

Potential of Civil-Public-Private-Partnerships in the design of community based payments for ecosystem services: Evidence from Costa Rica

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Oral presentation for session:

2. Natural resources, ecosystem services and environmental quality

2.1. Economics, incentives and institutions for ecosystems and biodiversity

Summary:

Many of the PES approaches using financial incentives are hybrid governance solutions using regulatory rules as well as voluntary types of community management (co-operations) and informal rules. The relations between involved actors are far away to be simple economic ones. We use the example of a Blue Carbon Project to demonstrate that a wide network of very different actors are the key element for the success of this community based PES project. The necessary cooperation between economic, governmental and civil society actors needs a lot of effort. Financial incentives as well as intrinsic motivation and the question of ownership are necessary to run the whole project. Data was collected through Net-Map interviews and a stakeholder workshop with SWOT analysis.

Abstract:

Payments for ecosystem services are discussed as an economic instrument to promote the provision of ecosystem services by governing human behavior through positive financial incentives. In fact many of the PES approaches using financial incentives are hybrid governance solutions using regulatory rules as well as voluntary types of community management (co-operations) and informal rules. The relations between involved actors are far away to be simple economic ones. Thus, it seems to be interesting to have a closer look at the motivations and relations of involved actors. Many of the threats discussed for PES, specifically regarding questions of equity can be reduce due to community based elements within the governance model.

To explain and discuss the potential of hybrid governance types and the engagement of actors from all societal spares we use an example of a blue carbon project in the Golfo Dulce on Costa Rica's Southern coast. This region is rich in mangrove and other wetland ecosystems, however, despite their legal protection status these ecosystems are at a high risk of destruction and degradation. This is a problem as mangroves capture large amounts of CO₂, both from plants that compose them and from their sediments. They store up to five times more carbon than tropical forests, and therefore they are of great significance in the fight against climate change. To foster conservation of these important coastal ecosystems, the NGO Fundación Neotrópica together with the local communities and companies like VW established the Community Blue Carbon Project. Conservation activities of the program mainly consist in the running of two nurseries that house 4000 seedlings of four different mangrove species, which will be distributed in different areas of the Golfo Dulce. The initiative is important, as it not

only involves local communities but also the participation and commitment of customers of companies like Ford, who take on their responsibility in conservation and offset their emissions. The project was identified as successful example of community based ecosystem service management during an EU project.

In our research we focused on the following questions: What kind of formal and informal rules exist and how do they fit together. What kind of actors are involved, what are their roles and motives? How is the situation of trust between the actors?

To answer this question and to analyze the social network, we did a Net-Map analysis in March 2014. Net-Map is an interview-based mapping tool that helps people understand, visualize, discuss, and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes. Individuals and groups create network maps on influence schemes and in this manner they can clarify their own view of a situation, foster discussion, and develop a strategic approach to their networking activities. In total, we conducted eleven Net-Map interviews with people from all different stakeholder groups. Additionally, a local stakeholder workshop was organized to discuss the project using the results of the Net-Maps as well as SWOT analysis.

Our results show that a wide network of very different actors are the key element for the success of this community based PES project. The necessary cooperation between economic, governmental and civil society actors needs a lot of effort. Financial incentives are necessary to run the whole project. However, the developed intrinsic motivation and question of ownership are essential as well.

Keywords: Payments for Ecosystem Services, hybrid governance, blue carbon, Net-Map.