

Assessing land cover and potential governance structures for the Bayano Carbon Project

By: Anna O'Driscoll

Supervisors: Prof Catherine Potvin and Prof Yann le Polain de Waroux

Introduction

- In February 2020, McGill University committed to offsetting the carbon emissions from the flights of its faculty and staff through a carbon forestry project in two indigenous Emberá communities in Eastern Panama, Ipetí and Piriati.
- This reforestation project raises the need to think critically about carbon offsetting, and how to engage in a way that prioritizes benefits for people participating in the projects.



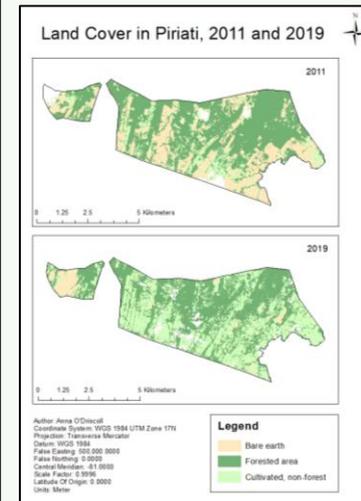
Research Aim and Questions

Aim: to assess the land cover feasibility and potential governance structures of the Bayano Carbon Project, so as to ensure equitable benefit-sharing in the project development phase.

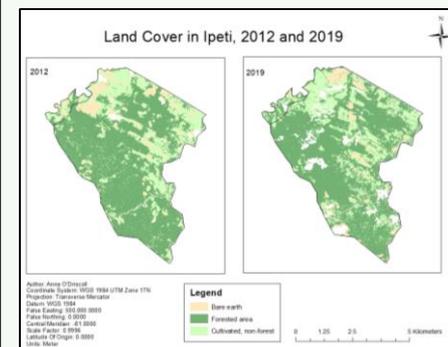
- How has forest cover changed in Ipetí and Piriati from 2008-2019?
- Does that change indicate that there is physical space for this further reforestation to take place?
- In thinking of possible governance structures for the new project, what lessons could be taken from the project design of other forest carbon projects to adequately prioritize benefit sharing for community needs?

Results and Discussion

- Remote sensing maps indicate that there is physical space for new reforestation to occur.



- However, the decision of where to reforest is dependent on landowners' choice to participate; locations for plots cannot be decided from a map alone.
- Importance of including plans for income generation over time and inclusion of marginalized community members in project design, especially in projects relying on existing community structures.



- Consideration of whether different governing structures cost more to operate, leaving less compensation for the farmers.

Literature Review

- Carbon market includes both voluntary and regulated sectors (particularly the Clean Development Mechanism)
- There are numerous critiques of the market
- One approach to address these critiques is through the lens of fairness (making the carbon market "fair")
- Two key components of fairness include access and benefits (Howard et al., 2014)

Methodology

Two-part methodology:

- Remote sensing (maximum likelihood classification) of land cover
- Analysis of project design proposals of five other forest carbon projects in Latin America through a framework of best practices developed by Holmes and Potvin (2014).

References
Holmes, I., & Potvin, C. (2014). Avoiding Re-Inventing the Wheel in a People-Centered Approach to REDD+. *Conservation Biology*, 1-14.
Howard, R., Tallontire, A., Stringer, L., & Marchant, R. (2014). *What lays at stake for standards organisations pursuing fairness in the carbon market? Lessons from literature applied to practice in the carbon market*. University of Leeds. Leeds: Sustainability Research Institute.