



Multimedia Library Collection: Periodicals

## "Learning From 'Actually Existing' REDD+: A Synthesis of Ethnographic Findings"

Milne, Sarah, Sango Mahanty, Phuc To, Wolfram Dressler, Peter Kanowski, and Maylee Thavat

Milne, Sarah, Sango Mahanty, Phuc To, Wolfram Dressler, Peter Kanowski, and Maylee Thavat. "Learning From 'Actually Existing' REDD+: A Synthesis of Ethnographic Findings." *Conservation & Society* 17, no. 1 (2019): 84-95. [https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs\\_18\\_13](https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_18_13).

The 2015 United Nations Paris Agreement on Climate reinforces actions to conserve and enhance forests as carbon reservoirs. A decade after sub-national demonstration projects to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) commenced, we examine why many REDD+ schemes appear to have fuelled social conflict while having limited success in addressing the drivers of forest loss and degradation. Our analysis is two-tiered: first we synthesise findings from a set of ethnographic case studies of REDD+ in Mainland Southeast Asia, conducted by the authors; second, we explore whether the insights from our regional synthesis apply globally, through a comparative review of published qualitative research on REDD+ field experiences. Our results reveal three major implementation dynamics that can undermine REDD+ in practice, which we conceptualise from science and technology studies and critical political ecology as follows: 1) problems with the *enrolment* of governments, civil society, and local forest users in REDD+ governance; 2) the prevalence of overly simplified *codification* systems for REDD+ implementation that mismatch targeted societies and landscapes; and 3) the consequent *dissonance* between REDD+ objectives and outcomes. Together, these problematic dynamics reveal how and why REDD+ so often misses its targets of reducing deforestation and delivering community benefits. In effect, it appears that REDD+ in the course of implementation maps onto local power structures and political economies, rendering it blunt as tool for change. The potential of REDD+ as a "solution" in the global climate regime must therefore be scrutinized, along with other similar mechanisms espoused by the green economy. (Text from authors' abstract)

© Sarah Milne, Sango Mahanty, Phuc To, Wolfram Dressler, Peter Kanowski, and Maylee Thavat 2019. *Conservation & Society* is available online only and is published under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 2.5).

**Download:**

PDF: [https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key\\_docs/conservatsoc17184-1497553\\_040935.pdf](https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/conservatsoc17184-1497553_040935.pdf)

**Related links:**

- *Conservation & Society* website  
<http://www.conservationandsociety.org/>
- *Conservation & Society* 17, no. 1  
<http://www.conservationandsociety.org/showBackIssue.asp>

**Websites linked in this text:**

- [https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs\\_18\\_13](https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_18_13)