



REDD+ Politics in the Media

A case study from Papua New Guinea

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Executive summary

This study examines how policy debates around reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+) have been framed by the media in Papua New Guinea. It does this through an analysis of print media articles mentioning 'REDD(+)' or 'carbon trade'/'carbon trading' published between December 2005 and December 2010. The articles were drawn from Papua New Guinea's highest selling and/or most influential newspapers – two English-language daily newspapers, the *Post-Courier* and *The National*, and the weekly local language publication *Wantok Niuspepa*. The analysis identifies common topics covered by the media when reporting on REDD+ and includes coverage of the key actors in the national REDD+ policy domain, and their positions – as either advocates or adversaries – on particular issues.

The analysis indicates that REDD+ was first reported in Papua New Guinea in 2006, but was not regularly being reported on until late 2008. This coincides with the first reports on the activities of questionable carbon project developers (dubbed 'carbon cowboys' by the media), and the government's establishment of the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade (OCCCT) to regulate carbon trading and develop a national policy for REDD+.

While most articles covered issues at the national level, international issues were also a focus of media attention, particularly Papua New Guinea's leadership role in advocating for REDD+ as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2010, media attention broadened to include sub-national and local issues, such as awareness of REDD+ at the local level and the development of specific pilot projects.

The study found that the media often framed REDD+ in political and economic terms, at the expense of, for example, ecological concerns or discussions of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Issues associated with carbon trading were a frequent topic of media articles, with

many stories focusing on the activities and antics of so-called 'carbon cowboys'. Governance issues, including allegations of corruption and impropriety levelled against the Office of Climate Change also featured prominently. International policy debates were also common topics covered by the media, including the annual conference of the parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, international funding for REDD+, and Papua New Guinea's leadership role in promoting REDD+ internationally

The 160 newspaper articles (and 213 frames) that covered REDD+ in depth (as opposed to only mentioning REDD+ in passing) featured a total of 183 advocates and 21 adversaries. The analysis reveals that national government actors were the dominant voices in the REDD+ debate in Papua New Guinea. Most prominent were the spokespeople of the various incarnations of the Office of Climate Change and the former Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare. However, international and domestic environmental NGOs or NGO coalitions, as well as research institutes were also prominent voices in the REDD+ debate.

In Papua New Guinea, REDD+ has added a new dimension to the highly contested policy arena of forest and land use management. The development of a national REDD+ strategy in Papua New Guinea has become intensely political as different actors, with different perspectives and interests, jostle to realise their 'vision' of how REDD+ strategies should be designed and implemented and how the costs and benefits should be distributed.

The media have an important role to play in providing accurate and balanced information on issues such as REDD+. This analysis suggests that difficulties faced by journalists in accessing and verifying information has allowed REDD+ discourses to be politically driven, and may have enabled certain actors – particularly the State and environmental organisations – to disproportionately influence public opinion through their dominance of the REDD+ media debate.

1. Introduction

'Forests can ease climate change', *Post-Courier*,
24 September 2008

'PM wants to go REDD', *Post-Courier*,
25 September 2009

'State grabs forest for REDD', *Post-Courier*,
31 October 2008

'Getting forestry right is the best solution',
The National, 9 July 2009

'Chambri Lakes people want fair deal in REDD
project', *The National*, 20 July 2010

'Kabon treid em I "kago kalt" tasol' – Namah
('Carbon trade is only "cargo cult" – Namah'),
Wantok Niuspepa, 4 October 2010

These are just some of the headlines that appeared in national media reports about Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+) in Papua New Guinea between 2005 and 2010. They serve to illustrate the range of discourses present in media representations of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea and the variety of actors, interests and issues involved in the national REDD+ policy arena.

The governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica first introduced the broad concept of REDD+ at the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Montreal in 2005. Their submission sought to highlight the significant contribution of tropical deforestation to global carbon emissions and the need to address this source of emissions. The evolution of the REDD+ debate has seen a gradual expansion of scope: from RED, or 'avoided deforestation' as it was referred to at COP 11 in Montreal, Canada; to REDD, incorporating avoided forest degradation, which was endorsed at COP 13 in Bali, Indonesia; to REDD+, including forest conservation, sustainable management of

forests and reforestation/afforestation, which was first proposed in early 2009. Some have even proposed REDD++, which includes carbon sequestration from agricultural activities. This report uses the term 'REDD+' unless otherwise taken from a direct quote.

The concept behind REDD+ is for developed countries to compensate forest-rich developing countries for preserving their forests. It involves placing an economic value on the role of forests in sequestering carbon and aims to enable forest conservation to compete financially with traditional drivers of deforestation, such as conversion to agriculture, timber extraction and infrastructure development. In addition to carbon sequestration, REDD+ could also deliver significant co-benefits, such as conservation of biodiversity, reduction of poverty and improvement of forest governance.

REDD+ has become a hotly debated topic at international and national levels. Issues such as land tenure, indigenous rights, funding mechanisms, corruption and emission reference levels are now the subject of much debate among governments, companies and affected communities.

National REDD+ policy processes are driven by the interests, strategies and beliefs of a network of 'more or less powerful actors, operating at different scales and embedded among markets, hierarchies, coalitions, networks and the state' (Peskett and Brockhaus 2009: 26). By analysing the discourses and the political interests and agency of different actors, a better understanding of REDD+ policy processes and outcomes can be gained.

Media representations can both *reflect* and *affect* social perceptions of an issue. Mass media are considered 'an influential and heterogeneous set of non-nation state actors that function as key conduits to both informal and formal discourses' (Boykoff 2008), and media analysis is a good way of identifying the different discourses and the actors promoting them.

By examining the content of national print media reports since the concept of REDD+ was first proposed in 2005, and adding depth and perspective through interviews with journalists, this paper seeks to identify how REDD+ policy events and debates have been portrayed in the public domain in Papua New Guinea, and how different policy actors have represented their interests to strengthen coalitions and influence public perceptions of REDD+. The research for this report was conducted from February to December 2011, with final revisions taking place in June 2012. The public debate and discourse on REDD+ have evolved since this time, and this analysis should be viewed as a 'snapshot in time' in the evolution of the REDD+ policy debate in Papua New Guinea.

This paper is organised into five main sections. The Introduction provides a brief overview of the study and background about Papua New Guinea. The Methodology section describes the research methods used in the study. The Results section presents the findings of the study, including an analysis of media articles on REDD+ and journalist interviews. The Discussion section highlights the dominant discourses (and counter-discourses), and the actors and coalitions that are promoting them in the national REDD+ policy arena. The Conclusion provides a brief summation of our findings.

1.1 CIFOR's global comparative study of REDD+ and the 3E criteria

CIFOR is carrying out a multi-year, global comparative study of REDD+ across Asia, Africa and Latin America. The objective is to support informed decision making that will help deliver REDD+ programmes that are effective, efficient and equitable. These are known as the '3E criteria' (Angelsen 2009):

- *Effectiveness* refers to the amount of emissions reduced or removals increased by REDD+ actions (i.e. Are the overall climate targets being met?)
- *Efficiency* refers to the costs of these emissions reductions or removal increases (i.e. Are the targets being achieved at minimum cost?)
- *Equity* refers to the distribution of REDD+ costs and benefits (i.e. Are the benefits shared and the costs allocated fairly?)

The study comprises three research components: (1) national REDD+ processes and policies; (2) REDD+ pilot sites; and (3) REDD+ monitoring and reference levels. This paper contributes to the first component by analysing how national processes to formulate and implement REDD+ policies reflect diverse interests at all levels (Brockhaus *et al.* 2012).

1.2 Papua New Guinea: The land of the unexpected

Papua New Guinea is a land of enormous diversity. Its 6.6 million people speak over 800 different languages, making the country the most linguistically diverse in the world. English is one of the country's three official languages (together with *Tok Pisin* and *Hiri Motu*), and is the language used in government and the education system. The vast majority of people in Papua New Guinea live in remote, isolated communities. Many people lack access to basic services and infrastructure, such as education, health, communications and transport. It is estimated that one-third of all adults are illiterate, with most having only received an average of 4 years of schooling. These factors combine to limit newspaper readership to a largely educated, urban elite.

Papua New Guinea houses the third largest tract of intact tropical forest in the world. However, a recent study measuring forest cover change in Papua New Guinea during 1972–2002 (Shearman *et al.* 2008) found an annual combined rate of deforestation and forest degradation of 1.41%, higher than previously thought. Drivers of deforestation include commercial logging, subsistence agriculture and large-scale agricultural developments (Shearman *et al.* 2008, Filer 2011). While Papua New Guinea's carbon emissions from industrial sources are low, the country ranks in the top 10 countries in the world for emissions from land use, land use change and forestry (OCCD 2011).

Papua New Guinea, through former Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, has been a leading proponent of a REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC. As a founding member of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, Papua New Guinea has lobbied for a mechanism that would place an economic value on the role tropical forests play in global climate regulation. They argue this can allow

developing countries, such as Papua New Guinea, to combine their need for economic growth with a desire to contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts.

Papua New Guinea is rather unique among REDD+ countries, as 97% of its land, and almost all its forests, are held under customary land tenure and regulated by custom, not the state. Customary landowners must be consulted and give their informed consent for any developments on their land, including REDD+ programmes.

Despite the value of its natural resources, Papua New Guinea has not been able to translate this wealth into improvements in the standard of living. Social indicators are among the lowest in the Asia-Pacific region, including educational attainment, life expectancy and maternal and child mortality rates (AusAID 2010). Around 80% of Papua New Guineans rely on subsistence agriculture, making them particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

However, Papua New Guinea faces a number of significant challenges if it is to build an enabling

environment for effective, efficient and equitable REDD+. Papua New Guinea is considered to be one of the most corrupt nations in the world, ranking 154 out of 178 countries in Transparency International's 'Corruption Perception Index' (Transparency International 2010). Papua New Guinea has faced persistent allegations of poor forest governance over the past 25 years (CELCOR & ACF 2006, Forest Trends 2006, ITTO 2007, ODI 2007). Politically connected individuals and companies involved in deforestation and forest degradation wield significant power over the state in Papua New Guinea through bribery and corruption and have the potential to derail REDD+ efforts (Laurance *et al.* 2011). The capacity of the government to monitor and enforce laws and regulations that prevent deforestation and degradation is low. Policy inconsistency and a lack of coordination between government agencies and economic sectors provide a number of 'grey areas' in which deforestation and forest degradation can occur. The most significant of these 'grey areas' in terms of REDD+ is the recent rapid increase in the number and size of Special Agriculture and Business Leases (SABLs) being granted over intact forest areas, which allow clearfelling to occur (Filer 2011, Greenpeace 2012).

2. Methodology

This study draws on methodologies used by other studies that have analysed climate change reporting in the UK and US media (Boykoff 2007, 2008). The methods employed for this study were adapted from Price and Saunders (2009) by Di Gregorio *et al.* (2012) and include content analysis of print media articles on REDD+ and semi-structured interviews with a selection of journalists/media professionals.

