

Do Land Rehabilitation Investments Have Desired Impacts? USAID's significant intervention after artisanal-&-small gold mining.

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Abstract (122 words)

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining supports local economies but it also degrades forests. Rehabilitation aims to remediate that degradation, yet evidence on its impacts is scarce. We study impacts of USAID's large Oro Legal (OL) rehabilitation project in Chocó and Antioquia, mining regions in Colombia where OL invested. Using difference-in-differences for estimates robust to evolving impacts, alongside archival data and interviews with stakeholders, we find that OL's local impacts varied – understandably – in magnitude, significance, and direction. In Chocó, forest rose in one cohort but fell where OL's livelihood efforts led to forest clearing. In Antioquia, rehabilitation efforts raised forest only in the area with lowest prior degradation. In sum, OL's impacts followed from its multi-element design interacted with local conditions.

Keywords: rehabilitation, forest, restoration, evaluation, livelihoods, artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), international cooperation

JEL classification: O22, Q23, Q56

Are Firms Willing To Pay For Quality In Carbon Offsets?

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Abstract (136 words)

Trade in emissions reductions (“offsets”) is agreed to have potential to lower the cost of climate mitigation. When reducing emissions – to comply with regulations, retain workers, or attract consumers – firms want to lower costs to raise profits. Unfortunately for nature, low emissions-offsets prices may reflect low quality, i.e., non-additionality (costless “actions”): while cheap, “offsets” might be offering zero climate mitigation. Since information asymmetries and over-crediting have allowed this in practice, offsets have varied in their climate (non-) impacts. That raises the issue of firms’ willingness to pay for higher quality, i.e., for impacts. Our discrete-choice experiment with managers at U.S. firms quantifies their willingness to pay for offsets as a function of actual emissions impacts, social and environmental co-benefits, our monitoring treatment, self-reported reputational exposure, past climate actions taken, and other characteristics within ‘firm types’.

Key words: carbon credits, quality, DCE, co-benefits, monitoring, firm preferences

Identity, Property Rights and Deforestation in Post-Conflict Frontiers

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Abstract (169 words)

Post-conflict transitions can place significant pressure on tropical forests, and land tenure formalization is widely promoted as a policy tool to prevent surges in deforestation. Yet its environmental effects remain ambiguous. We argue that behavioral responses to land titling depend on individuals' sense of belonging within their communities, particularly in post-conflict frontier forest regions. Drawing on insights from identity economics, we propose that formal property rights reinforce conservation norms primarily among individuals who feel socially connected to their territory. To test this hypothesis, we implement a survey experiment with farmers in deforestation hotspots in the Colombian Amazon. The experiment randomly varies the presence of land titles, economic incentives for forest clearing, and the actor responsible for monitoring land use (local government or armed groups). We find that while monitoring by local government increases stated willingness to deforest relative to armed group monitoring, land titling reduces deforestation intentions among individuals with stronger community belonging. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of tenure formalization depends on local identity and social context.

Key words: Identity economics, deforestation, land tenure, titling, post-conflict