



United Nations Development Programme



STAYING ON TRACK: TACKLING CORRUPTION RISKS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

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¹ Amelia Thorpe is International Programs Director at the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) and can be reached at amelia.thorpe@edo.org.au. Lisa Ogle is an Environmental Legal Consultant and can be reached at lisa@lisaogle.net.

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FOREWORD

Tackling climate change and fighting corruption go hand-in-hand.

Both are major challenges that weaken progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Corruption destroys public trust, undermines human rights and the rule of law, exacerbates conflicts and weakens gender equality. Adverse effects of climate change, such as breakdown of agricultural systems, malnutrition, water shortages, and more frequent and violent natural disasters, present major obstacles to sustained development and could reverse the progress we have made to date.

Successful climate adaptation coupled with stringent mitigation hold the key to human development for the 21st century and beyond. These are not without challenges, which can be compounded by corruption when it weakens institutional checks and balances on power and results in non-transparent decision-making processes.

Already corruption has significant impacts on the responses to climate change. For example, turning a blind eye to illegal deforestation and forest degradation results in increased greenhouse gas emissions; competition for scarce resources due to more severe droughts forces some to access these resources through corrupt means. The poorest and most vulnerable people – those without any power or influence, who also bear the brunt of the effects of climate change – are the first to suffer setbacks.

While emerging international mechanisms supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation represent unique opportunities for developing countries, they are not without risks. Developing countries need efficient and equitable access to substantial additional resources to support their efforts in adaptation, mitigation and sustainable human development, as well as strengthened capacity to manage those resources. Transparent and accountable financial processes and mechanisms will be needed, and the combined expertise in climate change and governance of the United Nations Development Programme can be key to supporting these efforts.

Strengthening principles of accountability, transparency, integrity and the rule of law in the responses to climate change will pave the way to a more equitable, sustainable future for all. The valuable and timely report you have in hand contributes to this endeavour.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi
Director, Democratic Governance Group
Bureau for Development Policy
UNDP

Veerle Vandeweerd
Director, Environment and Energy Group
Bureau for Development Policy
UNDP



AGF	UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing
C-MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification of carbon
COP	Conference of the Parties (of the UNFCCC)
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (hosted by the World Bank)
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GGM	Good Governance for Medicines programme (World Health Organization)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
NLDT	National Land Development Taskforce
NRI	National Research Institute
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACDE	Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (UNDP)
RPP	Readiness Preparation Proposals
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change creates a serious challenge for sustainable development, with scientific projections indicating that billions of people will face food and water shortages, increased exposure to diseases, losses of homes, assets and livelihoods, and forced migration. Recognising the urgency of the issue, the international community has pledged significant funding for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, and a wide range of mechanisms and institutions for climate finance are rapidly developing. In order to maintain progress - or even current achievements - towards the MDGs, it is imperative that these funds be spent effectively and not be diminished or lost through corruption.

Maximising the effectiveness of climate finance must include steps to reduce the potential for corruption, as large influxes of resources coupled with an imperative to spend can create conditions ripe for corruption. This paper thus identifies the corruption risks in relation to two elements of the climate change response of particular importance to developing countries: adaptation, and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+).

Adaptation is particularly important for developing countries in view of their vulnerability, limited capacity to adapt and lesser historical responsibility for the causes of climate change. This paper identifies the key corruption risks in adaptation at the country level as follows:

- State capture and abuse of discretion in the process of adaptation planning, resulting in prioritisation of projects and programmes favouring vested interests rather than areas of greatest vulnerability;
- Bribery, clientelism and cronyism in design and procurement, leading to poor quality, incomplete and potentially maladaptive projects and programmes; and
- Petty corruption in the delivery of projects and programmes, increasing the cost and reducing the effectiveness of adaptation activities.