2.1 Media framing

A media frame is ‘a broad organizing theme for selecting, emphasizing and linking the elements of a story such as the scenes, the characters, their actions, and supporting documentation’ (Bennett 2002, in Boykoff 2008). A frame acts as a conceptual lens that brings certain aspects of reality into focus, emphasising a certain way to understand an issue, while shifting others into the background (Di Gregorio 2009). A news article may contain a number of distinct frames, where the story covered is looked at from a number of angles. By identifying the primary and secondary frames we can make observations about the ways in which journalists and editors understand an issue, as well as the comparative importance given to these understandings.

For this study, we first identified the primary, or the most important frame. The primary frame is almost always contained in the most prominent elements of the text, that is, the headline, sub-heading or first paragraph. It is likely to quote sources in support of the frame – advocates – and these are most likely to be named, and more likely to be prestigious. For the sake of balance, the frame will often contain an alternative view from the one initially proposed. Those providing an alternative viewpoint – adversaries – are often given less prominence, space and direct voice than advocates (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012). We then sought to identify if a secondary frame, which might look at REDD+ from a different angle, was present and then coded this frame separately.

2.2 Newspaper and article selection

The methodology used for this study (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012) called for analysis of three major national newspapers chosen from among those with the highest circulation and reflecting a broad spectrum of political positions within the country. In the case of Papua New Guinea, only two national newspapers are published and both are in English – *The National* and the *Post-Courier*. As discussed in the Introduction, English is one of Papua New Guinea’s official languages, and is the language used in government and the school system. The third newspaper, *Wantok Niuspepa*, was chosen to include a local language newspaper, even though it has a small circulation and is only published weekly.

The National was founded in 1995 and is an English language newspaper with a daily circulation of 48,490, making it the highest selling newspaper in Papua New Guinea. *The National* is owned by Rimbunan Hijau, a Malaysia-based logging company. Rimbunan Hijau is the largest logging company in Papua New Guinea and the newspaper is often perceived to be biased in its reporting of forestry issues, but is generally thought to be independent and unbiased on other issues (Jackson 2011, Tindal undated).

The *Post-Courier* was founded in 1969, making it the oldest daily newspaper in Papua New Guinea. The *Post-Courier* is published in English and has a daily circulation of 26,262, making it the second highest selling newspaper in the country. The paper is owned by the Australia-based News Limited subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation.

Wantok is published weekly in *Tok Pisin (Pidgin English)*, with 12,000 copies printed every week for sale and distribution free charge. *Wantok* was established in 1969 and is owned by Word Publishing, a Papua New Guinean company established by the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran

and United churches of PNG (Dorney 2000). It is not considered to be particularly influential among national policy makers (N. Bingeding personal communication).

All three newspapers are printed in Port Moresby, and while they are distributed nationally, they have only limited circulation outside the capital. The *Post-Courier* and *The National* also publish some of their stories on the Internet.

We searched each of the three newspapers for articles containing the key words 'REDD(+)' and 'carbon trade'/'carbon trading'. These terms were most relevant in the Papua New Guinean context, as REDD+ was often discussed in terms of carbon trading and in many articles the terms often appeared to be used synonymously.

Different search methods were used for each of the three newspapers. For the *Post-Courier*, an electronic Boolean search of articles containing the key words was carried out, using the Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre database. For *The National* and *Wantok* newspapers, electronic catalogues were not available and a manual search for articles containing the key words was conducted of hardcopy archives.

The study included articles published between December 2005, when REDD+ was first officially proposed by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica at COP 11 in Montreal, until December 2010. The search was conducted during February–July 2011.

The search included news reports, feature stories and editorials. Manual searches of *The National* and *Wantok* newspapers also identified a number of half- or full-page 'Media Statements' published by several actors. However, the electronic search used for the *Post-Courier* did not include such statements.

2.3 The coding process

From December 2005 to December 2010, a total of 174 articles reporting on aspects of REDD+ were identified in the three newspapers analysed: *Post-Courier* (86), *The National* (78) and *Wantok* (10). These articles were coded to capture information at three levels.

Level 1 coding captured descriptive variables only, including date and author, the length of the article, what day of the week it ran and the section of the newspaper in which it appeared. While largely used for identification purposes, level 1 coding can indicate shifts in the priority placed on REDD+ coverage in the media. Level 1 coding also captured whether the article included only a passing mention of REDD+; in such cases, no more data were collected.

Fourteen articles mentioned REDD+ only in passing (*Post-Courier* = 8; *The National* = 6), and were coded to level 1 accordingly (basic information). This left 160 articles from the *Post-Courier* (78), *The National* (72) and *Wantok* (10) for level 2 and 3 coding.

Level 2 coding compiled broad variables about the primary, and, where applicable, secondary frames. This included: the *manner* in which the article framed the REDD+ debate (e.g. diagnostic, prognostic, symptomatic, motivational); the political scale at which it framed the debate (e.g. international, national, sub-national); and the specific *topics* around which it framed the debate (e.g. political, economic, ecological).

Level 3 coding identified the primary and secondary frames in much more detail. It included identification of the main *advocates* and *adversaries* of the frame, their particular ideological positions and their assessments of future REDD+ *outcomes*. The population of 160 articles contained 213 individual frames. These 213 frames featured a total of 183 advocates and 21 adversaries. Identifying advocates and adversaries allows a more detailed identification of REDD+ discourses and the different coalitions advocating particular approaches to REDD+ in Papua New Guinea.

Level 3 coding also included an inventory of *policy events*, *protest events* and *core actors*. A policy event was defined as 'a critical, temporally located decision point in a collective decision-making sequence that must occur in order for a policy option to be finally selected' (Lauman and Knoke 1987 p. 251). A protest event was defined as 'a collective, public

action regarding issues in which explicit concerns about the environment [in our case REDD+] are expressed as a central dimension, organised by non-state instigators with the explicit purpose of critique or dissent together with societal and/or political demands' (Fillieule and Jiménez 2006 p. 273). A core actor was defined as 'an organisation and/or individual that defines it/him/herself and that is perceived by others as being part of the national REDD+ policy domain' (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012).

2.4 Expert interviews

A series of short, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of journalists to add depth to the data from the coding process. Interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Interview questions focused on identifying: key actors, topics and policy positions; key REDD+ policy events; and sources of information on REDD+.

Seven journalists were initially identified for interviews: the journalists from each of the three coded newspapers (*Post-Courier*, *The National* and *Wantok*) whose stories were most often picked up in the study; one journalist each from the three most important radio broadcasting stations (NBC Radio, FM 100 and FM Central); and a foreign correspondent from the wire agency *Australian Associated Press* (AAP). Despite repeated attempts to schedule interviews with journalists, only five interviews were eventually conducted: one journalist each from the *Post-Courier*, *Wantok*, FM 100 and the *Australian Associated Press*, as well as the programme manager from the activist website/blog *ACT NOW!* A significant gap in the research is the lack of interview data from a journalist or other representative of *The National* newspaper.

3. Results

3.1 The evolution of REDD+ in the media

The term ‘REDD(+)’ was first used in the national print media in Papua New Guinea in 2006 (‘Understanding climate change’, *Post-Courier*, 4 June 2006). In this feature article by Professor Chalapan Kaluwin, from the University of Papua New Guinea, the role played by the government of Papua New Guinea in promoting REDD+ internationally was highlighted alongside the science of climate change and adaptation:

‘...the government...continues to take the lead in annual international forums, through the UNFCCC. For example, taking the lead in exploring ways in using our natural forest and its resources for economic incentives (known as Reduced Emission on Deforestation and Degradation-REDD), adaptation issues, and doing scientific research and inventory’.

However, despite this early mention of REDD+, media coverage of the topic remained sparse and sporadic until the second half of 2008, when there was a spike in media attention that continued to build during 2009, as shown in Figure 1.

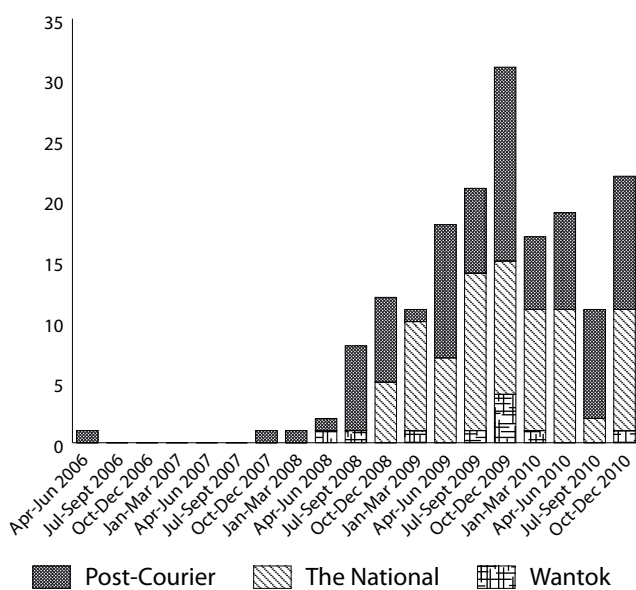


Figure 1. Frequency of REDD+ coverage, per newspaper, per quarter

When the timeline of policy events in Figure 2 is compared with the quantity of media coverage of REDD+, it appears that domestic governance arrangements for REDD+ in Papua New Guinea had the greatest impact. The spike in media coverage throughout 2008–2009 was largely associated with the establishment of the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trading (OCCCT) in October 2008, and with the first media reports suggesting impropriety within this office and lack of due process in its establishment. The increase in media coverage of REDD+ in late 2008 also coincided with the emergence of so-called ‘carbon cowboys’ in Papua New Guinea. Ms Nasau Lurang, a journalist with FM 100, recalled that:

‘there was this report about people trying to come in and do carbon trading and reports of carbon cowboys – that’s when the media started to be involved in finding out’.

Mr Ilya Gridneff, from AAP, suggested media coverage of REDD+ increased once ‘carbon cowboys’ came in as they ‘were more interesting than talking about additionality and carbon sinks’.

Throughout 2009, there was a flurry of sensationalist articles about the activities and actions of ‘carbon cowboys’; confusion about and raised expectations of benefits to landowners; and the government scrambling to control the issue. There was a recurring narrative of REDD+ as a ‘carbon rush’ providing the allure of quick and easy money, but which could potentially see ‘carbon cowboys’ swindle customary landowners. The Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trading (OCCCT) was established to control all aspects of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea, and Dr Theo Yasause, a former advisor to Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, was appointed as the Executive Director.

