



## Plan Vivo Addresses Key Issues of Transparency and Local Governance for Interim REDD+ Actions

**This briefing describes how the Plan Vivo System, a framework for community-driven carbon management projects and programmes can be used to build REDD+ governance at local, sub-national and national levels.**

### The need for systems to build REDD+ governance and implementation

Implementation of REDD+ within countries will require detailed actions at regional and local levels. There is now broad consensus that REDD+ governance frameworks need to ensure broad and informed participation by forest dependent communities.

Key challenges for developing REDD+ governance in developing countries include:

- Governmental institutions often have weak presence and capacity in rural areas.
- Governmental institutions are often not adequately set-up to carry out financial distributions to communities and micro-projects.
- Effective interventions take time and require a gradual increase of local implementation capacity from ground level.

#### What is the Plan Vivo System?

Plan Vivo is a framework for channelling resources to communities on the basis of results in achieving ecosystem benefits.

It is founded on the core principle of rural farmers and communities taking the lead in planning conservation and restoration activities on the basis of their needs and capabilities.

Plan Vivo activities have led to the sequestration or reduction of over 800,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>, from a range of activities including agroforestry, native species reforestation and avoided deforestation.

Thousands of participants have been engaged in rural land-use planning, and millions of dollars have been channelled to smallholders and forest-user groups.

**Plan Vivo was developed in response to the above challenges and has been tested successfully in several countries, and continues to expand each year**



Established projects (red): Uganda, Mexico, Mozambique, Tanzania. Programmes in various stages of development (yellow): Cameroon, Nicaragua, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal and Senegal

## How can Plan Vivo be used to implement and scale-up REDD+?

### 1. Legal and financial frameworks and capacity

#### **Adaptive frameworks**

REDD+ funding will need to reach a wide range of initiatives:

- In different legal and financial contexts, including different land-tenure systems and banking arrangements (or lack thereof);
- Including smallholders with both small and large land-holdings;
- Involving forest dependent user-groups and communally managed forests;
- Rewarding different activities including reforestation, improved agricultural practices, forest protection, management and restoration, supporting rural micro-enterprises and developing sustainable sources of energy.

Developing the financial, legal and administrative framework and procedures necessary to coordinate the above at the national and sub-national levels is a complex task. It requires local knowledge, strong community relations and learning by doing. Frameworks need to be adaptive and flexible for application in different contexts.

#### **Ensuring funds reach the people that manage and protect forests**

Ensuring that land-managers and forest-user groups are rewarded for positive action is a key issue. REDD+ funds will need to be channelled through transparent institutions to ensure funding reaches local initiatives, without being absorbed by bureaucracy.

#### **The Plan Vivo System:**

- Provides practical guidance for locally adaptive governance arrangements
- Provides a model for channelling resources through independent institutions directly to the grassroots level

#### **Scaling-up and learning by doing**

Plan Vivo programmes follow a staged approach towards scaling-up to regional and national PES programmes, learning lessons as they expand into new areas.

Can we afford to start small and scale-up? Don't we need to set up large scale programmes as soon as possible?

Programmes that try to do everything too quickly are likely to run into problems and critically may fail to gain the support of local people. REDD+ programmes can utilise the Plan Vivo model to develop programmes incrementally, incorporating a wide range of pilot initiatives.

**Plan Vivo projects and programmes are putting in place institutional frameworks through which REDD+ funding for a wide range of activities can be channelled**

## Programme Example | Scolel'Te, Mexico



**“Local land-use planning tools developed by Plan Vivo are instrumental for any REDD implementation activity.”**

Mexico's REDD Preparation Proposal to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility



