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Education and Capacity Building in Forest Carbon Governance: Evidence from Lao PDR

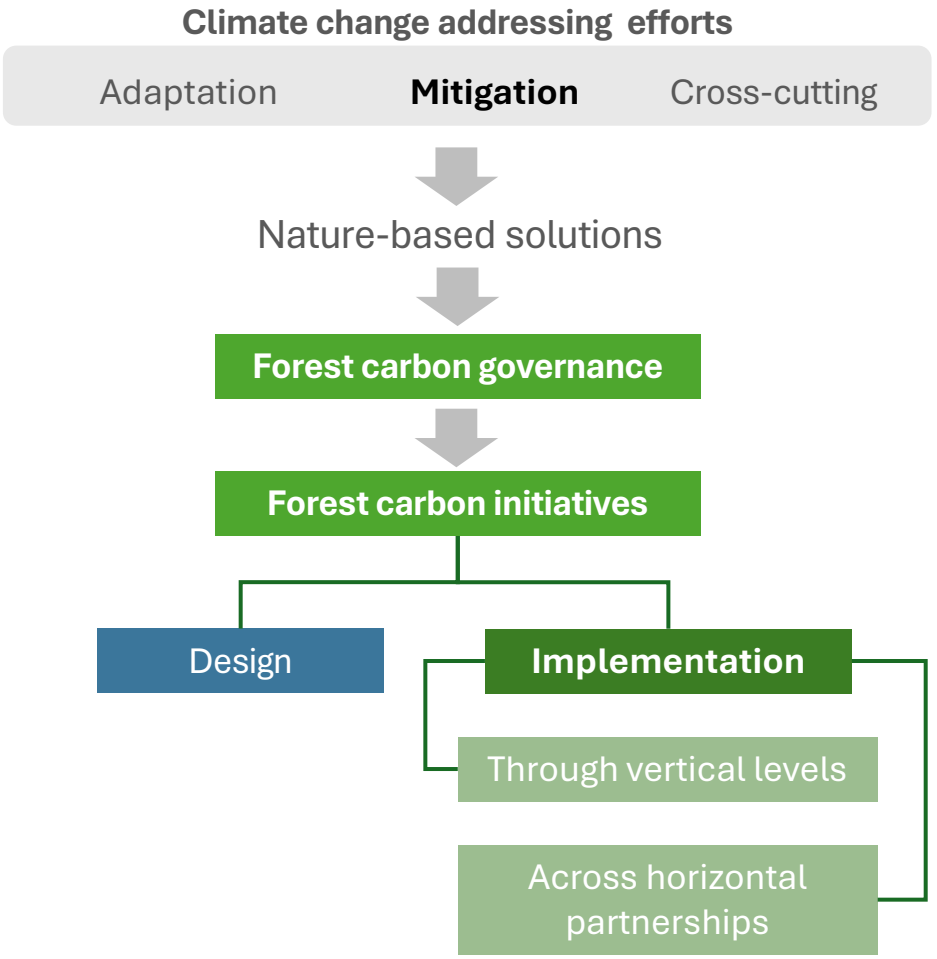
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29 June 2026

Oral session: Educating the Next Conservation Generation - A-921

Forest carbon initiatives

- Global framework to address climate change impacts: adaptation, mitigation, cross-cutting
- Forest carbon governance: formal and informal institutional arrangements – guide the forest carbon management and regulation – multiple scales, partnerships between actors
- Forest carbon initiatives: design + implementation
- Approaches/schemes: Protection/conservation (e.g., REDD+), Restoration (e.g., ARR), and Management (e.g., IFM), as finance sources (donor, market)



