



Blue Carbon: International Policy Analysis

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Objectives

- Identify potential existing international policies that could or do incorporate blue carbon
- Find and discuss the opportunities and challenges within these policies



Photo by M. Sanf elix

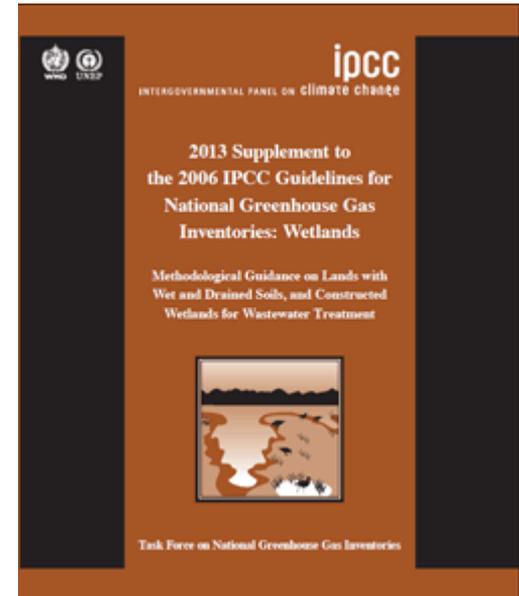
Policies Explored

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Wetlands Supplement
2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 - Reducing Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation (REDD)
 - Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
 - Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)
3. Ramsar Wetlands Convention



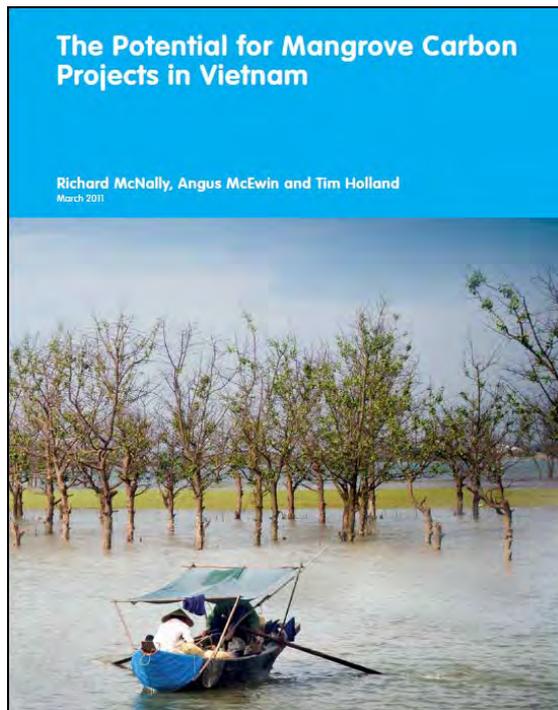
IPCC Wetlands Supplement

- IPCC provides Parties to the UNFCCC with guidance on how to compile their National Greenhouse Gas Inventories
- Previous guidance from 2006 did not include wetlands
- 2013 Wetlands Supplement provides Parties with guidance on how to include emissions from wetlands in their inventories
- Not a requirement – Parties are encouraged to gain experience in implementing guidelines and report back by 2017
- Blue carbon ecosystems hopefully will now be included in future inventories!



UNFCCC: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)

Case Study: Vietnam



- Provides financial incentives to protect forest carbon reservoirs in developing countries
- Mangroves can already be included; seagrasses and salt marshes are not included
- Each country defines for itself what constitutes a “forest”
- Many countries with mangrove blue carbon do not include mangroves in their definition
- Both soil and biomass carbon can be included, but countries often do not or are unable to include the soil carbon fraction

UNFCCC: Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

- Develop projects to reduce emissions that can be sold to developed countries seeking emissions reductions credits
- Mangroves can already be included; seagrasses and salt marsh are not included
- Each country defines for itself what constitutes a “forest”
- Soil carbon can be included
- Methodologies must be developed to determine how many credits a project gets:
 - Afforestation/Reforestation project method targets mangrove reforestation
 - <1% of current projects belong to the Afforestation/Reforestation category



