



Tropical Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (TroFCCA)

WHAT IS TroFCCA?

TroFCCA is a four-year project of the Center for International Forestry Research and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, started in 2005 and funded by the European Commission. The project is contributing to the limited understanding of the adaptation of tropical forest ecosystems by developing robust methodologies to assess vulnerability to climate change and to facilitate the mainstreaming of adaptation into development agendas.

OBJECTIVES

To contribute to national processes of adaptation to climate change, in particular through efforts to streamline adaptation into development and through the assessment of vulnerability derived from the impacts of climate change on tropical forest ecosystems and on forest dependent communities. The specific objectives are

- to develop specific methodologies to assess vulnerability;
- to contribute to current national and regional adaptation processes;
- to develop criteria and indicators for adaptive forest management;
- to develop policy-oriented adaptation strategies; and
- to facilitate a science-policy dialogue on adaptation.

Participating regions and countries:

- Southeast Asia: Indonesia and the Philippines
- West Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali
- Central America: Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua

METHODOLOGY

A general framework combining biophysical, human and institutional research allows each region to develop own methods on the basis of its regional contexts. This framework started with the definition of the regional focus of TroFCCA. Stakeholders in the regions decided on which topics or sectors the project should concentrate its research activities, taking into consideration what goods and services provided by forests are significant for development. This demand-oriented approach, combined with ongoing science-policy dialogues, ensures ownership and commitment of stakeholders in the varying policy arenas for forest ecosystem goods and services and adaptation to climate change. The methodology defines a chain of linkages between variables at different levels as illustrated below:

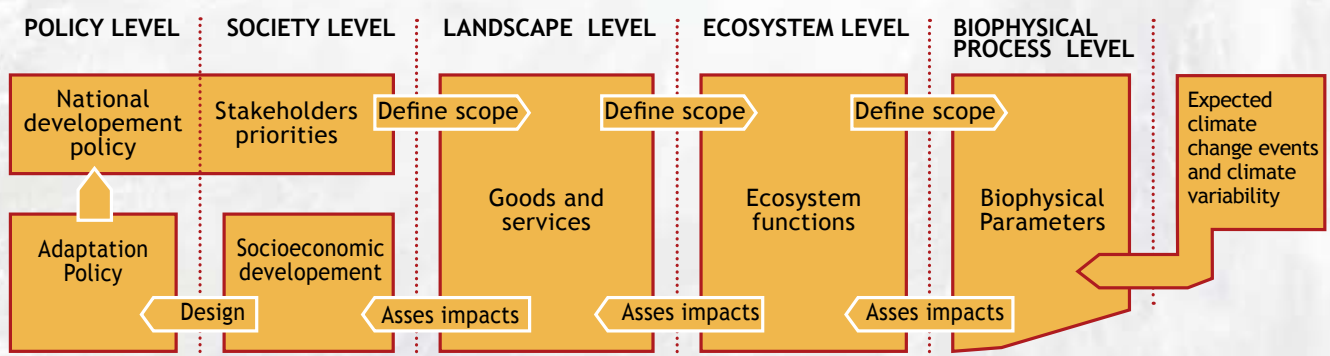


Figure 1. Chain of variables linkages

Adaptation is treated in parallel with the assessment of vulnerability and addressed through a policy-science dialogue-oriented approach rather than through offering technocratic solutions. After the assessment of vulnerability, policy-oriented adaptation options will be identified with the stakeholders involved in forest management and with those interested in the environmental goods and services provided by forest ecosystems.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Adaptation of tropical forest ecosystems in the countries where TroFCCA is operating is strategically approached by considering the following factors.

Adaptation as part of the development policy

This strategy includes assessing the perspectives of relevant decision makers. It requires strengthening the policy-science dialogue through consultation. Furthermore, departing from regional development priorities is strategic to mainstream adaptation into development policies. The chosen topics and sectors are as follows:

- Southeast Asia: Indonesia (forest fires, landslides) and the Philippines (water)
- West Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali (water, energy, non-timber forest products)
- Central America: Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua (hydroelectric power and potable water sector forest pests and fires).

Vulnerability assessment, not impacts

The approach is to understand the system and its vulnerability in climate terms. The assessment focuses on society and its dependence on forest ecosystems. The assessment of impacts will be functional, but not the focus. Development of criteria and indicators of vulnerability to current and future climate change and climate variability will be developed given their policy relevance.

Landscape level focus

Forest patches in the context of landscape are an important focus during the assessment of vulnerability. Adaptation strategies will be explored at landscape level recognizing the role of landscape heterogeneity in providing many environmental goods and services as well as the role of a variety of stakeholder at multiple scales in managing them.

CROSS-CUTTING INTERESTS

With regard to cross-cutting interests, TroFCCA explores the potential for innovative mechanisms to finance adaptation activities and compensating eventual tradeoffs as a means for sustainability of adaptation strategies. Potential synergies among international agreements like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity will be explored.

EXPECTED IMPACTS

TroFCCA contributes to the mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change into development. The assessments of vulnerability will increase the capacity to formulate relevant policies and raise the awareness of different stakeholders. At the regional level, the project intends to enhance cooperation relating to work on adaptation. The project will further build capacity by supporting students from the regions. TroFCCA also intends to raise awareness of the need to finance adaptation for tropical forest ecosystems.

PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

TroFCCA works very closely with national governments, scientists and non-governmental organizations. National and international research students are invited to become part of the project.

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