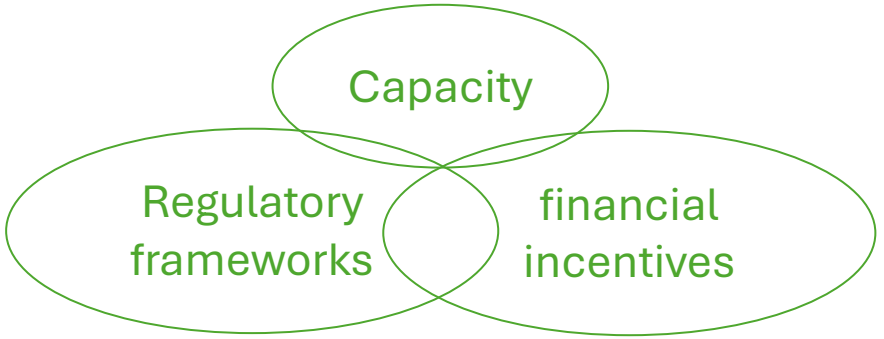
UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
REDD+: Reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and more
ARR: Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation
IFM: Improved Forest Management

(Griffiths et al., 2007; Chen and Xie, 2023; Ruseva, 2023; Konstantinos, 2024; Bond, 2020; Osborne, 2015)

(summarised from Black, 2011; Hibi and Dublin, 2023)

Research question and objectives

- Effective implementation requires – regulatory frameworks + financial incentives +capacity
- Capacity: adequate education and capacity-building among participating actors



Research problem

Gaps in carbon literacy (relates to education), institutional capacity, and technical expertise can limit meaningful participation and effective governance of forest carbon projects

Research Questions

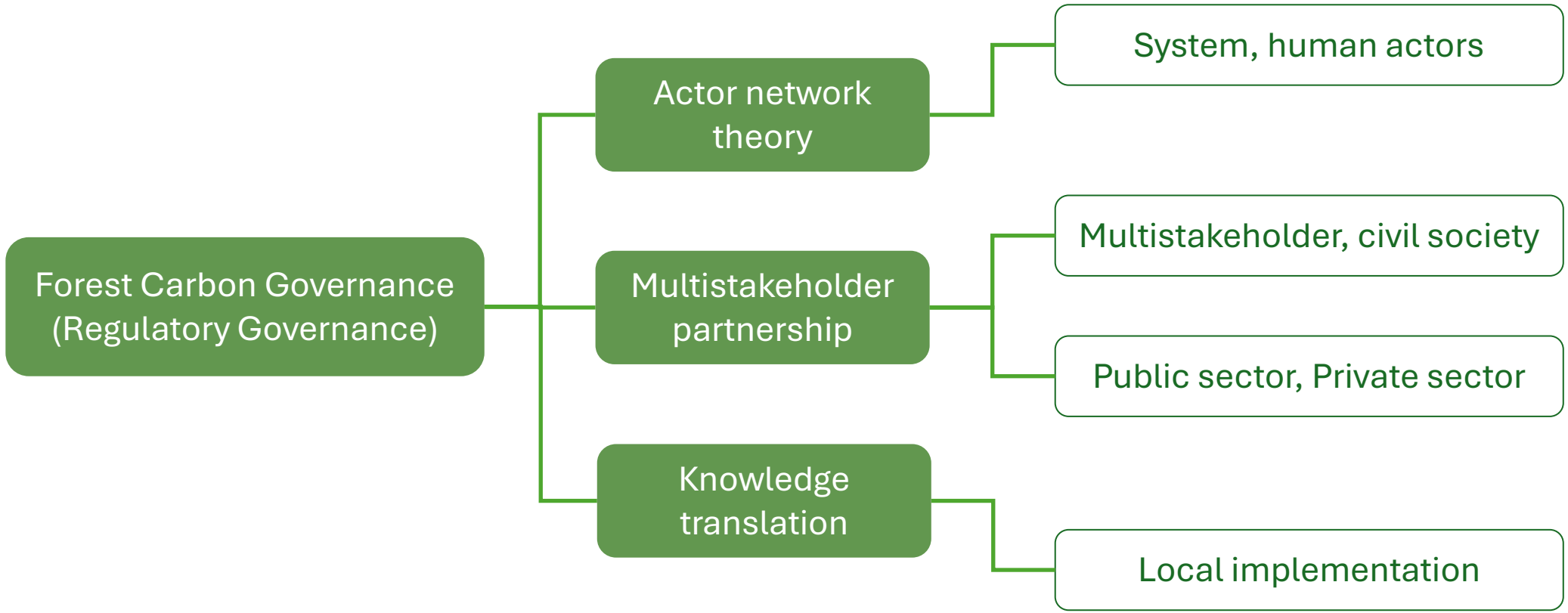
How do education and capacity-building initiatives facilitate the implementation of forest carbon governance?