The legality and mandate of this office to regulate carbon trading was questioned by a number of provincial governors and the Opposition. In one article (‘Office “illegal”’, *The National*, 16 February 2009), the Eastern Highland’s governor, Mal Kela-Smith, warned customary landowners not

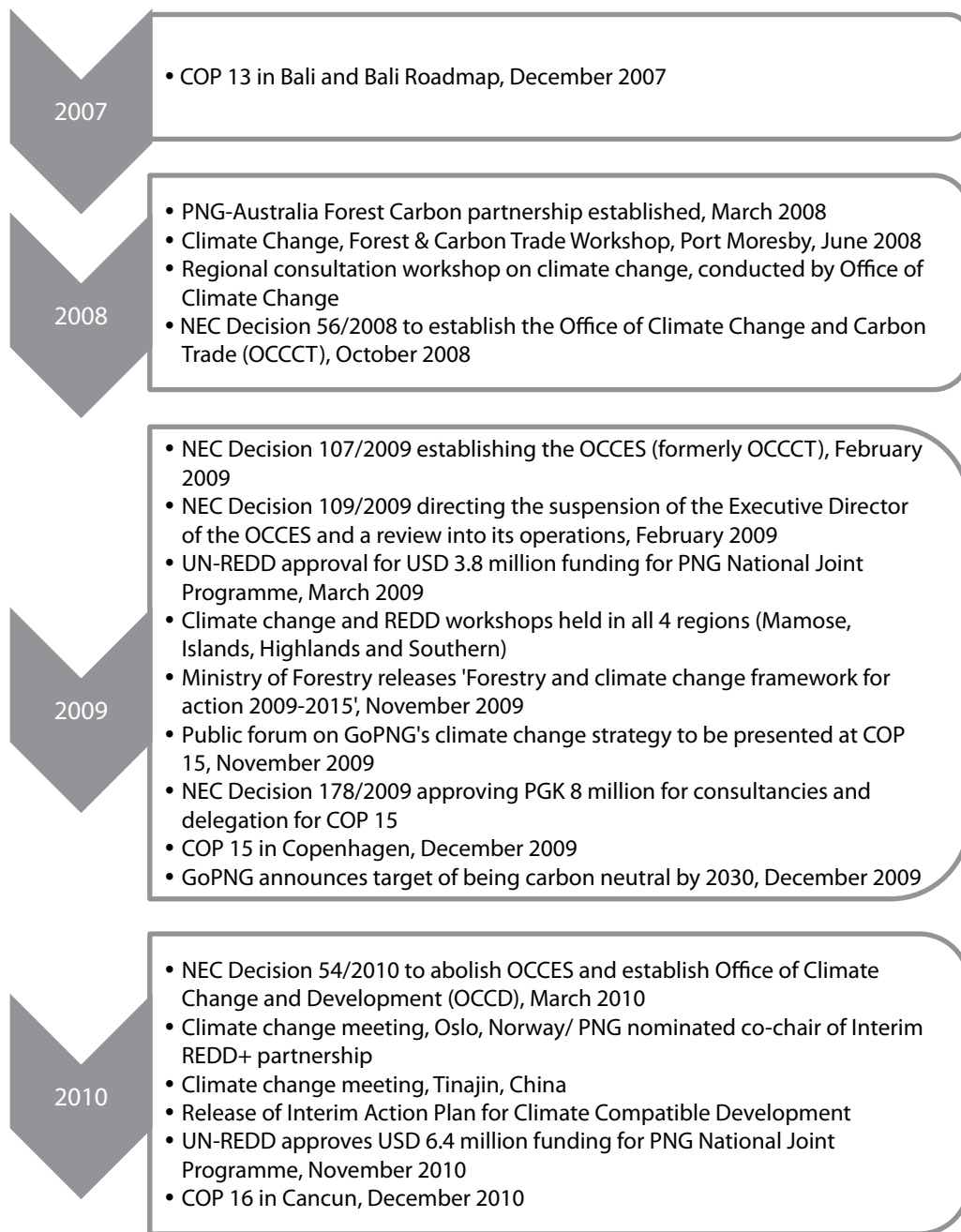


Figure 2. REDD+ related policy events reported in the national media in Papua New Guinea

to enter into any deals or pay any fees to the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trading as the office was illegal and established without due regard for existing mandates, suggesting the establishment of the office was:

‘internationally driven, rather than domestic, with the prospects of substantial amounts of money that could be received under the new Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) in developing countries as the driving force. We have already witnessed the issuing of trading licences by Dr Theo Yasaue (OCCCT Executive Director) to unknown

entities even though he did not have the mandate to do so.’

These claims were presented and rebutted in a series of unedited, and sometimes vitriolic, full-page ‘media statements’ or ‘advertorials’ by various actors, including the Office of Climate Change, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

In early 2009, the OCCCT was renamed the Office of Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (OCCES). The office continued to be plagued

by a number of scandals, including allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement against the Executive Director, Dr Theo Yasause, leading to his suspension and a review of the activities of the office.

In early 2010, a series of decisions by Papua New Guinea's National Executive Council established a new governance structure to coordinate action on climate change. This included the establishment of a new 'lean and professional' Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD). In March 2010, the government released a draft Climate Compatible Development Strategy (CCDS) for stakeholder consultation. The release of this strategy did not appear in reports from the media outlets under review. However, various aspects of the CCDS were extensively covered in blogs and other web-based media, particularly the role of international consulting firm McKinsey and Co., in drafting the strategy (see for example: PNG Exposed 2010a, 2011).

Articles were analysed to identify the political *scale* at which they framed the REDD+ debate. The majority of articles (61%) covered issues relating to REDD+ at the national level (see Figure 3), such as governance and institutional arrangements for REDD+ (including establishing and disbanding the various incarnations of the Office of Climate Change); and initiatives to raise awareness of climate change and REDD+ issues.

26% of articles covered REDD+ at the international level, including Papua New Guinea's contribution to international processes, such as the annual UNFCCC COP meetings and the REDD+ partnership. The government's preparation for, and delegation to, COP 15 in Copenhagen generated a large spike in media articles in the last quarter of 2009 (see Figure 1). Debate centred on the cost of sending the delegation and on their legitimacy to represent the people of Papua New Guinea – particularly when the lead negotiator and much of the negotiating team were not Papua New Guinean. One report, 'Canrad [sic] running a one-man show' (*The National*, 18 December 2009), reported that Papua New Guinea's delegates to COP 15 in Copenhagen:

'...have been pushed aside as mere spectators while PNG Climate Change ambassador Kevin Conrad ran the show...all who acted on PNG's behalf were Italian advisers, lawyers, spin doctors and even support staff.'

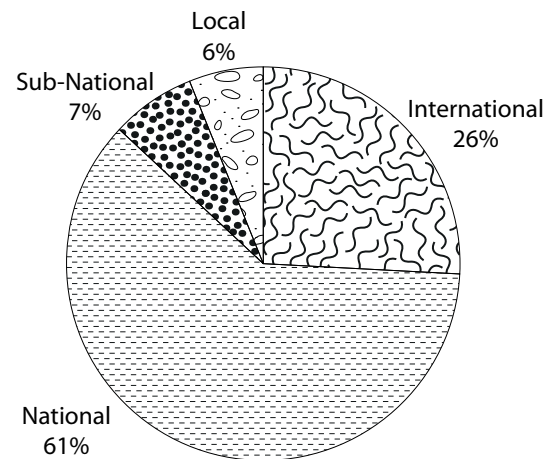


Figure 3. Scale of REDD+ frames

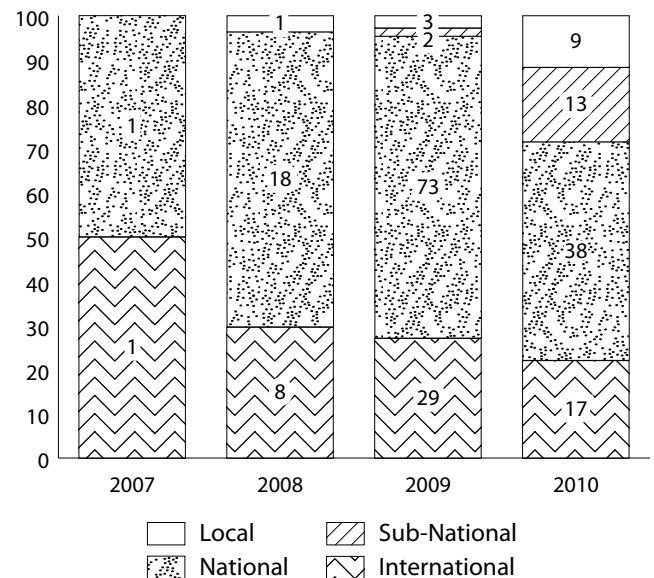


Figure 4. Reporting level, all frames, per year (with the number of frames specified in each bar)

Only 7% of the articles covered issues at the sub-national level, and 6% at the local level. However, over time there was an increase in coverage of issues at the sub-national and local levels (see Figure 4), as REDD+ readiness activities began to penetrate further into regional areas through provincial meetings and awareness-raising workshops, pilot projects and other activities.

3.2 Framing the REDD+ debate

Analysing the primary and secondary frames of newspaper articles allowed us to identify key actors, themes and issues in the REDD+ debate and make

observations about the ways in which journalists and editors understand REDD+, as well as the differing importance given to these understandings.

While the majority of articles (67%) contained only one frame, a second frame was identified in 33% (n = 53) of articles. This means that a total of 213 frames were identified from the 160 articles that were coded beyond Level 1. Each frame was analysed and coded separately.

Of these 213 frames, the main theme or *metatopic* was politics and policymaking (50% of frames), with approximately half of these covering international organisations and political debates (such as UNFCCC negotiations) or state and bureaucratic interests (such as governance arrangements for REDD+) (see the Annex for a list of topics and metatopics).

A total of 24% of the frames focused on economics and markets, mainly carbon trading and funding for REDD+. Governance issues accounted for 14% of the frames, which included governance of carbon markets, governance of international funds for REDD+ and corruption. Issues associated with ecological aspects of REDD+, such as drivers of deforestation, were rarely the main focus of the articles (3%) (see Figure 5).

There were some subtle differences between the metatopics of primary and secondary frames, with secondary frames more often reporting on governance issues compared with the primary frames (23% and 11%, respectively), and a lower incidence of reporting on economics and markets compared with the primary frames (15% and 27%, respectively). This suggests that governance issues such as corruption were often not the main focus of

the article but were discussed in the broader context of Papua New Guinea; while issues around carbon trading tended to appear in the primary frame but were not often discussed as a secondary issue in articles focusing on other topics.

The occurrence of metatopics was relatively consistent across all newspapers, except that the *Post-Courier* reported on governance issues almost twice as often as *The National* (19% and 11% respectively).

Overall, carbon trading was the most frequent topic of media articles, and was generally framed in economic and political terms. International policy debates, particularly COP meetings and Papua New Guinea’s leadership role in promoting REDD+ internationally also featured prominently as topics.

This impression was supported by the journalist interviews. For example, James Kila from *Wantok* noted that ‘mostly, it’s the carbon trade issue that’s being sort of the hype of the media coverage after the REDD... It diverted from the REDD issue into carbon trade’.

When asked what topics were most often covered by the media and why, Nasayau Lurang, from radio station *FM 100*, replied:

‘...REDD is a new thing to Papua New Guinea, despite the Government going overseas and being involved in the international negotiations on REDD. We didn’t get the message. There was not much awareness on what the Government was doing internationally at the UN level. So this issue on carbon trading was an eye opener for people to know that there’s actually something called REDD that is currently being negotiated between our Government and at the UN level’.

