

Joint Implementation and Forestry Projects - Conceptual and Operational Fallacies

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Abstract

The Framework Convention on Climate Change addressing the problem of global warming at the international level, was signed in 1992. A protocol to the convention, including emission limitation or reduction commitments, was recently adopted. Joint implementation (JI), in any of its various forms, constitutes one of the mechanisms for reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. The basic rationale for JI is to achieve the greatest global environmental benefits for the least cost. JI can in principle be a useful instrument in implementing environmental agreements. In this article, the authors argue that JI raises several issues of concern in relation to the realization of different aspects of sustainable development. More specifically, in the forestry sector, JI often seems to conflict with local and global environmental priorities. Moreover, the basic premises on which JI forestry projects are predicated, namely the carbon sequestration potential, is not borne out by available scientific data. In the long term, such projects have a very limited capacity for carbon sequestration considering that woody biomass eventually decays or burns.