

## REDD+ - financing forest protection

**Emmanuel Opuni-Frimpong** - *Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG)*

**Robert Bamfo** - *Forestry Commission, Ghana*

**Osei Kwame Bonsu** - *Private Afforestation Developers Association, Ghana*

### Summary

Ghana is one of several African countries taking a keen interest in the REDD+ scheme, which offers payment for planting and protecting forest areas. Adoption and promotion of REDD+ presents challenges however, and farmers are among those who are concerned as to whether they will ever receive the promised financial benefits. Kofi Adu Domfeh speaks to some of those involved with Ghana's uptake of the scheme about the challenges and rewards that REDD+ brings, including the benefits it could offer in terms of local climate as well as the global picture.

### Suggested introduction

Developing countries in Africa are among the world's lowest producers of greenhouse gases. Yet despite this, these same countries are seen as highly important in efforts to slow the rate of global warming. The system of carbon credits, whereby nations can earn payments for protecting their forests, rather than cutting them for timber or fuel, is one example. It's a system known as REDD plus, which stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation. Funding for the scheme comes from a variety of international sources, including the UN, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility.

Kofi Adu Domfeh reports now from Ghana on efforts there to introduce REDD plus payments, and the challenges and benefits the scheme offers.

CUE IN "Felling of trees in order ...  
CUE OUT ... Domfeh reporting from Ghana."  
DURATION 7'26"

### Suggested closing announcement

And Domfeh was reporting on Ghana's efforts to introduce the international REDD plus scheme which offers financial rewards for planting and protecting trees and forests. This interview is one in a series supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network.

### For further information

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#### **Making the most of this interview...**

What efforts is your country making to take advantage of REDD+ payments? Find out what information is available from the ministry responsible for forestry or the environment.

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### Transcript

- Domfeh** *Felling of trees in order to provide fuel and timber or to make way for new land uses like agriculture, is estimated to cause up to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. But people living in or near forests normally depend on the income earned from these activities. The REDD+ programme is designed to give countries and individuals a financial incentive to preserve their forests. The programme enables people to receive payments for planting and protecting trees, recognising that trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in their wood as carbon. Scientists often use the word 'sequester' to explain that storage process. I asked Dr Emmanuel Opuni-Frimpong of Ghana's Forestry Research Institute to tell me more about how this payment system works.*
- Opuni** For this carbon credit business, when you plant a tree you sign an agreement with whoever will be buying your carbon for a number of years. Maybe you want to do your project for twenty years. You want to sequester carbon for twenty years, so you sign an agreement for twenty years and for that twenty years they will be paying you based on the market value of carbon till the twenty years. The carbon that is sequestered in your tree becomes a commodity like cocoa or like coffee, like oil palm. The size of your tree is an indicator of the amount of carbon that your trees have sequestered. The World Bank is one of the agencies involved in this carbon business and there are other markets in Europe and the US. The pricing of carbon may be less than cocoa, but the way climate change issues are becoming hotter and hotter everyday, with time it is likely that it will become more expensive than cocoa.
- Domfeh** *Introducing an internationally funded payment scheme to support smallholder forest managers will not be an easy business. Exactly how carbon payments will be calculated and given to those who are managing the trees, will need careful planning. But Robert Bamfo, Head of the Climate Change Unit at Ghana's Forestry Commission is pleased that implementing REDD+ has now become part of national policy.*
- Bamfo** The national climate change policy is actually focusing on low carbon development under the mitigation of climate change, and that is where REDD dovetails perfectly. And in readiness for this, we are supposed to develop a national REDD+ strategy. We are engaging with stakeholders to get inputs for the formulation of the strategy. We are also going to start the REDD+ pilots on the ground, where we will learn lessons from the implementation of REDD. These lessons will inform the formulation of the national REDD strategy. Regarding REDD implementation, we expect that stakeholders that engage in best practices to ensure environmental protection and also conservation of our forests or protection of our forests, will receive some benefits, it could be social benefits or financial benefits in accordance with the policy approaches under the REDD programme. REDD is not only going to be an environmental mechanism. It is also going to improve on the social well being of the local

communities, as well as enhance the economic gains. In other words, REDD will ensure sustainable development.

**Domfeh** *Already, there are signs of growing interest in tree planting in Ghana, with the prospect of increasing financial and other rewards through the REDD+ scheme. Osei Kwame Bonsu, President of the Private Afforestation Developers Association, explained the activities being done by his members.*

**Bonsu** In terms of our plantation activities, we have two groups of membership. We have the commercial plantations and then the smaller plantations. And the smallholder plantations are made up of farms of about five acres, perhaps to ten or twenty acres, which are always outside the reserves. And the commercial plantations are made up of farms of around three to four hundred acres. Looking at the nature of degradation in our communities now, we find it prudent to venture into tree planting to help humanity, and also to promote long life.

**Domfeh** *However, according to Osei Kwame, farmers and forest managers have concerns about whether they will really gain from the REDD+ payment scheme.*

**Bonsu** REDD+ means that we should encourage tree planting. Farmers or developers who are into tree planting are doing their best. When you go round you can see a whole lot of tree planting projects going round our country, but when you get nearer to the farmers, the benefits or the encouragements that are supposed to come to them are not being done. We have the problem of tenancy issues, which are bothering tree growers. Again, farmers should be given incentives to encourage them to plant so that as we do that, because with the REDD, trees are to be sustained for a number of years. There should be no room for logging, there should be no room for cutting down of trees anyhow, but the trees will be sustained for a number of years, which will help our environment.

**Domfeh** *Dr Opuni-Frimpong of the Forestry Research Institute accepts that there will be challenges in implementing the REDD+ scheme. However, he is optimistic about the benefits it can provide, not only financial benefits in rural areas but also climatic benefits both locally and on a bigger scale.*

**Opuni** The tropical forest is seen as a major sink for carbon for the world. That is even why the developed economies are ready to support these programmes like CDM, REDD, in the developing countries. So we should all make the effort to understand some of these things that are put out there and then maximize opportunities for our economic purpose and also for the well-being of the environment and posterity. I think there are challenges in some of these things but we should not be deterred, we should make all the effort to be able to succeed in getting some of these benefits to our country.

**Domfeh** *With the REDD+ payment scheme offering both significant benefits and sizeable challenges in implementation, the time perhaps is now for the inclusion of climate change and related activities in schools' curricula to build capacity and expertise in carbon trading for the future. This is Kofi Adu Domfeh reporting from Ghana. End of track.*