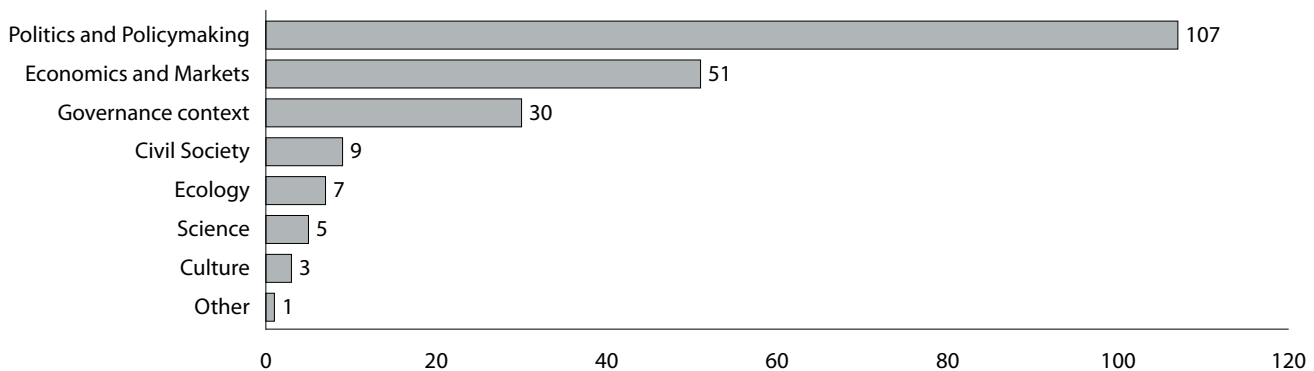


Figure 5. Metatopics or main themes, as pre-identified in the code book; all frames

Harlyne Joku from the *Post-Courier* noted that there was a lot of confusion amongst customary landowners when REDD+ first emerged, recalling that ‘...at the time there was a lot of debate and confusion. What really was climate change? What is REDD? What is carbon trade? How will people actually benefit out of it, and REDD?’

The REDD+ debate in Papua New Guinea has been politicised and dominated by the mechanisms of carbon trading, talk of quick and easy money, and the potential for con men and scams to flourish. One article entitled ‘Rush is on for sky money’ (*Post-Courier*, 10 September 2009) provides a colourful example of this discourse:

‘...carbon trading has been converted into a cargo cult luring cash from Australian taxpayers, international investors and local villagers alike. This classic 21st-century scam emerging from the global climate change industry is known in PNG as “mani bilong skai” (sky money) because it appears to be selling air’.

Another key theme in media reporting on REDD+ was *state and bureaucratic interests* – including wrangling between government agencies and different factions within the government for control over REDD+; allegations of impropriety and illegitimacy that plagued the various incarnations of the Office of Climate Change; and progress in developing a REDD+ policy and legislation.

Articles were analysed to identify the *manner* in which the article framed the REDD+ debate. Just over half of the articles (52%) were considered Prognostic; that is, they proposed a solution to a problem, with the remaining articles classified as Diagnostic (31%), Motivational (9%), Symptomatic (8%) and Other (1%). The *Wantok* newspaper had a higher proportion of motivational articles (although overall numbers were low). Of those articles that did have a second frame, 58% were prognostic and 31% were diagnostic.

The predominance of prognostic articles can suggest a preference for stories that go beyond merely identifying a problem, and attempt to propose a solution. However, the media analysis also highlighted a general lack of in-depth reporting on REDD+. While a significant number of articles mentioning REDD+ could be found, very few could be described as analytical or investigative – i.e. delving into issues associated with REDD+.

While 86% of the frames featured an actor advocating a particular ideological, personal or political stance in relation to that frame, only 39% of all frames had an adversary to contest this stance or provide an alternative view. Our analysis identified many instances of opinions being published without critique or rebuttal and stories not being followed up or corrected, even when new information came to light.

3.3 REDD+ actors, advocates and adversaries

A variety of actors are involved in the REDD+ policy arena in Papua New Guinea – state agencies, non-governmental organisations (both domestic and international), research institutions, intergovernmental organisations, private companies and customary landowners (or their representatives). These actors hold particular perspectives on REDD+ based on their interests, ideologies and access to information (Brockhaus and Angelsen 2012) and may be advocates or adversaries for particular proposals for REDD+.

The 213 frames (identified from the 160 articles coded beyond level 1) featured a total of 183 advocates and 21 adversaries. Identifying advocates and adversaries in article frames enabled us to identify the principal actors driving particular discourses, as well as assess the importance that journalists and editors place on the perspectives of these actors.

Half of all advocates and adversaries were *national-level state and bureaucratic actors* (103 frames) including the Office of Climate Change (33 frames), the Prime Minister (mainly the former Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare, or his Deputy/ Acting Prime Minister) (eighteen frames), the Government of Papua New Guinea including Members of Parliament and government advisors (sixteen frames) and the Department of Environment and Conservation (twelve frames) (see Figures 6 and 7). These findings are similar to those from other countries that are part of the GCS-REDD, including Indonesia (Cronin and Santoso 2011) and Brazil (May *et al.* 2011), suggesting that state actors are often the dominant voices in national REDD+ debates.

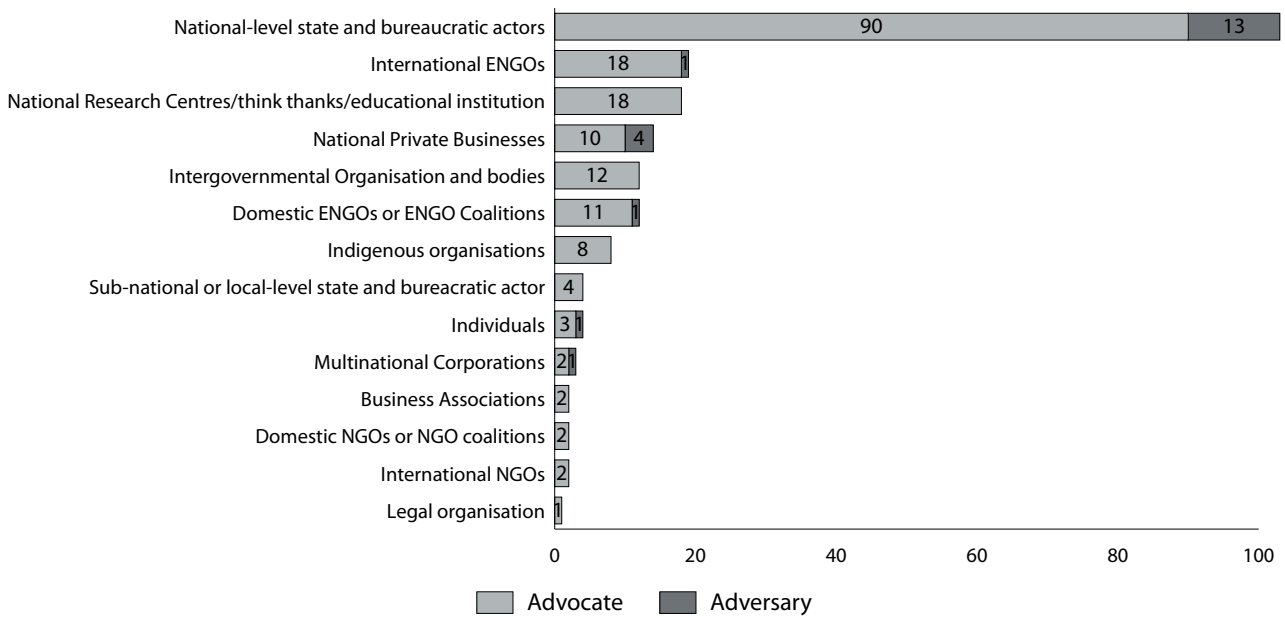


Figure 6. Advocate and adversary types; all frames

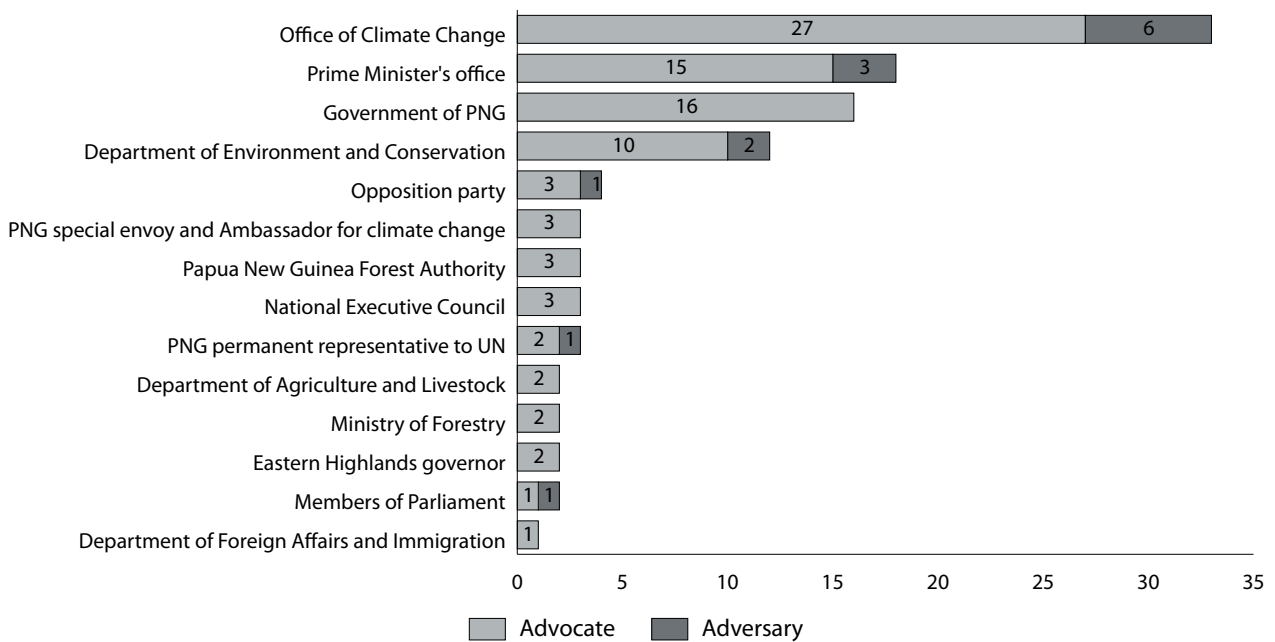


Figure 7. National-level state actors; all frames

However, the media analysis revealed that a number of important state actors were largely absent in the *public* debate on REDD+ in Papua New Guinea. The Papua New Guinea Forest Authority (PNGFA) appeared only rarely as advocate or adversary (three times – twice as advocate) despite their key role in future REDD+ implementation. This may

reflect the wrangling between the PNGFA and the Office of Climate Change (and its advisers, McKinsey and Co.) for control of REDD+ during the period of the media analysis. The PNGFA developed its own climate change policy document in 2009, ‘Forestry and Climate Change Framework for Action 2009–2015’ (Ministry of Forests 2009)

and saw itself as being well placed to take the lead on REDD+. One of the few articles where the PNGFA was quoted as an advocate sought to position the Authority as a lead agency on REDD+ and having the relevant technical experience ('Log sales out', *Post-Courier*, 20 August 2009); while another article lobbied for 'adequate resources to fulfil its role as a key agency for the establishment of in-house forestry programs and climate change framework for action' ('More wealth', *Post-Courier*, 21 August, 2009). However, this was the extent of their voice in the media.

