

Kaisa Korhonen-Kurki		
Affiliation	University of Helsinki	
Session Chair		
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Abstract Session 1.3 – Power of small wins? Realizing the transformative power of REDD+ in Indonesia, Vietnam and Brazil.

Halting deforestation seems to be one of the most straightforward responses to the urgent need to mitigate CC. Yet, achieving this goal in an equitable manner needs transformative change in discursive practices, incentive structures and power relations. To facilitate required changes, several REDD+ policies and strategies were designed in the REDD+ countries during past ten years. In this paper, we will study what kind of transformative elements and signs there have been from the beginning of the REDD+ era until today. We base our analysis on the framework of “small wins”, “the smaller, yet potentially transformative changes of moderate importance” (Termeer & Metzger 2019). Small wins are concrete, implemented and often incremental changes that can accumulate, scale up, broaden or deepen and create momentum for larger-scale changes. They can act as seeds for transformative change. Our earlier analysis (Korhonen-Kurki et al 2019) has shown that already initiated policies changes play a crucial role in setting the REDD+ policies and measures. In the small wins framework, non-linear complex system thinking replaces linear policy development approaches (Termeer & Dewulf 2019). We also examine if any “propelling mechanisms” were activated. We define propelling mechanisms as chains of events that reinforce themselves through feedback loops with an amplifying effect on an initial small change so that it becomes larger and stronger, or intensifies and escalates its consequences. Our material include extensive interview and survey material with key REDD+ actors from the years 2012, 2016, and 2019 from Indonesia, Vietnam and Brazil. Our preliminary observations show that various small wins, and their propelling mechanism can be, indeed, identified, yet their possible transformative power remains questionable.

Co-authors: Korhonen-Kurki, K Brockhaus, M. Pham, T. Moeliono, M. Dwisatrio, B. Gallo, MF. Gebara