REDD+, which is to be funded by developed country Parties (and, potentially, through the market), represents a potential source of new revenue for many developing countries, yet also poses significant corruption risks. In particular, the paper identifies the key corruption risks for REDD+ as:

- Corruption affecting the REDD+ readiness phase which may be affected by state capture, effected through grand corruption and political corruption, in which powerful individuals and groups, such as politicians, logging companies, agribusiness and possibly the military, seek to influence the design of a country's national REDD+ framework in order to advance their private interests or to entrench their political power. This can be a way of 'legalizing' corruption.²
- Corruption affecting the implementation phase of REDD+ which may also be affected by grand corruption and political corruption but also includes the risk of petty corruption, in which the low to mid-level public officials who are responsible for implementing REDD+ are bribed to ignore routine breaches of REDD+ laws (e.g. illegal logging), or are bribed to create fraudulent land titles or carbon rights.

2 UNDP (May 2008) *Tackling corruption, transforming lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and Pacific*, Asia-Pacific Human Development Report series, Macmillan Publishers India Ltd, at p. vii.



- Corruption affecting the distribution of REDD revenues and benefits, such as the embezzlement of revenues and the misappropriation of revenues by powerful groups, such as logging companies, the military, and project developers.

While the corruption risks in climate finance for adaptation and REDD+ are considerable, there is much that can be done to reduce them by adopting strategies to promote transparency, consolidate funding, engage stakeholders, involve local communities, and ensure adequate monitoring, reporting and verification.

The key recommendations to reduce corruptions risks in adaptation and REDD+ which are outlined in this paper include:

- The need to avoid fragmentation of funding which can itself create opportunities for corruption and can send mixed messages to developing countries about the importance of addressing corruption;
- The need to encourage developing countries to ratify and implement global and regional anti-corruption instruments, such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption ('UNCAC'), and utilize UNCAC as an anti-corruption framework in adaptation and REDD+ activities;
- The importance of carrying out corruption risk assessments in order to ascertain the condition of the general governance framework in the country concerned, and to tailor the anti-corruption measures to the country circumstances;
- The desirability of using multi-stakeholder accountability mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability in designing, implementing and monitoring adaptation and REDD+ frameworks;
- The importance of improving the capacity of developing countries to administer the funds anticipated to arrive for adaptation and REDD+, and to strengthen their systems for public financial management and procurement;
- The need to strengthen the capacity of civil society to participate and play a 'watchdog' role and the need to establish independent recourse and complaints mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability;
- The need to support anti-corruption bodies to build their capacity so that they can raise awareness and can develop and implement preventive mechanisms such as system audits, and are able to investigate and monitor corruption cases in adaptation and REDD+; and
- The need to strengthen transparency and accountability of local governance institutions and systems.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why corruption and climate change?

Climate change creates a serious challenge for sustainable development, with scientific projections indicating that billions of people will face food and water shortages, increased exposure to diseases, losses of homes, assets and livelihoods, and forced migration.³ The impacts of climate change will be felt worldwide, but will be most devastating for poor people and poor countries. Their high reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, coupled with high levels of poverty, low education levels and limited human, institutional, technical and financial capacity, mean that developing countries, and particularly women and indigenous peoples within them, will bear the brunt of climate change. Unless addressed urgently, climate change will seriously constrain progress against the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The problem of climate change was recognised internationally in 1992 with the signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ('UNFCCC' or 'the Convention'). The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and to this end Parties agreed to take actions both to mitigate and to adapt to climate change.⁴ While the Convention places the heaviest burden for fighting climate change on developed country Parties,⁵ it does provide for significant action in developing countries.

In line with commitments made under the Convention, and in response to increasingly alarming scientific projections, large amounts of funding are being pledged by the international community to assist with adaptation and mitigation in developing countries.⁶ In order to maintain progress - or even current achievements - towards the MDGs, it is imperative that these funds be spent effectively and not be diminished or lost through corruption.

Maximising the effectiveness of climate finance must include steps to reduce the risks of corruption, as large influxes of resources coupled with an imperative to spend can create conditions ripe for corruption. The experience of development assistance shows that corruption can seriously compromise development outcomes, diverting funds away from intended beneficiaries and undermining the development of local knowledge, skills, governance and institutional capacity.⁷

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