/Objectives

- Who are the main actors in the participation in the governance of forest carbon projects?
- What forms are these education and capacity-building initiatives?
- What roles do they play in enabling diverse actors?

Framework

- Forest carbon governance implementation as a process of knowledge translation across actor networks.



A mixed-method approach

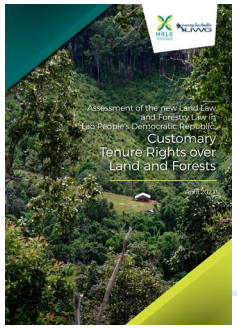
Key-informant interviews

Public and private sectors, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders

Participatory observation

Research workshops, local carbon trainings, forums, seminars, conferences

Data collection



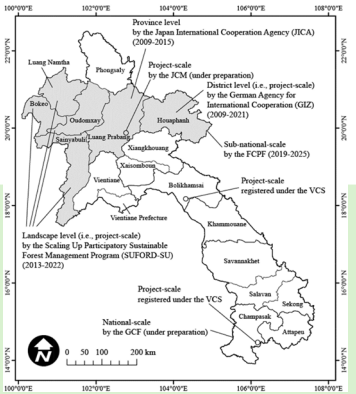
Analysis/presentation

Documentary analysis

Project development documents (PDDs), gov/IGO/NGO reports and portals, and policies

Conceptual mapping

Visualisations



Education & capacity-building

Questions	Main actors in forest carbon projects	Main forms of capacity-building initiatives	Key roles of education and capacity building in enabling diverse actors to participate
Results	Local governments, private sectors, NGOs, local communities	Conservation training programs, NGO facilitation, participatory engagement	Translating complex carbon governance frameworks into locally understandable practices











NGO's policy-research workshop, participation mapping, and training on youth advocacy in local communities

Education & capacity-building

- International partners act as translators on the technical setup, while knowledge exchange occurs through regional workshops
- At the local level, implementation translation includes Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP)



- Education is more than linear, but an exchange of legitimacy and on-the-ground practice
- Capacity-building is a co-production process that facilitates both local communities' understanding and cooperation, and the private sector's implementation

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Education & capacity-building

- Conservation training programs and NGO facilitation play key roles in implementing forest carbon governance through workshops, participatory activities, and technical guidance at local levels.

- While training initiatives have improved awareness of forest carbon projects, challenges remain in strengthening carbon literacy among communities and enhancing technical and administrative capacity within government institutions.



Mechanisms and theoretical contributions

- Beneath the findings: **education and capacity-building** initiatives function as a mediating infrastructure that enables forest carbon governance to operate across different knowledge systems.

Knowledge → Practice

Mechanisms

Translate abstract carbon governance frameworks → Into locally actionable knowledge → Shape understanding and practice of governance

Transfer information

Interpretation

Forest carbon governance is not implemented through standardised technical procedures, but through continuous processes of translation between scientific, administrative, and local knowledge systems

Conclusion & summary

Theoretical contribution

Challenges linear assumptions of capacity-building as a one-way transfer of knowledge, revealing a relational and iterative process embedded in multi-level governance arrangements

- Strengthening education and capacity-building mechanisms is essential to improving participation and the effectiveness of governance in tropical forest carbon initiatives.
- The significance of sustained training programs, intermediary organisations, and institutional learning in boosting the long-term sustainable implementation of forest carbon governance

One sentence summary

This study examines that education and capacity-building initiatives support forest carbon governance by training projects and participatory engagement, through multi-stakeholder partnerships among communities, NGOs, private developers, and the government in Lao PDR.

Thanks For Your Attention

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