



State of the AFOLU sector in the COP 15 negotiations

The role of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) in reducing emissions targets will be defined in the Copenhagen meeting late this year. The Conference of Parties 15 (COP15) will be crucial for the inclusion of a concrete policy concerning AFOLU issues in the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the Long-term Cooperative Action post-2012 (AWG-LCA).

The LULUCF sector (Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry) has a great potential for carbon sequestration from afforestation / reforestation, agriculture-related techniques such as no tillage, drip irrigation, improved nutrient management, agroforestry and modified livestock management. Despite this, the AFOLU sector is currently not included in the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Commitments. Therefore, Annex I countries have no obligation to limit the Green House Gases (GHG) generated by deforestation or agricultural practices, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from deforestation, methane (CH₄) emissions from cattle and rice, and nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions from fertilization, among others (e.g. emissions from fossil fuels, loss of soil carbon, etc). Agriculture being responsible for 14% of global GHG emissions, such non-inclusion is expected to change, depending on the negotiations in December. Deforestation accounts for about 17% of the global GHG emissions. Therefore the discussions about the Reduced Emissions through Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) will be another central point of the negotiations. The efficiency of this mechanism to control deforestation will be discussed in Copenhagen and may be implemented in the post-2012 agreement.

Status of the negotiating texts (AWG-LCA and AWG-KP) regarding the AFOLU sector

A key reference to mitigation in the AFOLU sector is found in the sectoral approaches/sector-specific activities context. In the section on Enhanced Action on Mitigation (AWG-LCA), National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) potentially embody REDD-plus, including agriculture to consider agricultural expansion and deforestation. Yet, the link between land use sector and NAMAs in developing countries is not well developed.

It is not clear whether agriculture and soil management would be included in LULUCF neither if a new CDM, or the NAMAs would include agricultural soil carbon.. These activities and bioenergy production as well, suffer from the difficulty to account for carbon pools and non-anthropogenic emissions in agriculture.

The need for effective measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) for both NAMAs and REDD+ is emphasized. Land-based accounting is a key element in the development of MRV to facilitate the inclusion of AFOLU in the second commitment period (2012 – 2017).

The creation of a work programme for agriculture is currently being discussed. It would focus in particular on soil carbon MRV and the realisation of adaptation and mitigation co-benefits. Still no reference to smallholder agriculture, rural development or livestock is found. Adaptation is often associated with risk reduction and management for which insurance is presented as a key tool and linked to crop production.

While developed countries are well positioned to account for GHG emissions and removals in the agricultural sector, developing countries often lack data and monitoring expertise, and benefit from few incentives in the agricultural sector. No R&D and technology cooperation programmes are foreseen in this sector.

(Global Donor Platform, 2009, IISD, 2009 and UNFCCC, 2009)

Key areas of the negotiation regarding the AFOLU sector to be discussed in Copenhagen include: (i) the integration of agriculture into mitigation activities (REDD-plus and LULUCF); (ii) the challenges of managing food security and a sustainable agriculture in a changing climate and; (iii) addressing the need of more Research & Development in AFOLU mitigation technologies.

The role of REDD+ in the emission reduction goals and the way to implement is to be defined, especially the inclusion or not of LULUCF and agriculture. A credible REDD mechanism can be agreed to at COP 15, even though some argue that linking REDD and Sustainable Land Management is unrealistic and could jeopardize momentum on REDD. But that mechanism could be lost in the negotiations if other issues, such as agriculture, are forced upon the agreement (IISD, 2009).

Although agriculture is one of the few sectors where potential synergies between adaptation and mitigation are clear, while the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) are already being executed, the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) are still only being discussed. Thus, any post-2012 incentives will need to consider programmes synergies. The protocol should also ensure the transition toward more robust Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) methodologies in developing countries.

The access to adaptation/monitoring-related technologies, the promotion of Research and Development, especially regarding soil carbon and livestock and finally the definition of the best mitigation financing mechanisms, whether these will be mandatory or voluntary, to reduce GHG emissions in the AFOLU sector while ensuring poverty reduction and food security are the critical issues to be debated in Copenhagen.

Although the main concern for developing countries involved in the negotiations -the transfer of adaptation, mitigation and monitoring technologies- diverge from developed countries focuses, reaching an agreement on the AFOLU sector is still possible. The implementation of the NAMAs, including the AFOLU sector would significantly increase the role of agriculture, forestry and other land use in mitigation and adaptation actions. Such decision may dope the development of mitigation and adaptation activities in the NENA countries, while possibly increasing food security and reversing the continuous land degradation process affecting the region.

References

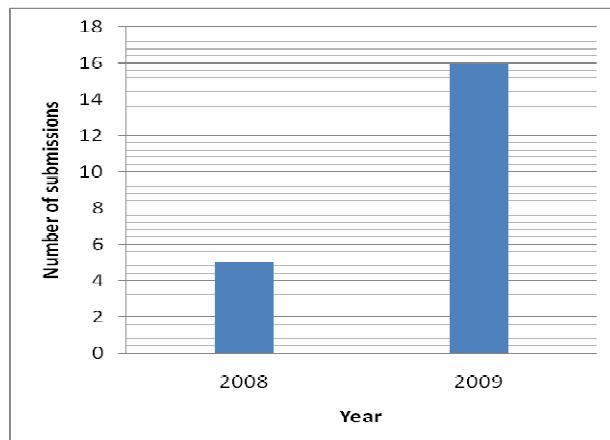
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International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) - Expanding Agriculture's Role in a Post-2012 Climate Change Regime, 2009

UNFCCC, 2009 - All AWG-LCA submissions by Parties

Annex 1. Number of submissions from parties in the AWG-LCA negotiating text concerning the AFOLU sector.



Annex 2. Some country proposals regarding the AFOLU sector in the AWG-LCA negotiating text

Australia	Defends the inclusion of agriculture in the second commitment period and promotes collaborative research to assist developing countries. Accreditation of carbon in soils and vegetation is a main issue.
European Union	Call for full land-based accounting and is not likely to favour the inclusion of agriculture soils under the CDM in a post-2012 agreement, noting that forestry credits should only be considered in the EU-ETS after a thorough review of experience using deforestation credits for government compliance and only for the period after 2020.
New Zealand	In favour of increased global collaborative R&D of technologies and has called for the consideration of the inclusion of agriculture soil carbon as an eligible activity under the CDM.
USA	Defends the inclusion of sustainable land management in REDD
China	Supports the promotion of bio-energy, including bio-fuel
Brazil	Key mitigation interventions in the AFOLU sector include combating deforestation, enhancing soil storage, restoring degraded areas, intensifying bovine ranching, improving cultivation/fertilization to reduce CH ₄ and N ₂ O emissions and cultivating bio-energy crops. Brazil states it would be able to reduce emissions from deforestation by 80% until 2020 (COP 15).
Belize	Supports the creation of measures to include carbon pools in soils, and their improvement with biochar: establishment of global baseline and the corresponding monitoring system.
Iceland	Proposes Wetland restoration as a new activity.
Swaziland on behalf of Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Concrete action for the inclusion of soil organic carbon restoration as a significant mitigation and adaptation tool to climate change.

(IISD, 2009 and UNFCCC, 2009)