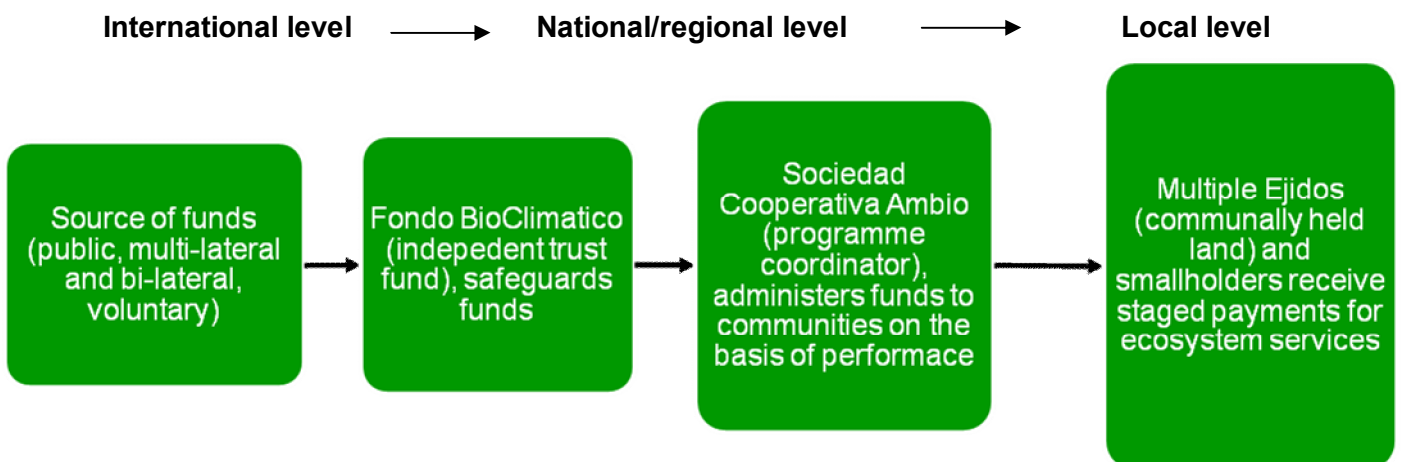
The Scolel'Te programme has tested and developed the Plan Vivo System for over 10 years in Chiapas and Oaxaca, and demonstrated that it works in a variety of situations: small or large forest holdings, smallholders and communally managed forest areas.

Land-holdings under management range from 0.25ha to 8ha for agroforestry and reforestation, 15 to 60ha for forest restoration, and an average of 1000ha for areas under forest management.

The programme is set-up to monitor and reward performance of ecosystem service generation across a number of ecological and cultural regions including Tojolobal and Tzotzil communities in the highland and Tzeltal and Lacandon communities in the lowland regions.

Monitoring is performed initially by community technicians who receive continued training from Ambio, the project coordinator, who verify 10% of their work.

It has developed to address specific legal and social structures found in that area, including the ejido (communal) land-tenure system and fideicomiso (trust fund) law. Figure 1 shows the institutional arrangement which enables funds to be channelled through the project.



**Figure 1: Flow of finance through the Scolel'Te programme**

## 2. Technical capacity at institutional and community levels

### Linking methodologies to action

The single biggest cause of tropical deforestation is the conversion of forest to cropland and pasture, mainly for subsistence agriculture, by communities living within forested areas of developing countries.

A great deal of work has been done and funding applied to develop technical methodologies to measure and monitor changes in forest carbon. However, in order to create real change, developing countries require the technical capacity, and cost-effective monitoring systems to make methodologies work on the ground, and to tailor them to their needs and resources.

### Plan Vivo projects are developing:

- Inclusive, participatory tools for establishing local baselines and threat maps, that recognise the importance of local knowledge;
- Systems for setting project-specific indicators, to ensure incentives are linked both to performance and concrete, achievable actions (e.g. establishment of fire-breaks, patrolling, improved agricultural activities);
- Social monitoring systems systems of community-based monitoring, where local staff are trained to monitor activities and impacts in their areas using simple indicators. Results are spot-checked by programme coordinators. Monitoring systems are designed to ensure programmes are:
  - Cost-effective and realistic for developing countries (i.e. not reliant on frequent use of expensive remote sensing software);
  - Increase local skills; and
  - Leave behind greater awareness and employment opportunities.

