Vietnamese government is subsuming forest PES under REDD+ policies. The media report two instances in which state-owned enterprises disagree with the Vietnamese government. Despite this resistance, it would appear that in Vietnam the national government is trying to impose a change in direction in business as usual *vis-à-vis* some state-owned business interests (Pham *et al.* 2012).

Overall stances and coalitions calling for transformational change are less prominent in the media than business as usual or neutral stances. This indicates that, overall, transformational coalitions are minority coalitions opposing more powerful coalitions supporting the status quo. In Indonesia, parts of domestic civil society oppose the inclusion of plantations in REDD+ schemes, which represents a direct attack to the dominant business as usual coalition. Yet, there is no indication of a broader transformational coalition that might include other actors such as representatives of business or government. A number of international environmental NGOs side with domestic civil society in expressing their concerns about the potential of REDD+ to limit forest access for local users or even dispossess forest-dependent groups. But this attempt to push policy makers to reconsider local forest tenure arrangements does not find a response in the discourse of the dominant coalition.

Concerns about weak governance and corruption are voiced by both international and domestic civil society actors in Indonesia. In particular, they stress the danger that corruption might lead to ineffective implementation

of REDD+. Such a position can be understood as a call for transformational change and a denunciation of collusion and capture, which often underlie business as usual coalitions. Yet, such concerns remain unaddressed in most other countries, despite the fact that weak governance is a major political constraint in most countries.

The main demand of the dominant domestic civil society coalition in Nepal is for a stronger role of local forest user groups in accessing benefits from REDD+. This view is opposed by local government, while state government seems unengaged with REDD+ issues in media debates. Forest user federations form the only REDD+ coalition engaging with the media in this country. Such a prominent position is in part linked with the long history of forest user groups and community forestry in Nepal. This is the only case in our study where path-dependencies seem to lend strength to civil society. Yet, in the absence of a broader coalition that includes allies from within the elite, its effectiveness in pushing for change remains in doubt.

In Peru, international environmental NGOs dominate media debates and share with indigenous organisations a concern about the inclusion of plantation forestry in REDD+ schemes. However, state actors are hardly engaged in discussions around REDD+ in the media, while business actors call for the strengthening of private property arrangements to ensure access to credit and security of investments. Business as usual coalitions, corruption and collusion remain hidden from public scrutiny. The same is true for Cameroon, where the media do not mention any specific state actors providing a position statement on REDD+, although it is suggested that Cameroon as a country is in favour of the development of REDD+ programmes. The absence of transformational coalitions in the media might contribute to the lack of engagement of state actors, who are not called to take a position on REDD+, and indicates that REDD+ policy developments are at a very early stage.

In summary, Indonesian state actors, although supportive of REDD+ in their rhetoric, are open in defending business as usual policies. In Brazil, state actors have taken steps to support REDD+ but entrenched interests linked to drivers of deforestation are powerful players and try to influence policy decisions. In Vietnam, the government is explicit in defying such path-dependencies, although resistance from business interests is evident. In all countries except Nepal, coalitions for transformational change, if present at all, are minority coalitions. Only in Nepal does such a coalition dominate media discourse, in large part thanks to the lack of engagement of state actors with REDD+ policy discussions. Peru and Cameroon lack any evidence of transformational change coalitions.

5.5 Conclusions

The above evidence illustrates how four important factors, which can help overcome the politico-economic constraints to policy reform and lead to effective and equitable REDD+ policy design, operate in different countries. They are: a high level of autonomy of state actors from business interests linked to forest exploitation and conversion; ownership and control by national governments of national REDD+ strategies; a high degree of inclusiveness in policy processes; and the presence of coalitions for transformation change.

The findings illustrate that in most countries these factors were neither present before the introduction of REDD+, nor are they currently being achieved – instead countries struggle with reform processes in and beyond the forest sector. One common challenge in all seven countries is the level of autonomy of state actors. While state rhetoric, expressed in media stances, illustrates 'win–win' scenarios where economic objectives go hand in hand with environmental protection, state actors seem to find it extremely difficult to embrace such a view in practice. High dependence of economic development on unsustainable exploitation of natural resources is deeply engrained in politico-economic structures. This remains the major challenge in all seven countries.

None of the countries demonstrates very inclusive policy processes, expressed by democracy indices and effective decentralisation, although Indonesia and Brazil fare better than the others. Cameroon and Vietnam present the most exclusive processes, raising concerns that latent conflicts and tensions among stakeholders might occur in the REDD+ domain and might worsen over time. Yet, in a number of countries, the lack of engagement of national state actors raises serious questions about who is driving policy processes. In three out of seven countries, national ownership over REDD+ policy developments and related reforms is weak. In these countries the significant role of international players in the financing and design of policies – in the absence of a national government that takes charge of such processes – leads to slow progress and likely problems in implementation.

Proactive efforts, predominantly on the part of civil society organisations, to build domestic constituencies that challenge powerful interests are evident in the media debate in some countries, but these remain minority coalitions. Further advances are needed if REDD+ is to be perceived not as a donor-driven activity, but as a truly national policy, one which serves the broader interest of forest-rich developing countries and is not perceived as conflicting with national development. Even in countries that are most advanced in the formulation of national REDD+ strategies, related policies are often perceived as a threat to economic development. Consequently, powerful economic

interests lobby governments to adopt policies that reduce the effectiveness of REDD+ or further slow decision making, as evident from the experience of the Indonesia Moratorium on Forest Conversion and the current threat in Brazil to revise the Forestry Code to reduce the requirements for forest protection.

What is needed now are coalitions capable of breaking up such path-dependencies: new, broad and inclusive alliances that use scientific expertise and technical and institutional capacity to overcome a traditional policy model that is unable to envision how REDD+ policies can be harmonised with development goals. The participation of state elites and the engagement of business actors in these coalitions are key to influencing the political agenda in a significant way. In most countries this will require the rise of a counter-discourse for transformational change that can challenge the old development model, disband dominant coalitions and attract support from state and business actors willing to take on these challenges.