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Ecosystem services: equity and access



Why is equity important in ESPA?

- Equity, fairness and justice all imply 'fair treatment or due reward' (Schroeder and Pisupati 2010)
- ESPA's underlying premise is that greater value of ES will lead to poverty alleviation
- More value (monetary and non-monetary) is being assigned (more explicitly) to ecosystem services
 - Global carbon markets in 2010 = \$120 billion
- But does this new value necessarily lead to greater equity?
- Resource curse literature suggests we should be cautious about assuming positive equity outcomes (even where poverty appears to be alleviated)

Poverty alleviation is not the same as improving equity

- A. Poverty alleviation, distributional equity improves
- B. Poverty alleviation, distributional equity worsens
- C. Poverty increases, distributional equity improves
- D. Poverty increases, distributional equity worsens

Equity in the PES literature [Gregory 2011]

- Broad acknowledgement that PES schemes should be equitable, fair or just...
- And that equity is overlooked unless explicitly taken into account in scheme design, implementation and monitoring (Angelsen et al., 2009).
- But difficult to find any clear definition of equity or how it links to other widely used asset-based models.
- This implies that programme designers implicitly assume the need for broadly equitable outcomes, but have no clear or agreed definition, framework or mechanism with which to plan, measure or check this assumption.

No agreed set of equitable principles, but it is implied that:

- they may be part of the regulatory framework of an agreement;
- there can be some overarching global acceptance of equity and equitable principles and processes led by international human rights agreements;
- the CBD forms a parallel basis for developing equitable principles for PES schemes;
- principles may be culturally defined so therefore be specific to a given culture – and at a given time;
- it will require both large scale (global) legal understanding and a small scale (local) understanding of local socio-cultural issues.

Brown and Corbera (2003)

- equity of access (especially land title or rights and participation);
- equity of decision making (especially power relations/ transparency/ mediation of conflict);
- equity of outcome (especially reasonable opportunity cost compensation/inclusion and effect of community based training as an alternative payment).

Mahanty et al. (2006)

- equity of access and participation;
- equity between stakeholders/ groups/ communities/ generations;
- equity standards (legal/social and cultural rights).

Aim: to produce a framework that defines equity in the context of ecosystem services

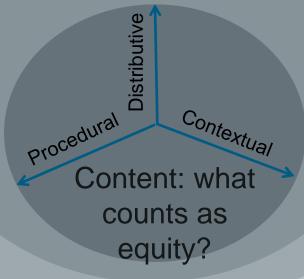
- Framework can be used in planning or assessment of policies and initiatives
- Framework sets out guiding questions and dimensions rather than specifying universally applicable standards
- Could be used to establish a context-specific definition of equity – e.g. as a baseline for assessing how equity is affected by a PES scheme

The equity framework

Process: how are the parameters of equity set?

Goal: why equity?

Target: who counts?



1. Content: What counts as a matter of equity? (e.g. Nepal community forestry)

a. Distributive equity

- Outcomes in allocation of benefits, costs AND risks
- Decisions justified on the basis of equality, social welfare, merit and need

b. Procedural equity

- Fairness in political processes
- Participation in decision-making:
 - inclusion, representation, voice

c. Contextual equity

- Capabilities
- Access
- Power



2. Target and scale: Who counts as a subject of equity? (e.g. gas extraction, Bolivia, Bebbington 2011)

- Regional or national government? Conflict over control of rents from hydrocarbon extraction ('natural gas with redistribution')
- Which community? De-institutionalising effect of companies negotiating only with 'affected' communities or individual Weenhayek leaders
- Who along the value chain? High salaries and decisionmaking concentrated in company HQs in Santa Cruz, Brazil, UK, France
- Which generation? Short-term hydrocarbon benefits vs future climate?

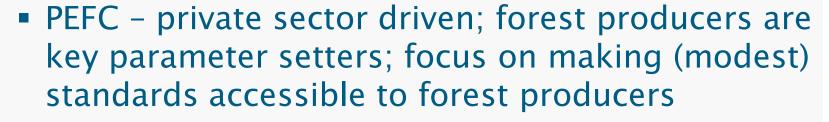
3. Goals: Why equity?

- What are the (explicit/implicit) equity-related goals?
 - maximise equity
 - advance equity (fair trade)
 - do no harm (national REDD+)
 - equity impacts not under consideration?
- Equity and poverty do not necessarily co-vary
 - e.g. REDD+ agroforestry scheme can alleviate poverty (by raising aggregate income) while increasing inequity (excluding landless)
- Equity highlights the distribution of power & resources underlying poverty

4. Process: How are the parameters of equity set? (e.g. forest certification, C. McDermott 2011)



- What is the process for deciding the goals, target, content of the initiative? Who is included/excluded?
- FSC NGO driven; social, economic and environmental chambers have equal votes; emphasis on involvement of NGOs and indigenous people to set parameters; can have FSC standards endorsed without industry support







Case study: Trees for Global Benefits, Uganda





- Plan Vivo model developed in Mexico and Mozambique
- Uses carbon finance to fund planting of indigenous trees by producers on their own land with explicit objectives of poverty reduction and environmental protection
- Uganda project implemented by ECOTRUST
- Working with >900 farmers in Rubirizi, Mitooma, Masindi and Hoima districts

How does it work?

- Farmers must have enough land and a bank account.
- Buyers purchase carbon from individual farmers with registered plan vivos. Payments held in trust by ECOTRUST until they are made to the producers.
- ECOTRUST makes sale agreements (for 50 years) with individual producers on behalf of purchasers.
- Producers paid after monitoring visits in years 0 (30%), 1 (20%), 3 (20%), 5 (10%) and 10 (10%).
- 10% of payment goes into a Carbon Community Fund.



Some equity issues

- Distributive equity:
 - Shift from variable payments per ton of CO2 to standardised payment of \$6
 - Carbon Community Fund: distribution pro-rata, merit or need-based?
- Procedural equity:
 - Agreements only available in English
 - Farmers sign before knowing exact payment and schedule
 - Many farmers wait > 2 years to receive signed copies
 - No info about breach of contract or loss of trees
- Contextual equity:
 - Land ownership requirement disadvantages vulnerable groups
 - Ecotrust is only information source

More equity issues

- Equity at different scales:
 - Within the hh: men dominate decision-making over use of payments
 - Along the value chain: farmers receive 50-60% of CO2 price
- Equity goals:
 - None yet; 'do no harm' safeguards
- Parameter setting:
 - International level: price of carbon
 - National level: which species can be included in carbon forestry? (coffee, banana?)
 - Project level: which species are allowed? (indigenous, exotic?)

Are they getting a fair deal?



In conclusion...

- As ecosystem services are valued more explicitly and are increasingly marketed, we need an agreed terminology to describe the multiple dimensions of equity.
- Our framework highlights the distributive, procedural and contextual dimensions of equity as well as recognising the importance of how decisions are taken about framing the content, target (or scale) and aims of equity.
- The equity framework is useful for both planning and assessment of policies and initiatives.
- Ideally, it would be used in an inclusive process in which participants at all levels from local to nation states have a say in determining a context-specific definition of equity.

 For further elaboration of ideas presented here see: McDermott, Mahanty and Schreckenberg
 http://redd-net.org/themes/equity



Thank you! k.schreckenberg@soton.ac.uk

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