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**For immediate release**

## **Measuring the social impacts of REDD+ projects: An emerging challenge**

**CANCÚN, Mexico (26 November 2010)** \_ With hundreds of REDD+ pilot projects planned for the world's tropical forests, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) has published a guide on how to measure their welfare impacts on forest users.

Many REDD+ projects identify improving rural livelihoods as an important co-benefit to the reduction of carbon emitted into the atmosphere. So far the scientific community has focused mainly on forest carbon monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV). But relatively little attention has been given to how to rigorously analyze the social impacts of REDD+ projects and to understand the causal mechanisms that link interventions with outcomes.

Gathering this information is important so that policymakers, donors, REDD+ project proponents, civil society organizations and scientists have a better understanding of the determinants of win-win outcomes and trade-offs before REDD+ is scaled up to the sub-national and national level, said Pamela Jagger, a scientist associated with CIFOR and co-author of the book titled, "A Guide to Learning about Livelihood Impacts of REDD+ Projects."

The guide was published as part of the CIFOR's Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS-REDD), which aims to inform policy makers, practitioners and donors about what works with REDD+. GCS-REDD is conducting research at REDD+ project sites in five countries using the methods described in the guide.

"We have a narrow but critical window of opportunity to incorporate lessons from rigorous impact evaluation into the present and future REDD+ projects," she said. "Careful evaluation designs will allow us to assess what works and what doesn't, and to understand how we get from project activities to social welfare outcomes."

The guide is designed to be used by a range of stakeholders, including REDD+ proponents, donors, civil society organizations, governments and the research community.

“While there exist many guides on how to structure the monitoring and evaluation component of projects, and many toolkits on how to measure changes in well-being of the rural poor, these guides are not adapted to the context of forest conservation and many of the well-being indicator toolkits do not embrace the ‘counterfactual thinking’ that is necessary to attribute observed outcomes to the project/program of interest,” Jagger said. “We seek to bridge these two worlds and create a guide that is uniquely suited to uncovering the social impacts of REDD+ and creating a common language and structure for learning about REDD+ projects.”

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To download a copy of “A Guide to Learning about Livelihood Impacts of REDD+ Projects” click [here](#).

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“A Guide to Learning about Livelihood Impacts of REDD+ Projects” will be launched in Cancún, Mexico, on **Thursday, Dec. 2 at 7pm** at the Presidente Intercontinental Hotel, Tulum Ballroom. Journalists are welcome to attend. Click [here](#) for more information.

Journalists who will be in Cancún, Mexico for COP 16 are encouraged to attend the fourth annual **Forest Day on December 5, 2010**. Forest Day is one of the world's leading global platforms for anyone with an interest in forests and climate change to come together with others and exchange their views. Last year, nearly 1,500 people attended the event in Copenhagen, including world leaders, three Nobel Prize winners, top scientists, donors, policymakers, leaders of indigenous communities, 250 climate negotiators and more than 100 journalists. This year, we anticipate up to 2,000 participants. For further information and registration, go to [www.forestday.org](http://www.forestday.org)

**The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)** advances human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that affect forests in developing countries. CIFOR helps ensure that decision-making that affects forests is based on solid science and principles of good governance, and reflects the perspectives of developing countries and forest-dependent people. CIFOR is one of 15 centres within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

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