The documentation and sharing of technical outputs, procedures, and developments at the programme level (i.e. between different communities) and system level (i.e. between Plan Vivo programmes in different countries) further ensures institutional learning, reduces duplication of effort and builds technical networks.

### Plan Vivo as a system for targeting wider ecosystem services

Plan Vivo projects can also provide the basis for national schemes that wish to reward the generation of a range of ecosystem services, not just carbon.

For example, project activities in areas where important watersheds are threatened can be designed to increase watershed protection (e.g. restoration of riverine forests). Funds can then be channelled through the Plan Vivo framework and targeted at these areas. Likewise, funds can be targeted at areas of high biodiversity importance or landscape value.

**The Plan Vivo System helps programmes to develop technical tools and methodologies that are inclusive, cost-effective and increase technical capacity at ground level.**

## Programme Example | Trees for Global Benefits, Uganda

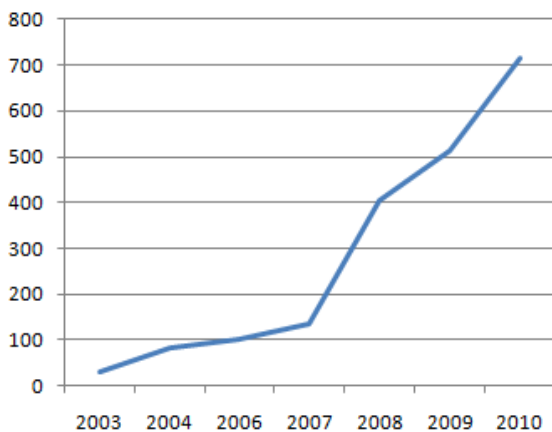


Since inception in 2003, the Trees for Global Benefits programme in Uganda has grown from a micro-scale project in the South-West region of Bushenyi, to a multi-regional programme involving over 700 smallholders. Hundreds more are currently on the waiting list to sign ecosystem service agreements with Ecotrust, the programme coordinator.

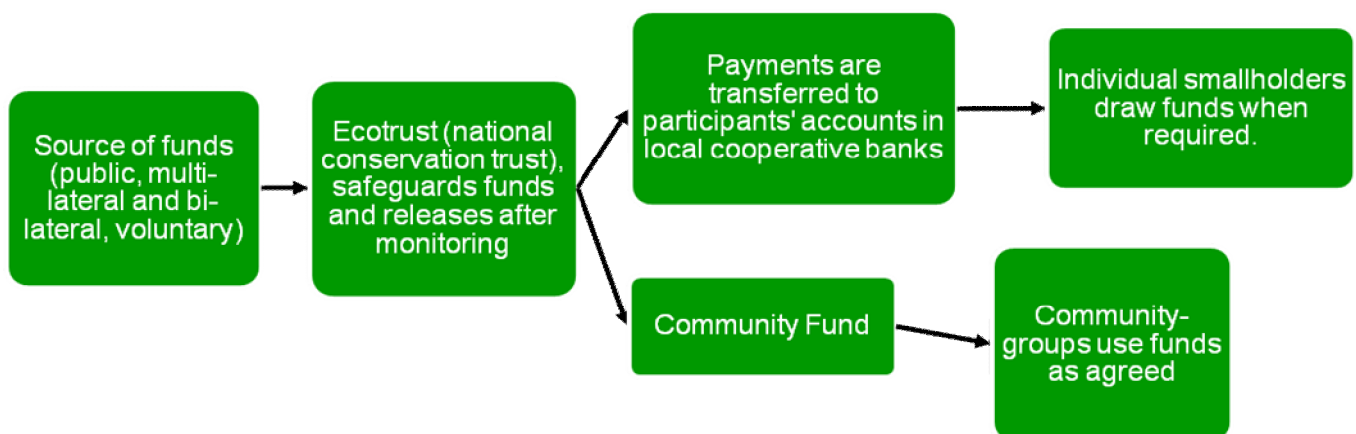
Early implementation of the programme was heavily dependent on the motivation and interest of established women's groups, who have played an instrumental role in disseminating information about the Plan Vivo System.