The voices of the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP) and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) were also largely missing from the public REDD+ debate. These departments are also key actors in REDD+ as they are involved in the process of allocating Special Agriculture and Business Leases (discussed in the Introduction), which allow large areas of forest to be cleared for agricultural and other developments. If the absence of these departments' voices in the media is indicative of their absence in the national REDD+ policy domain, this is cause for significant concern as coordination across economic sectors will be necessary to achieve the transformational change required to reduce forest-based emissions (Brockhaus and Angelsen 2012).

International environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOs) were the next most frequently quoted actor group (9%; nineteen frames), after the government. These included Greenpeace (fourteen frames), Wildlife Conservation Society (three frames), and Friends of the Earth (1 frame). Greenpeace was a dominant voice in the public debate on REDD+, often providing a counter-discourse to that of government actors by suggesting that Papua New Guinea was not 'ready for REDD+', highlighting concerns about corruption and poor forest governance and the government's persistent inability to tackle the drivers of deforestation ('PNG given golden chainsaw', *Post-Courier*, 26 October 2010).

National Research Centres/think tanks/educational institutions were quoted in 9% of the frames. These included the National Research Institute (nine frames) and the Forest Research Institute (three frames). While largely focusing on the provision of information, these actors often

advocated specific policy positions on issues such as policies and mechanisms for reducing forest-based emissions, funding mechanisms, and benefit sharing arrangements. As with NGOs, these often provided a counter-discourse to that advocated by government actors.

Domestic ENGOs and *ENGO coalitions* were quoted in 4% of frames. The most prominent group was the Papua New Guinea Eco-Forestry Forum (eleven frames). This umbrella-group of environmental and civil society organisations was a prominent voice in the national REDD+ debate. They advocated strongly for social safeguards, such as free, prior and informed consent, to be included in the national REDD+ strategy and promoted participation and rights-based discourses.

National private businesses comprised 7% of actors quoted (fourteen frames); these were mainly carbon project developers, and included Nupan Trading Corporation (six frames) and Carbon Planet (1 frame), or landowner companies, such as April Salome Landowner Company (one frame). This actor group had the highest proportion of adversaries, and were mainly rebutting the claims of other actors about their activities.

The logging industry was a noticeable actor missing from the REDD+ debate in Papua New Guinea. Only two articles put forward the perspectives of the industry, both appearing in *The National*. One quoted the Executive Director of the Papua New Guinea Forest Industry Association ('Getting forestry right is the best solution', *The National*, 9 July 2009) and the other quoted World Growth ('Commercial forestry urged over carbon trading', *The National*, 20 April 2009). Both advanced similar arguments: that by promoting sustainable commercial forestry, Papua New Guinea could simultaneously achieve emissions reductions, increase jobs and raise living standards. Di Gregorio *et al.* (2012) suggest that although private sector voices are often absent in the public REDD+ discourse, they are highly influential behind the scenes.

Intergovernmental organisations and bodies were quoted in 6% of frames (12 frames). No single actor dominated and organisations quoted included the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Australian Agency for

International Development (AusAID). As could be expected, these organisations were diplomatic in their claims – generally expressing their support for the government of Papua New Guinea in its REDD+ efforts and/or outlining their own initiatives. One journalist interviewed said donors generally talked about funding for projects, but it was often unclear what these projects were, and how they might relate to broader work on REDD+. Their lack of critique of government claims also belies the fact that concerns over poor governance, financial management and a lack of inter-agency coordination has seen significant delays in many donor-supported readiness activities (Babon 2011).

Indigenous organisations were quoted in 4% of the frames (eight frames) and were generally groups of customary landowners from a particular geographical area; often the subject of interest for carbon project development. While the role of landowners in REDD+ policy processes was frequently contested in the media, there were stark differences in how landowners themselves expressed their position. In many cases, articles quoted landowners as advocates for forest carbon projects to be developed on their land or for projects in neighbouring areas to include their land, rather than for more general conditions such as social safeguards or free, prior and informed consent.

This is not to suggest there has been *no* landowner opposition to forest carbon projects, merely that their voice is less organised and less prominent in the national media. Customary landowners are not a homogeneous group, but they may need a common voice (or coalition) for them to ‘compete’ with other actors in the policy domain. In some ways this has occurred, because non-governmental organisations and research institutions have often promoted the interests of landowners through broader participation and rights discourses, such as free, prior and informed consent. However, as one journalist noted, these organisations often have their own agenda and do not replace the voices of customary landowners themselves.

3.4 Assessment of REDD+ outcomes

Article frames were analysed to identify whether advocates and adversaries were optimistic, pessimistic, neutral or offered no outlook in their assessment of the likely *outcomes* of REDD+ schemes and policies.

A total of 50% of frames provided an optimistic assessment of REDD+ – that is, they considered

REDD+ schemes and policies were likely to have mainly positive outcomes, and were thus desirable; 18% were pessimistic – suggesting REDD+ schemes and policies were likely to have mainly negative outcomes, and hence were undesirable; 14% were neutral – suggesting that REDD+ schemes and policies were likely to result in a mix of positive and negative outcomes; while 18% offered no outlook on the prospects for future REDD+ outcomes.

National-level state and bureaucratic actors were much more likely to be optimistic (58%) or to offer no outlook (24%) than the average (see Figure 8). This is to be expected, given the role played by the government of Papua New Guinea in introducing and promoting the concept of REDD+.

Intergovernmental organisations and national private businesses were almost overwhelmingly positive (83% and 62%, respectively), although these came from a very small number of articles (twelve and thirteen articles respectively).

NGOs were much more mixed in their perspectives on the prospects for REDD+. International ENGOs showed a fairly even split between optimism and pessimism for REDD+, with Greenpeace being notable for its pessimism. Domestic ENGOs were much more likely to be neutral or pessimistic (or offer no outlook). Individuals were more likely to be pessimistic (75%) – but this was from a small population of only four articles.

This analysis suggests that more work may be needed for REDD+ to gain the support of various actors, and build the necessary constituency for transformational change away from a business-as-usual pattern of development linked to forest loss (Brockhaus and Angelsen 2012).

3.5 REDD+ and the 3Es

The stances of advocates and adversaries were assessed to determine which of the ‘3 Es’ they were most concerned with: effectiveness, efficiency or equity; or other co-benefits (including poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation or improved governance). Almost half of all frames (49%) focused on issues to do with equity, 33% focused on effectiveness, 10% on efficiency and 8% on other co-benefits.

3.5.1 Equity

The media analysis highlighted a strong equity discourse in the public debate on REDD+ in Papua

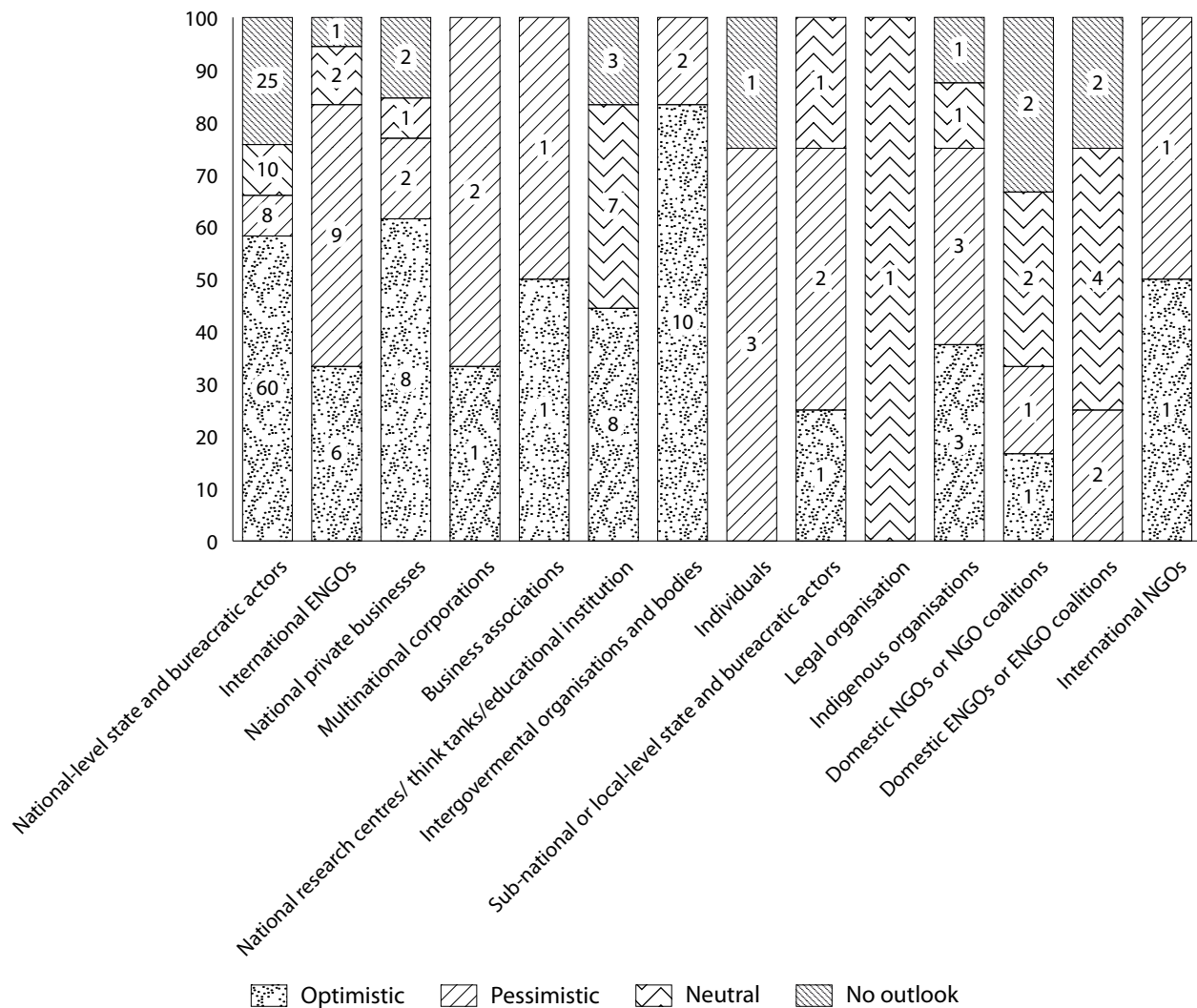


Figure 8. Advocates and adversaries, by type, and by future assessments; all frames

New Guinea. This is interesting when compared with several other countries such as Indonesia (Cronin and Santoso 2011) and Brazil (May *et al.* 2011) that were analysed as part of CIFOR's GCS-REDD, where effectiveness discourses were more prominent. The prevalence of equity concerns in the national REDD+ debate in Papua New Guinea may reflect the country's unique national context – notably its land tenure system, where the vast majority of forests are owned by customary landowning groups rather than the state; and the predominance of concerns about corruption and poor forest governance. This context makes debates about the costs and benefits of REDD+ for various actors particularly salient in Papua New Guinea.

