

# Governing Natural Climate Solutions: Prospects and Pitfalls

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## Governance Context

### Discourse: Carbon-centric and crisis orientated<sup>1</sup>

- Narrows scope of issues requiring solving- e.g. inequality
- Emphasizes emergency politics over deliberative politics

### Knowledge: emphasis on global mitigation potential<sup>2</sup>

- Modelling sidelines governance issues (e.g. land rights, contested values) leads to inflated estimates, partial knowledge (e.g. Fig 1.)
- Not innocent process: embedded in politics of interests and knowledge
- Leads to ramping up of ambition – but history of green grabs and colonialism give cause for concern.
- A lot of existing knowledge production *obscures* rather than clarifies the conflicting interests and trade-offs involved in governing NCS

### Institutions: central to determining NCS outcomes<sup>3</sup>

- Land contested *across scales*. Targeting people with authoritative and control rights can marginalize people with use rights.
- No simple relationship between land tenure and management decisions.
- Formalization can entrench inequalities.
- **NCS about navigating conflicts not delivering win-wins.**

Fig. 1. Research and evidence-base on NCS reflects, and risks replicating, existing inequalities.

Green countries are where research exists (darker green = more studies). Red circle highlights dearth of studies in Africa.

Image from Nature-Based Solutions Evidence Platform:  
<https://www.naturebasedsolutionsevidence.info/evidence-tool/>



## Elements of a response

A

### Access

- Who can access (financial and non-financial) benefits from NCS?
- Who can access decision-making processes on NCS?
- Desperately/urgently need to disaggregate questions of access (e.g. gender, ethnicity, across scales) to mitigate risk of entrenching inequality.

B

### Burden-Sharing

- Instrumentally (effectiveness) and normatively (equity) important
- Cuts across scales – vital to understand local-level burdens and their distribution.
- ***Again***: Desperately/urgently need to disaggregate (e.g. gender, ethnicity, across scales) to mitigate risk of entrenching inequality.

C

### Resisting Co-option

- Co-option = strategic utilisation of knowledge to support existing economic and political systems in ways which are unintended and uncontrollable by those that produce the knowledge
- Is stating NCS should not distract away from decarbonising fossil fuel economy sufficient?
- **Politically contextualised approach to NCS is vital to resisting co-option**

**References:** 1. Hulme, (2019). Is it too late (to stop dangerous climate change)? An editorial. *WIREs Climate Change*; Hulme, (2019). Climate emergency politics is dangerous. *Issues in Science and Technology*. 2. Nightingale et al., (2020). Beyond Technical Fixes: climate solutions and the great derangement. *Climate and Development*. Bellamy and Osaka, (2020). Unnatural climate solutions? *Nature Climate Change*. 3. Asaaga et al., 2020. Questioning the link between tenure security and sustainable land management in cocoa landscapes in Ghana. *World Development*. Putzel et al. (2015). Formalization as development in land and natural resource policy. *Society & Natural Resources*.