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# Community Based REDD+

## SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT FOR REDD+ ACTION

Developed to mitigate climate change through safeguarding the world's forests, the initiative to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) is a mechanism under the Paris Agreement on climate change. Indigenous peoples and forest communities – as custodians of large forest areas – are crucial stakeholders for the success of REDD+. Importantly, their rights, livelihoods and customary lands may be impacted by REDD+ activities. It is therefore critical to ensure the full engagement and inclusion of the perspectives of indigenous peoples and forest communities in REDD+.

In response to this, the UN-REDD Programme in partnership with the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) set up the Community Based REDD+ (CBR+) initiative to bring small grants of up to \$50,000 to forest-dependent communities on the ground. The CBR+ initiative is a hands-on, bottom-up endeavour for genuine stakeholder engagement in REDD+. It also fosters synergies between local action and national policy for REDD+.

### CORE OBJECTIVES OF CBR+

- Support the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, communities and civil society in national-level processes related to REDD+, including supporting communities to determine whether and how they see themselves engaging in REDD+.
- Build the capacity and awareness of communities to engage in REDD+ activities and processes.
- Facilitate the integration of community-based activities, knowledge and ideas into national REDD+ processes.
- Develop and share knowledge and lessons learned from community-based experiences to inform national and international REDD+ policies and practice.



## HOW CBR+ WORKS

- CBR+ operates in countries that already have an ongoing SGP national programme.
- The existing SGP national steering committees (NSC), which are multi-stakeholder in composition, are expanded with REDD+ expertise and related stakeholders to form the CBR+/NSC. The CBR+/NSC provides overall guidance to the CBR+ initiative in the country, including reviewing proposals and selecting the beneficiary projects.
- A National Plan for CBR+ is designed through consultation with stakeholders and adopted by the CBR+/NSC. The National Plan provides guidance for the submission and selection of CBR+ proposals, ensuring synergies between local initiatives and national processes for REDD+ results.
- A call for proposals is issued in line with the National Plan for CBR+ and following SGP procedures.
- Capacity building is given to potential grant applicants to help them develop and submit proposals.
- Typically, CBR+ delivers small grants (up to USD 50,000) directly to indigenous peoples and forest communities for REDD+ action, which can range from organisational capacity to actual actions to conserve forests and address deforestation drivers.
- SGP and UN-REDD specialists guide and monitor the implementation of CBR+ projects.
- On completion of the CBR+ grant and knowledge management cycle, lessons are shared with REDD+ decision-makers in order to influence REDD+ policy and action on the ground.



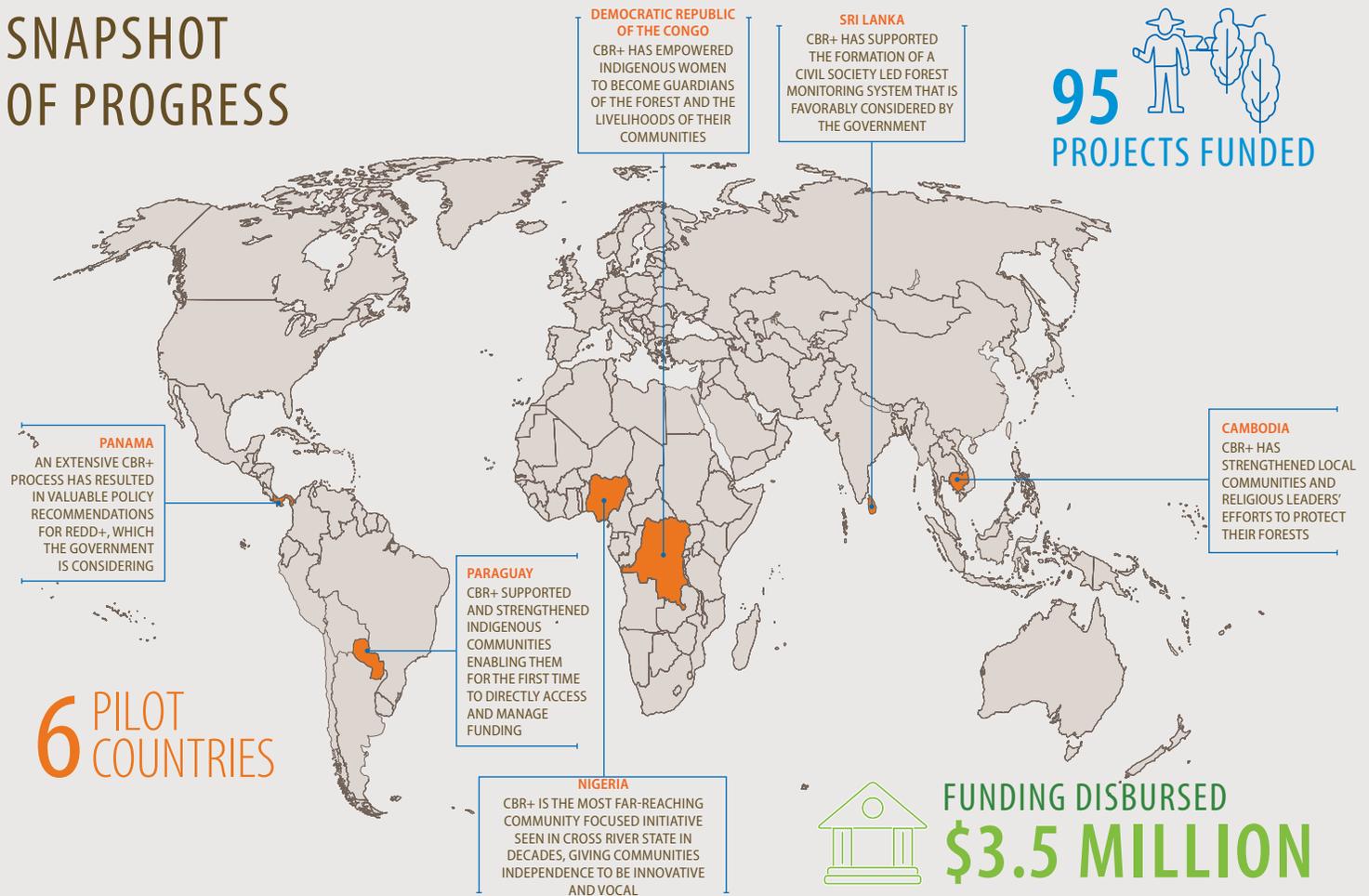
“With the support we are now receiving from the Project and the activities that we are carrying out, we have the hope of recovering the natural resources of our region, the food safety of our families and to be examples for other communities”.