The actors most concerned with equity issues were legal organisations, indigenous organisations, domestic NGOs/ENGOS, sub-national state actors, and national private businesses (see Figure 9). The study period – which encompassed the worst of the 'carbon cowboy' activity and impropriety

within the early incarnations of the Office of Climate Change – also included sobering examples of the potential equity implications of REDD+. State actors employed equity discourses when discouraging customary landowners – as owners of most of the country's forests – from engaging in voluntary carbon agreements until government regulations had been developed. In one article titled 'Iamo warns about con groups in carbon trade' (*The National*, 30 October 2009), carbon cowboys were characterised as:

'cunning educated individuals...targeting illiterate rural people and cheating them out of their hard earned income while misleading them on carbon trade issues'.

However, an interesting counter-discourse came from an unlikely coalition of national private businesses (including the 'carbon cowboys' themselves) and indigenous organisations (defined here as customary landowning groups), who criticised the government's lack of support for the development of forest carbon

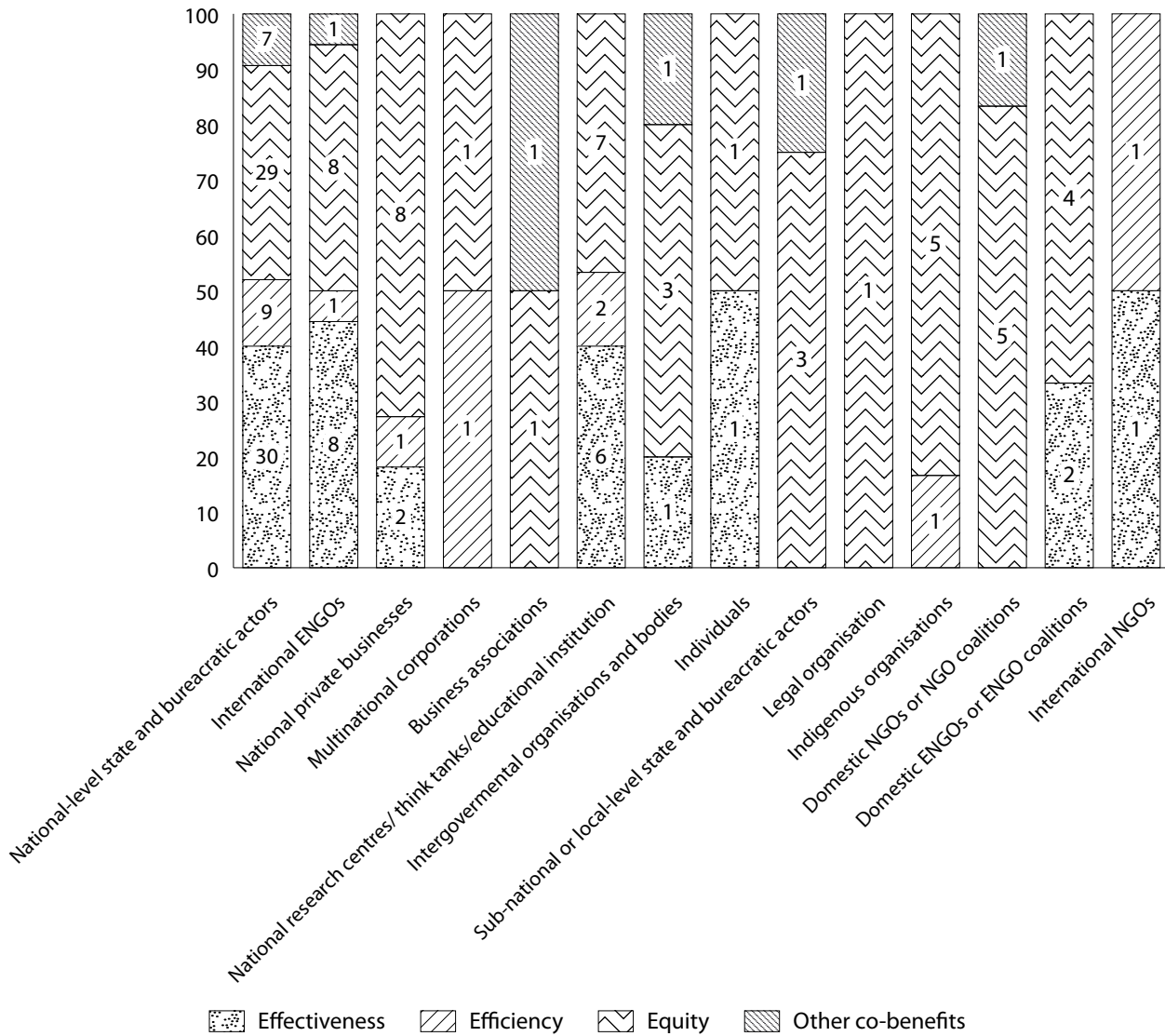


Figure 9. Advocates and adversaries, by type, and by priority outlook; all frames

projects for the voluntary market, claiming that by not supporting the voluntary carbon market the government was denying landowners the opportunity to generate income from their forest resources.

NGOs and research institutions raised equity concerns in the context of institutional arrangements for REDD+. Their arguments centred on the ability of landowners, especially those living in rural areas, to meaningfully participate in REDD+ policy processes. They also highlighted the need to provide information to and raise the awareness of landowners, to enable them to engage in REDD+ programmes on a level playing field with other actors. In particular, this was seen as a strategy for reducing the risk of landowners entering into poor deals with carbon developers.

At the international level, equity concerns differed somewhat. Equity discourses were used by state actors when making a case for industrialised countries to provide adequate funding for REDD+ programmes in less developed countries. They were also used to highlight concerns about who could legitimately represent the interests of *all* Papua New Guineans on the international stage. For example, Dorothy Tekwie of Greenpeace stated in an article ‘Govt not ready for Copenhagen, say NGOs’ (*Post-Courier*, 20 November 2008):

‘there was no proper co-ordination and consultation between landowners and civil societies by the Government, therefore when the Government goes to the UN climate talks in Copenhagen they would not represent the people of the country’.

3.5.2 Effectiveness

National-level state and bureaucratic actors, international ENGOs, and research institutes were almost equally concerned with the effectiveness of REDD+ and issues to do with equity. Government actors regularly employed effectiveness arguments – i.e. that it was committed to and capable of reducing emissions – to attract donor funds and (re)gain the confidence of the international community.

However, NGO and research actors used media campaigns to question the commitment and capacity of the government of Papua New Guinea to address forest-based emissions. Arguments were made that the government was not serious about tackling the drivers of deforestation, and was only interested in accessing REDD+ funds. Nalau Bingeding, of the National Research Institute, wrote in an opinion piece ‘Carbon trade - which way PNG?’ (*Post-Courier*, 22 April 2009) that:

‘Everything done now on carbon trade is about the financial aspects rather than the technicalities of what the concept was originally designed for... reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and mitigate the effects of the resultant climate change’.

Greenpeace forest campaigner, Sam Moko, put it more bluntly in an article entitled ‘PNG given golden chainsaw’ (*Post-Courier*, 26 October 2010) saying:

‘The PNG government is hungry for international funding from REDD but has no plans to stop destroying its own rainforest or reduce its own emissions’.

The media analysis also highlighted considerable concern among NGO and research actors that only limited opportunities existed for stakeholder participation in REDD+ policy processes, and that the government was relying too heavily on an international consultancy firm, McKinsey and Co. in the development of a national REDD+ strategy. A number of NGO and research actors used the media to propose alternative approaches and policies for REDD+ – which could indicate a lack of opportunity to contribute to policy processes through more formal channels. These alternative policy proposals covered issues such as: transparent and accountable benefit sharing mechanisms, including utilising an independently run national REDD+ fund or Payment for Environmental Services (PES) approach; a moratorium on the allocation of land

for new logging concessions and Special Agriculture and Business Leases (SABLs); reforming the Forest Management Agreement (FMA) process, especially the Development Options Assessment component, and reviewing existing FMAs; and developing a national land use plan so as to avoid conflict between different sectors.

National ownership over REDD+ policy processes, and policy processes that are inclusive, are seen as key factors in achieving effective REDD+ outcomes (Di Gregorio *et al.* 2012). This is likely to be particularly true in Papua New Guinea, where customary landowners, not the state, own the vast majority of the country’s forests. For example, in an article titled ‘Rainforests and climate change’ (*Post-Courier*, 23 June 2009), Kenn Mondiai of the PNG-based NGO Partnership with Melanesians explained:

‘Over time, we have seen many initiatives that aimed to protect forests. Most of them have failed because they have come from the top down and have not included the very people at the front lines of rainforest protection [—]the communities who live in and from the forest. Emerging initiatives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation known as REDD must not repeat the errors of the past’.

3.5.3 Efficiency

The cost efficiency of REDD+ was only a topic of concern to national-level state and bureaucratic interests. During the period of the media analysis, efficiency issues focused mainly on the high costs associated with the creation of new institutions for REDD+, including the initial incarnations of the Office of Climate Change, and the amount being paid to consultancy firm McKinsey and Co. to support the activities of this Office.

The media analysis highlighted discontent and disagreement between state actors, external to the policy clique involved in the initial incarnations of the Office of Climate Change, regarding the office’s mandate and funding. The National Executive Council (equivalent to the Cabinet) described the office as ‘large, unwieldy, grossly over-staffed and expensive’, citing this as one of the reasons for abolishing the office. Other reasons included allegations of serious misconduct by senior executives

and legal employment issues ('Climate office, huge and costly', *Post-Courier*, 14 December 2009).

Efficiency stances were also employed by state actors when discouraging landowners from engaging in the voluntary carbon market. For example, the director of the Office of Climate Change, Dr Wari Iamo, stated that 'landowners who volunteer to be

involved in carbon trading may be selling their forests cheaply...' ('Carbon trade risks raised', *Post-Courier*, 11 June 2010), suggesting they were more likely to receive higher carbon prices from a formal REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC. Arguments were also made for using REDD+ finances efficiently, so the majority of funds could flow to landowners as compensation for lost opportunity costs.

4. Discussion

4.1 Actor stances and coalitions

The media analysis identified a number of important actor groups and coalitions influencing REDD+ policy processes: the government of Papua New Guinea, customary landowners (and their advocates), non-governmental organisations and national research institutes.

The Government of Papua New Guinea officially supports a formal REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC. However, the government is not a homogeneous unit and individuals bring different beliefs, interests, and affiliations to their role as elected officials or public servants. Papua New Guinea's political system is inherently unstable, with frequent changes in leadership, ministerial positions and heads of government agencies – with corresponding changes in priorities. This makes building, and sustaining, a constituency for transformational change especially difficult. One example is that of Belden Namah, who has at various times been the Minister for Forests, Minister for Forests and Climate Change and Deputy Prime Minister. In one article titled 'Carbon trade is only "cargo cult" – Namah' ('Kabon treid em I "kago kalt" tasol – Namah', *Wantok*, 4 March 2010), Mr Namah, the then Minister for Forests, claimed carbon trade was just a 'cargo cult' and that resource owners should not be duped into thinking they would receive substantial economic benefits from it. What was not disclosed was that Mr Namah has significant business interests in the commercial logging industry (Editorial Opinion 2012).

