Implementing REDD+: Policy, philosophical and practical issues facing forest carbon projects

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REDD+ is an idea mooted from the 2007 Bali UNFCCC meeting (COP-13), where an agreement was reached on “the urgent need to take further meaningful action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation”. At its core therefore, REDD+ aims to change incentive structures in favour of protecting forests so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also deliver "co-benefits" including biodiversity conservation and social improvement. But how do you deal with the intractable drivers of deforestation while retaining local community support and enhancing their livelihoods? What are the some of the key issues, opportunities and challenges involved in actual implementation, and how do they scale from the local (project) level to jurisdictional or national scales? This talk will broach some of these issues besides the underlying philosophy around REDD+, then illustrate how market-driven REDD+ projects function. I will use an example from the first dual (VCS and CCB) validated REDD+ project in the world—The Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project—that is administered by Wildlife Works, SE Kenya. This project has been running for six years and has accumulated vital lessons that can be useful for other actors in the REDD+ fraternity, plus forest conservation practitioners in general.

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