COMMUNITY OF SAN MIGUEL, PANAMA

## KEY FACTS

- **6 PILOT COUNTRIES:** Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay and Sri Lanka
- **CBR+ STEERING COMMITTEES** established in all countries with government, indigenous and community representatives working cooperatively.
- **CBR+ COUNTRY PLANS DEVELOPED** in all countries to guide grant making and evaluation.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING** has been carried out for indigenous peoples, forest-dependent communities and civil society groups to understand REDD+ and the CBR+ initiative as well as apply successfully for grants.
- **\$3.5 MILLION** has been disbursed through 95 community grants since 2015.

## SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS



“Community-Based REDD+ provides an opportunity to identify community members from all over the country, who are capable of inspiring their own communities to understand and act against drivers of climate change.”

NIMANTHI, CBR+ GRANTEE, SRI LANKA

# LESSONS FROM PANAMA

CBR+ was initiated in the country in 2014 with the development of the CBR+ Country Plan via consultations and workshops with key national stakeholders, such as the Environmental Ministry, COONAPIP (indigenous representative body) and UN-REDD. Thematic areas and priorities of work were defined and in response to stakeholder feedback it was decided that in Panama CBR+ would be referred to as *Bosques de Vida* to be more representative of Panama's perspectives. It was also decided that a Technical Committee composed of representatives of indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, campesinos, and the UN-REDD National Programme would be formed to revise and enrich the projects before sending them to the National Steering Committee.

The Country Plan was finally launched on 31 March, 2015, in an event that had the presence of COONAPIP, the indigenous Masugandí and Guna Yala Congresses, afro-descendants and campesino representatives followed by a workshop to build the capacity of potential grantees. *Bosques de Vida* has contributed considerably to the momentum of REDD+ in Panama, showing how activities from the grassroots can support REDD+ progress at the national and policy level. A total of 20 CBR+ projects have been funded in the country. These include:

- The establishment of pilot sites in the District of Macaraca to demonstrate sustainable cattle raising practices that increase forest cover while improving productivity and contributing to the protection of water resources and other ecosystem services.
- The sustainable management of forests through the reproduction and protection of traditional medicinal plants, conservation of traditional medicine, and recovery of sources of water.
- Demarcation of the lands of the indigenous community of the Puerto Indio in the Emberá Comarca for the protection of the catchment area and sustainable management of wood and hunting resources.

- Rescuing traditional plants and trees and traditional agricultural techniques of afro-descendant communities in the Darien.

Two knowledge exchange workshops were held in March and October, 2016, to share results and lessons between participating CBR+ communities and provide lessons for the government. Findings included:

- *Bosques de Vida* has made traditional knowledge on agriculture and medicine more visible, and the validation of these approaches through an international programme such as UN-REDD has elevated their value nationally.
- The protection of critical water sources is an issue that unites goals of forest protection, reforestation and the fight against deforestation more than any other concern and could therefore be seen as an important co-benefit and motivation for increasing forest cover in the country.
- Almost all participating communities have identified agrochemical pollution as an issue they want to work on further – environmental leadership is seen to go beyond REDD+ through these projects.



UN-REDD  
PROGRAMME



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SGP The GEF  
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