Customary landowners, as owners of the country's forests, are core actors in REDD+ in Papua New Guinea. In general, landowners are keen to have sustainable livelihood options and are interested in opportunities such as REDD+ which enable them to generate income from preserving their natural resources. However, the GoPNG has taken the stance that REDD+/forest carbon projects need to be centrally coordinated and approved at the national level, effectively preventing landowners from developing their own forest carbon projects for the voluntary carbon market. Several landowning groups

formed coalitions with carbon project developers, arguing that the government is denying landowners the opportunity to generate income from their forest resources because it has not supported the voluntary carbon market.

Customary landowners have also formed coalitions with NGOs advocating for REDD+ to recognise and reward the rights and roles of indigenous peoples and local communities in protecting forests. NGOs are concerned about the potential for corruption and negative impacts on landowners, and, together with national research institutions, are advocating for landowners and their representatives to be provided with information and the opportunity to build capacity.

NGOs and research institutions have formed a vocal and effective coalition advocating for more inclusive and transparent REDD+ policy processes, which they perceive to be taking too long and with insufficient participation of key stakeholders. The government, however, contends they cannot finalise a national REDD+ policy until the design of a REDD+ mechanism is settled at the international level.

Several multilateral and bilateral donors have promised to provide financial and technical support for REDD+ 'readiness', although their voice is somewhat hidden in the public debate. While publicly supporting the government in its REDD+ efforts, the delay in granting and/or disbursing promised REDD+ financing suggests deeper concerns on the part of the donors.

4.2 Pushing their perspectives

Some actors significantly increased their voice in the REDD+ debate by writing opinion pieces or having their views published in feature articles in the newspapers we studied. Some authors had multiple feature articles published, such as Nalau Bingeding from the National Research Institute (five articles) and Dorothy Tekwie from Greenpeace (three articles).

There was a noticeable difference between the newspapers in the number of REDD+-related articles classified as ‘features’ (*Post-Courier* = 28%, *The National* = 4%, *Wantok* = 40%). Of particular interest, was the significant difference between the two major newspapers in the number, and the authors, of published feature articles.

The *Post-Courier* published 24 feature articles, written by a range of authors from different groups, including academics, environmental NGO representatives and political actors (including the Opposition). The majority of feature articles published in the *Post-Courier* were either optimistic or neutral in their assessment of the future for REDD+, where a ‘neutral’ assessment of the future of REDD+ is defined as ‘REDD+ schemes are likely to result in a mix of positive and negative outcomes’.

Only three feature articles were published in *The National*. One was an investigative piece on corruption within carbon trading syndicated from the international wire service *Reuters* (‘Carbon markets showing cracks’, *The National*, 4 June 2009). The other two were written by ‘World Growth’ (‘Poor Countries Bashed Again’, *The National*, 22 December 2009; ‘Greenpeace Wearing Out Welcome in Developing World’, *The National*, 5 November 2010). World Growth is an international not-for-profit organisation that advocates global trade and globalisation. It is closely associated with the consulting firm of International Trade Strategies Global (ITS Global), which is frequently commissioned by Rimbunan Hijau, owner of *The National*, to conduct studies into the economic benefits of logging in Papua New Guinea and to rebut claims of illegal and unsustainable practices. World Growth has suggested that REDD+ programmes will reduce economic growth and impoverish developing countries (World Growth 2011).

World Growth/ITS Global appear as advocates in two articles published in *The National* (‘Commercial Forestry Urged over Carbon Trading’, *The National*, 20 April 2009; ‘Report: REDD Freeze Would Be Costly for PNG’, *The National*, 3 December 2010), yet there is no disclosure made about World Growth/ITS Global’s connection to Rimbunan Hijau, nor of the connection between Rimbunan Hijau and *The National*.

Neither World Growth nor ITS Global appear as advocates or adversaries, and are not quoted at all, in the *Post-Courier* or *Wantok*. By contrast, NGOs quoted extensively in the *Post-Courier*, such as Greenpeace, did not appear at all as advocates or adversaries in *The National*. This analysis suggests that media ownership may be influencing how REDD+ is portrayed in particular newspapers, particularly in terms of which actor groups are given a voice as advocates and adversaries.

A number of actors have used full-page advertisements to put forward their policy positions and to rebut the claims of other actors. Harlyne Joku from the *Post-Courier* suggested that the strategy of taking out full-page advertisements was mainly aimed at other policy actors rather than the general public, ‘which is good, that’s important, but to the public – they don’t really like looking at a whole lot of text, you know’.

4.3 Sources of information on REDD+

Lack of access to independent, credible and reliable information inhibits the ability of many journalists in Papua New Guinea to provide critical analysis of complex issues such as those surrounding REDD+. When asked if international media were a source of information on REDD+, one journalist explained that they were not connected directly to the Internet, making it difficult to access international media, and, presumably, other on-line content.

Basic journalistic norms, such as balanced reporting and fact-checking, are difficult in a country such as Papua New Guinea that has limited transport and communications infrastructure. One journalist noted that it is often difficult to contact sources to check information because of poor communications infrastructure, and that often journalists must rely on government ministers or other actors to fly them around the country to report on various initiatives, making it difficult to present an independent and unbiased account.

There is also a problematic reliance on press conferences and press releases for information. In many cases, it appears that newspapers were reprinting press releases from various actors – particularly government agencies, NGOs and carbon project developers – without scrutiny or verification,

and without seeking opposing opinions, even when it was clear that opposing views existed.

Although state agencies, particularly the Office of Climate Change, were often quoted, the journalist interviews indicated the government office was not considered a main source of information on REDD+. One journalist noted that:

‘the government set up, through the Office of Climate Change, seem to not be doing much in terms of assisting or contributing to driving the REDD agenda through public awareness and dissemination of critical information related to REDD and carbon trade’.

The journalist interviews identified NGOs, particularly the Papua New Guinea Eco-Forestry Forum (EFF), Greenpeace, and WWF, as key sources of information on REDD+. Harlyne Joku, from the *Post-Courier*, noted that NGOs ‘have a very strong network...with land and forestry’, and journalists know they can tap into this for information.

Donors were not seen as key sources of information, with one journalist noting the information they did provide generally related to their own initiatives or funding, rather than more general information on REDD+. When donors were quoted in articles, the wording was generally diplomatic in nature – to announce partnerships or express their support for the government’s activities – rather than providing critical analysis or information on REDD+.

Many of the journalists interviewed also highlighted the complex nature of REDD+ and the lack of clear and simple information they could use in their reporting. Harlyne Joku expressed a strong desire to access more information on REDD+ from scientific articles and conferences to use in her reporting. She also highlighted the importance of linking REDD+ with local people’s experiences of climate change. She noted that some local communities are already experiencing the effects of climate change but that the current discourse on REDD+ is dominated by carbon trading and ignores basic information about the role of REDD+ in climate change mitigation.

The lack of critical reporting in the mainstream national media may be responsible for the increased

popularity of web-based media, including websites such as *REDD-Monitor* (www.redd-monitor.org), blogs and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which have become important sources of information for many Papua New Guineans with access to this technology (Jackson 2011, Chandler 2012). Papua New Guinean activist website *ACT NOW!* (www.actnowpng.org), the anti-corruption blog *PNG Exposed* (<http://pngexposed.wordpress.com>) and the Masalai blog (<http://masalai.wordpress.com>) have all covered aspects of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea. In many cases, these articles have either sought to assist Papua New Guineans to understand the complexities of REDD+, and what their government is advocating for on their behalf (for example, Narokobi 2009a, b) or revealed details of a perceived misuse of taxpayer funds (PNG Exposed 2010a, b, 2011)). Issues of representation and legitimacy were recurring themes in web-based media – i.e. Who is driving the REDD+ agenda? Who is benefitting from it? Who can legitimately represent the interests of all Papua New Guineans?

Foreign media have also been influential in reporting on REDD+ in PNG, particularly through their investigative journalism. Sometimes the most interesting stories were picked up by the national media and re-printed. It is interesting to note that many of the earliest and most detailed stories regarding the activities of the so-called ‘carbon cowboys’ were written by foreign journalists working for international media outlets – in particular *The Economist* (Loder 2009), the wire agency *Australian Associated Press* (Gridneff 2009, 2010), and *Reuters* (Wynn and Creagh 2009) – only some of which were picked up by the domestic newspapers analysed for this study. Thus, the national discourse around REDD+ may have differed from the way the evolution of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea was being represented to the rest of the world through the international media.

A thorough analysis of on-line and international print media was beyond the scope of this study, which focused on national print media because it allows for a comparative analysis across REDD+ countries. However, this is an important area for future research.

5. Conclusion

This study sought to identify the key actors and discourses shaping the public debate on REDD+ and influencing REDD+ policy processes in Papua New Guinea. It did this through an analysis of how REDD+ was portrayed in the national print media.

The study captured a snapshot of events, frames, actors and perspectives that shaped the REDD+ debate at the national level in Papua New Guinea from December 2005 to December 2010. The analysis identified that REDD+ was first reported in Papua New Guinea's media in 2006, but was not regularly being discussed in the print media until late-2008 and early-2009 when reports of so-called 'carbon cowboys' began to surface and the government established the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trade. The office was soon embroiled in scandals over its legality, mandate and the actions of its Executive Director and was the subject of numerous articles.

REDD+ was largely framed in political terms, with politics and policymaking the most common topics covered by the national media in their reporting. This is a reflection of the early stages of the policy process covered by the study period – which was dominated by a jostling for control of the REDD+ agenda by different state actors, scandals plaguing the first incarnations of the Office of Climate Change, and the high stakes involved with this new initiative in the highly contested area of land and forest management.

The media also framed REDD+ as an economic issue, focusing particularly on carbon trading. This reflected the uncertainty in international REDD+ design and financing at the time, with the government seeking funding for REDD+ readiness activities from various bilateral and multilateral donors as part of a formal REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC, while various carbon project developers were seeking access to voluntary carbon markets. It may also demonstrate confusion in the media regarding the difference between voluntary carbon markets and efforts to establish a REDD+ mechanism under the

UNFCCC. Indeed, the terms REDD+ and carbon trading seemed to be used synonymously.

Few articles focused on the technical aspects of REDD+, suggesting little contemplation in the national discourse of how REDD+ initiatives would actually be implemented.

The study shows that REDD+ generated widespread interest and the involvement of a diverse range of actors in Papua New Guinea. State and bureaucratic actors were particularly prominent in the national policy debate, especially the Office of the Prime Minister, the various incarnations of the Office of Climate Change, and the Department of Environment and Conservation. Notably, several government agencies likely to play a significant role in REDD+ implementation, including the PNGFA, DLPP and DAL, had little presence or voice in the media. This could suggest that these organisations were simply not participating in the *public* debate on REDD+ (but were involved in policy debates behind closed doors), or that REDD+ policy processes had failed to generate whole-of-government support.