Programme implementation in the first few years was gradual, both as more funds were secured for expansion, and community fears that ecosystem service agreements would lead to land-grabs were assuaged.

The payments for ecosystem services (PES) mechanism makes use of local banking structures; joining the project requires opening an account with the local cooperative trading post where funds are deposited after monitoring. This payment structure capitalises the local bank, enabling it to provide micro-credit services to the wider community. Figure 3 summarises this arrangement.



**Figure 2: Participation in TFGB since inception (number of farmers with land-use plans)**



**Figure 3: Flow of finance through the Trees for Global Benefits programme**



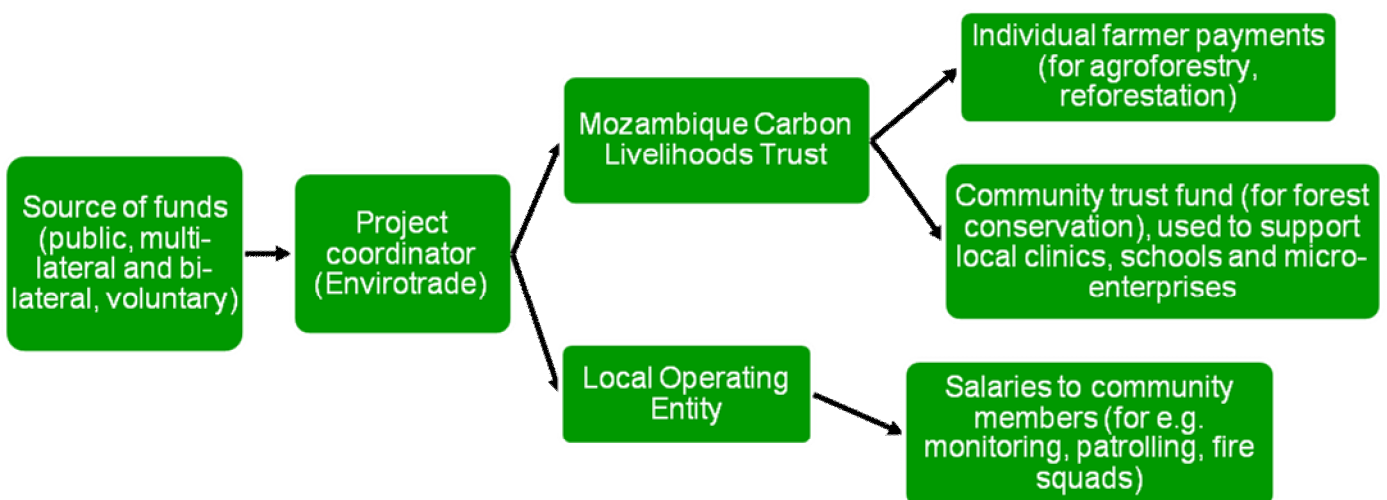
## Programme Example | Sofala Community Carbon, Mozambique



In the Sofala province of Mozambique, an area ravaged by recent civil war, a Plan Vivo programme is supporting the communities to re-establish there and develop sustainable livelihood activities. Forest management is planned by the local community and carried out as a community business. Community members sign contracts with the community association to patrol and make fire breaks in the forest. Annual monitoring is carried out by community technicians who are spot checked by the project. Simple, verifiable outputs have been identified and agreed.

In addition to forest management, farmers around the forest can adopt one or more Plan Vivo Systems on their machambas (plots), including woodlots, fruit orchards and agroforestry systems. Participants choose which systems fit their needs. This promotes diversity in the programme which has positive knock-on effects for biodiversity.

The programme also supports a wide range of micro-enterprises that help to diversify and increase local income thus drawing them away from unsustainable use of the forest resources. These include furniture making, a saw mill, and beekeeping activities. Figure 4 summarises the financial framework. The programme demonstrates how PES programmes can be used to build capacity in post-conflict situations.



**Figure 4: Flow of finance through the Sofala Community Carbon programme**

## Stakeholders and supporters



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