

A Pro-poor and People-centered Response to Climate Change

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Work relates to Adaptation X Mitigation X

1. What is your organization doing to advance pro-poor and people-centered climate change?

IFPRI's Global Change Program analyzes the complex interrelations among climate change and agricultural growth, food security, and natural resource sustainability in developing countries. IFPRI's comprehensive approach looks at the key drivers of climate change and their possible evolution over time and space, models the effects of climate change on food security, and assesses adaptation and mitigation strategies in terms of their impact on agriculture, food security and poverty. Analyzing the influence of changes in climate and policy on food production systems enables IFPRI researchers to identify which regions and sectors will be most vulnerable to climate-driven environmental change over the next 30-50 years. Based on this research, linkages that connect environmental change to the welfare of poor people are examined, to reveal the impact of climate variability and change on peoples' livelihoods.

Understanding the impacts of global change will enable policymakers and other stakeholders to develop effective strategies designed to maintain environmental security while accelerating pro-poor growth. To further facilitate decision-making in the face of global change, IFPRI research aims to help policymakers and stakeholders develop adaptation responses at the crop and farm, national, and regional levels that will help mitigate and offset the negative welfare effects of climate change. In addition, IFPRI is exploring ways to make climate change mitigation pro-poor by reviewing current rules governing carbon trading and assessing potential new mechanisms (i.e. policies, organizational arrangements, and investments) to make mitigation strategies 'pro-poor'.

2. What is, in your view, the most critical gap or unaddressed issue in the international negotiations towards a pro-poor climate regime?

Currently there are few mechanisms for developing countries and the poor within developing countries to benefit from climate change mitigation, as most carbon trading schemes are principally focused on reducing emissions, not on promoting pro-poor development. The Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol is the main carbon-trading scheme that is designed to promote sustainable pro-poor development by granting emission reduction credits for carbon offset projects in developing countries. Yet, complicated rules regarding participation, high transaction costs, and the exclusion of certain types of projects under the CDM hinder the participation of many developing countries and poor communities. Recently some discussion regarding the potential inclusion of additional projects (i.e. projects involving avoided deforestation and soil carbon sequestration) has taken place. While the World Bank has become involved in carbon financing and capacity building, much more work needs to be done to make climate change mitigation pro-poor.

Other critical gaps relate to lack of capacity in many developing countries to absorb the growing literature on climate change, adaptation, and mitigation, to analyze and model impacts at the national and sub-national levels; and to develop adequate policy responses on adaptation and mitigation.

Finally, the level of uncertainty associated with climate change research is still very high, and the types of and level of response needed to enhance positive and reduce adverse impacts of climate change remain vague as a result.

3. Do you plan to address this issue? If yes, how?

IFPRI is assessing the potential of a range of new mechanisms to address pro-poor mitigation. This research focuses on generating knowledge on the impact of alternative mitigation regimes—such as carbon taxes, targeting payments for above- and below-ground carbon sequestration, reduction in methane and nitrous oxide emissions to impoverished regions and cap-and-trade—on developing country agricultural and economic growth, food security, poverty, and environmental sustainability. Specific activities include identifying pro-poor investments and viable governance systems to help small farmers and foresters participate in carbon trading. IFPRI is also investigating institutional arrangements and government and community capacity required to implement carbon trading projects. Thus, this research aims to highlight ways carbon-trading projects in developing countries can increase the profitability of environmentally sustainable practices, generate income for small producers and create investment flows for rural communities.

IFPRI also hopes to contribute to the other two gaps identified.

4. What are the challenges you see in addressing this gap?

International negotiations on climate change mitigation have been slow and difficult. Thus, although the constraints to pro-poor mitigation have been identified, little has been done to implement measures designed to increase the participation of developing countries in carbon markets and to ensure that the poor benefit from carbon offset projects. In addition, the lack of technologies for monitoring performance or their relatively high cost have been used as reasons to proceed slowly. This research will highlight ways in which the international community, countries and stakeholders can move forward to promote environmental sustainability and pro-poor growth.