International and national NGO actors, especially Greenpeace and the Papua New Guinea Eco-Forestry Forum emerged as strong voices in the national REDD+ debate. These two organisations have a long history of involvement in national forest policy debates, and have played an important role in representing the interests of landowners and other civil society organisations. National research institutes such as the National Research Institute, the Forest Research Institute, and the Institute for National Affairs were also prominent voices, often drawing on their research base to promote evidence-based policy and to address the lack of discussion of technical aspects of REDD+.

Carbon project developers and the landowner companies with whom they worked, regularly used the media to attempt to drive the REDD+ agenda toward supporting their interests, notably accessing the voluntary carbon market. By comparison,

industries associated with deforestation and forest degradation, such as commercial logging and palm oil, were noticeably silent in the media debate on REDD+. This could suggest little involvement in REDD+ policy discussions during the research period, or that they did not perceive REDD+ as being either a significant threat to or opportunity for their businesses.

Customary landowners were reduced to somewhat of a phantom voice in the REDD+ debate. Their interests were often invoked by other actor groups, notably NGOs and carbon project developers, yet the unadulterated voices of those at the 'grassroots' were largely absent.

A number of key issues emerging from this study will need to be addressed if Papua New Guinea is to design and implement an effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ scheme. These include resolving the contradiction between the apparent enthusiasm for adopting REDD+ by some state actors, while business-as-usual activities leading to deforestation and forest degradation continue. Other key issues involve questions of: whether to allow voluntary carbon market projects given the

continuing uncertainty of a REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC; how to ensure full and effective participation of customary landowners, particularly given the country's unique land tenure system where landowners, rather than the state, control the majority of forest resources; and how best to oversee the development of a credible financial mechanism to manage REDD+ funds in a transparent and accountable manner that will give confidence to landowners, the private sector and donors to invest in REDD+ initiatives in Papua New Guinea.

It is important to note that the REDD+ debate and progress toward a national scheme have progressed considerably since the period covered by this paper (2005–2010). There are encouraging signs that lessons have been learnt from the challenges experienced in the early stages of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea. There is a growing consensus around certain issues, including benefit-sharing and consultation processes. However, it is yet to be seen if Papua New Guinea will be able to challenge business-as-usual development and establish a climate-effective, cost-efficient and equitable REDD+ scheme.

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Annex. List of topics and metatopics

F1/F2 Metatopics

1. **Ecology:** frame refers mostly to ecological or 'green' aspects of forest, plants, biodiversity, conservation and forest protection, and CO₂ emission/stocks/sequestration from deforestation and degradation.
2. **Economics and markets:** frame refers mostly to economics aspects related to industry, commerce, markets – including carbon markets-, business groups, business lobbyists, specific products or spokespeople of business interests. Includes economic impacts upon society.
3. **Politics and policymaking:** frame refers mostly to individuals, processes or claims of governments and other political actors (parties) at any level, whether international, in national, opposition, the civil service, quasi non-governmental organisations or local authorities. Includes policy design and implementation.
4. **Civil Society:** frame refers mainly to civil law claims and rights, campaigns and protests - demonstrations, direct action, public opinion polls, consumer reports.
5. **Governance context:** frame refers mainly to the existing general governance conditions (corruption, law enforcement, monitoring and verification mechanisms) in a country and its implications for reducing emissions through avoided deforestation and degradation.
6. **Science:** frame refers mostly to discoveries, fundamentals, new studies, release of scientific reports on applied science and new technologies. This category includes discussion of any scientific findings, scientific controversy, change in science, science reports etc.
7. **Culture:** frame refers mostly to lifestyles, practices of individual and community living, consumption patterns and popular culture.
8. **Other:** any other metatopic not captured above. Use this category sparingly, only if none of the others can apply.

999. (For F2 variables only) Not applicable or There is no F2.

A) Ecology

Forest

1. **Deforestation:** related to ecology of deforestation in reference to carbon emissions (e.g. as a consequence of clearfelling, fires and conversion to other uses)
2. **Degradation:** related mainly to ecology of degradation of forests in reference to carbon emissions (e.g. as a consequence of selective logging or fires)
3. **Forest conservation:** related mainly to ecology of forest conservation in reference to carbon stock enhancement
4. **Enhancement of forest carbon stocks:** refers to forest restoration and regeneration
5. **Sustainable forest management:** mainly related to technical issues related to sustainable methods to manage forest as RIL and timber certification
6. **Afforestation and reforestation:** refers to planting of new forests (including tree plantations) on lands that historically have not contained forests, and to schemes under these categories currently included in CDM mechanisms

Agriculture

7. **Small-scale agricultural management systems:** ecological characteristics of small-scale agriculture, agroforestry schemes, limits and opportunities to reduce emissions
8. **Large-scale agriculture and livestock management systems:** ecological characteristics of large-scale agribusinesses and livestock systems, limits and opportunities to reduce emissions

Biodiversity

9. **Biodiversity conservation:** focusing mainly on conservation of biodiversity as a co-benefit or as opposed to carbon sequestration
10. **Other major ecological concerns:** any other major ecological concern not captured above

B) Economics and markets

11. **Funding:** refers to issues related to funding of REDD+ processes, relations to donors and design and implementation of financial mechanisms
12. **Carbon Trading:** refers to intermediation and trading of carbon credits from REDD+, can include creating REDD+ projects for carbon trading. Can also relate to business-related profit-making activities in carbon trading.
13. **Cost-efficiency of REDD+:** refers to considerations related to reducing or containing costs (including transaction costs). Can refer to preparedness activities as well as REDD+ schemes.
14. **Economics and business:** refers to other economic issues as effects on the economy in general, or economic interests of business, or specific companies.
19. **Forest policies/ policy reform**
20. **Agricultural and agrobusiness policies/ policy reform**
21. **Demonstration activities (activities related to pilot projects in specific localities)**
22. **MRV policies**
23. **Infrastructure policies/ policy reform (road building, etc.)**
24. **Energy policies/policy reform**
25. **Industrial sector policies/policy reform**
26. **Decentralisation/regional autonomy policies/ policy reform**
27. **Land tenure policies/policy reform**
28. **Indigenous rights policies/policy reform**
29. **Carbon tenure policies**
30. **Policy reforms in other sectors (e.g. elimination of perverse incentives/subsidies)**

C) Politics and policymaking

C.A.) Elite politics

15. **International Organisations and political debates:** refers to politics of UNFCCC meetings where REDD+ issues are discussed, position of different countries or country coalitions aimed to influence public opinion or national policies.
16. **State and bureaucratic interests:** refers to statements on a government agency agenda, state interests often represented in bureaucracies, struggles between and with state agencies on REDD+ issues to protect/ expand spheres of influence
17. **Business interests:** refers to indication of industries opposing or pushing for REDD+ in order to gain financially (or reduce losses) from REDD+ schemes.

C.B.) Policymaking

C.B.A.) Design of REDD+ strategy/policies (refers to the policymaking process related to REDD+ policies, from agenda setting to policy formulation, including design of demonstration activities and MRV processes, and REDD+ sectors)

18. **REDD+ readiness activities (activities for readiness NOT primarily linked to a specific REDD+ locality, for example institutional changes, capacity building, etc.)**

C.B.B.) Policy implementation (refers to implementation of national REDD+ policy strategy)

31. **REDD+ readiness activities**
32. **Forest policies/ policy reform**
33. **Agricultural and agrobusiness policies/ policy reform**
34. **Demonstration activities**
35. **MRV policies**
36. **Infrastructure policies/ policy reform (road building etc.)**
37. **Energy policies/ policy reform**
38. **Industrial sector policies/ policy reform**
39. **Decentralisation/regional autonomy**
40. **Land tenure policies**
41. **Indigenous rights policies/policy reform**
42. **Carbon tenure policies**
43. **Policy reforms in other sectors (e.g. elimination of perverse incentives/subsidies)**

C.B.C.) Policy coordination and participation

44. **Intermediation and coordination:** refers to efforts or concerns about **coordination** of sectoral government agencies, or coordination across levels (national, sub-national, local).
45. **Stakeholder consultation:** refers specifically to efforts or concerns to assure **inclusions and participation** of multiple stakeholders in policy discussions

C.B.D.) Equity and distributional issues

46. **Benefit sharing:** refers to the policy discussions on rights to carbon and decisions on benefit sharing mechanisms across stakeholders for REDD+ schemes.

D) Civil society

47. **Civil society interests:** refers to statements, positions, release of reports of civil society actors
48. **Campaigns/protest:** refers to expressly politically oriented protest **actions** and responses of citizens and civil society organisations (e.g. demonstrations, direct action, email campaigns)
49. **Civil law:** involving a civil law claim, and class actions related to issues relevant to REDD+

E) Governance

50. **Illegal logging:** refers to law enforcement issues related to logging activities, international trade, monitoring and verification of certification etc.
51. **Governance for effective monitoring, reporting and verification:** refers to governance issues related to monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon emission reductions from REDD+ schemes
52. **Governance of carbon markets:** refers to governance issues related to fraudulent activities and lack of transparency and law enforcement in carbon markets
53. **Governance of international funds for REDD+:** refers to governance of funds provided by the

international community at the national and sub-national level related to lack of transparency and law enforcement in administration of these funds.

54. **Corruption:** refers to corrupt and collusive practices (illegal activities involving government officials) and related law enforcement issues
55. **Other law enforcement:** involving the implementation and enforcement of criminal law other than indicated in the above categories

F) Science

56. **Scientific funding and processes**
57. **New scientific methods, fundamentals, new studies**
58. **Applied science, new technologies:** (e.g. measuring degradation)

G) Culture

59. **Knowledge and public understandings:** knowledge, education, public opinion (poll results, consumer reports).
60. **Lifestyle:** practices of individual and community living, consumption patterns
61. **Official national culture:** drawing on ideas and symbols of nation
62. **Minority culture:** referring to minority cultural groups
63. **Popular culture:** celebrities, films, books.

CIFOR Working Papers contain preliminary or advance research results, significant to tropical forest issues, that need to be published in a timely manner. They are produced to inform and promote discussion. Their content has been internally reviewed but has not undergone the lengthier process of external peer review.

This research is part of the policy component of CIFOR's global comparative study on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (GCS-REDD+), which is conducting research in 12 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The study captures a snapshot of events, actors and perspectives that have shaped the REDD+ debate at the national level in Papua New Guinea through an analysis of print media articles published during 2005–2010.

The study found that media coverage largely focussed on REDD+ issues at the national level although, international issues were also a focus of media attention, particularly Papua New Guinea's leadership role in advocating for REDD+ as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The study found that the media often framed REDD+ in political and economic terms. The analysis reveals that national government actors were the dominant voices in the REDD+ debate in Papua New Guinea, although international and domestic environmental NGOs or NGO coalitions, as well as research institutes were also particularly prominent. What was missing, however, were the unadulterated voices and opinions of local people and communities who own the vast majority of Papua New Guinea's forests. Their engagement and active participation in policy development and implementation will be vital for effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ outcomes.

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