UNFCCC: Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)

- Mechanism to assist developing countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Countries define what mitigation actions are included
- Multiple funding mechanisms
 - Government funding
 - International climate and development support
 - Private sector
- Flexible nature could easily incorporate blue carbon:
 - Expand guidance on how to develop a NAMA project to include blue carbon habitats
 - Capitalize on the potential to earn carbon credits for NAMA projects to incentivize more blue carbon projects



Blue Carbon Indonesia
Research activities

Plans for Study Sites of Blue Carbon project (until 2014)

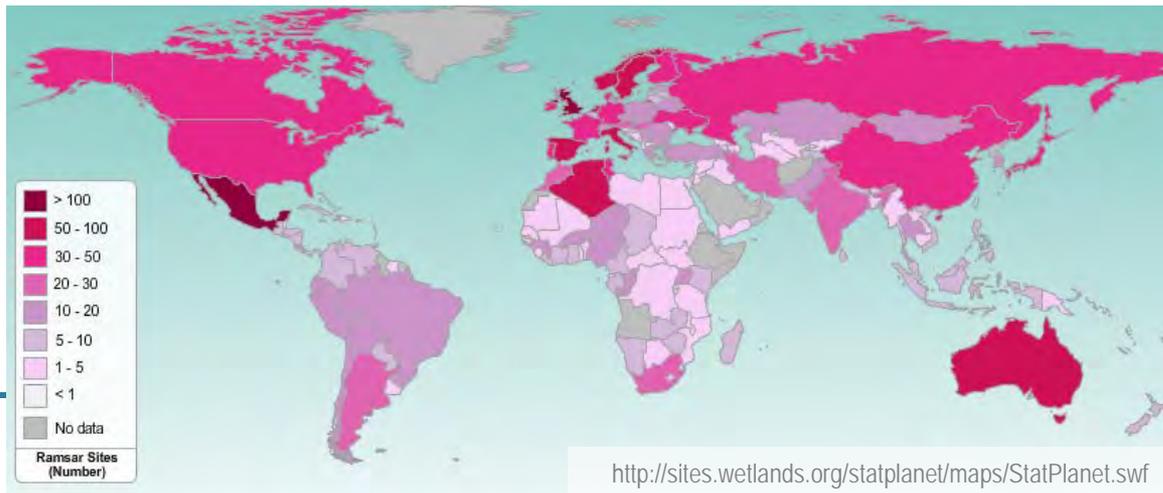


2 pilot projects launched, 7 more in development

Photo Credit: Blue Carbon Center, Indonesia

Ramsar Convention

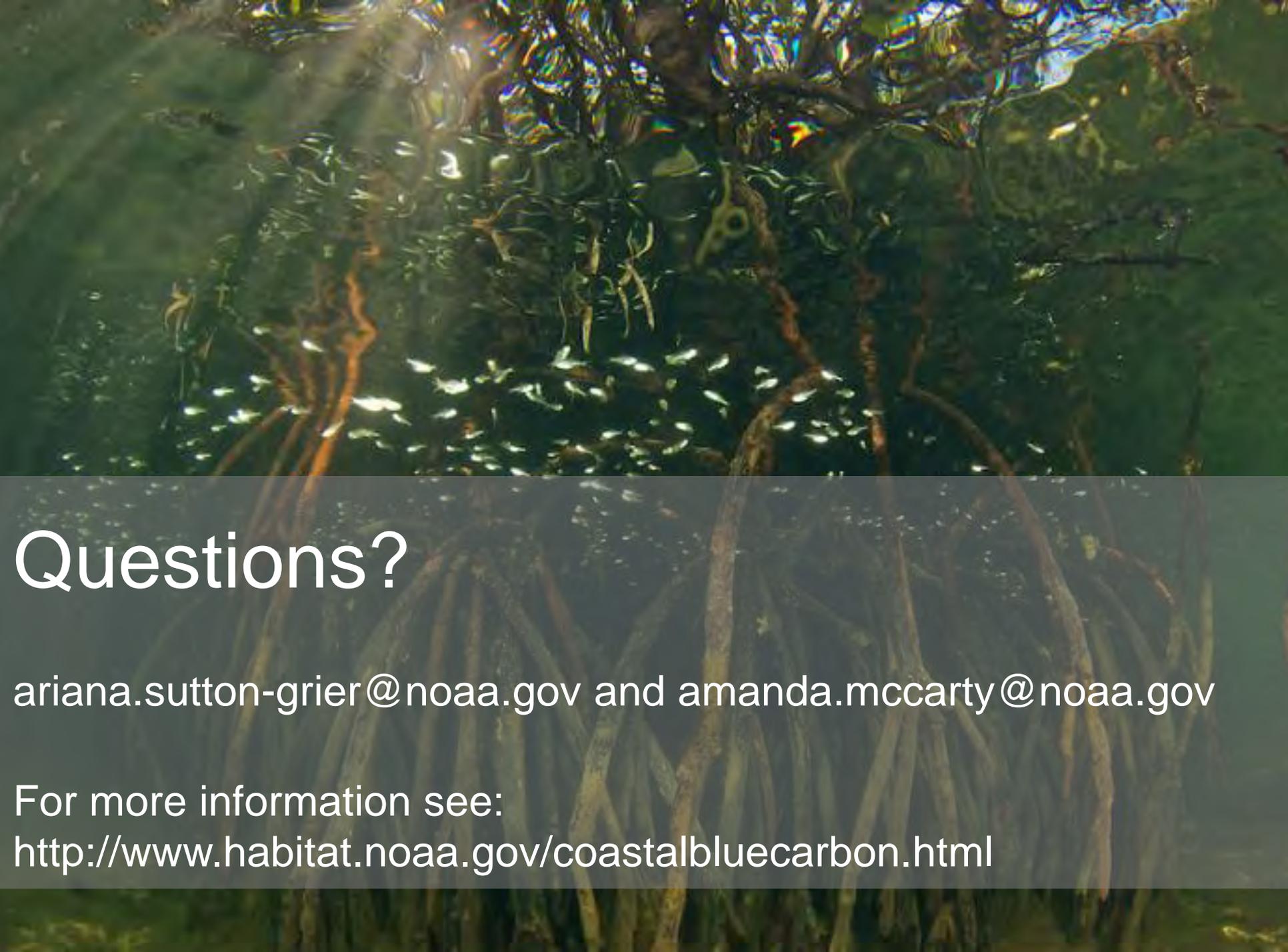
- Intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources
- Existing efforts:
 - Promoting research about carbon capture and storage capacity of these ecosystems (since 2002)
 - Recognized *blue carbon* and the need to protect it (2012)
- Opportunities to further incorporate blue carbon in to Ramsar:
 - Include blue carbon in the Convention's Handbooks
 - Add as a criteria to identify Wetlands of International Importance
 - Include protection of blue carbon ecosystems as a requirement for access to grant opportunities



Conclusions

1. There are existing (and emerging) opportunities within international policies to incorporate coastal blue carbon
2. More opportunities for including mangrove forests than salt marshes and seagrasses
3. Need to increase inclusion of soil carbon in addition to biomass as a carbon reservoir
4. Need to increase countries' awareness of the ability to include blue carbon ecosystems in policies and definitions of forests to take advantage of existing mechanisms
5. Need to develop guidance on how to design and implement blue carbon projects under different policy framework





Questions?

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For more information see:

<http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/coastalbluecarbon.html>

UNFCCC: Land-Use and Land-Use Change Forestry (LULUCF)

- Parties can use LULUCF to meet emissions targets under the Kyoto Protocol
- Relatively cost-effective mitigation through conservation
- Technical challenges with monitoring and reporting emissions
- Wetlands land use changes are not captured in Good Practice Guidelines, but with the new 2013 Wetlands Supplement, could be part of future inventories
- Opportunities
 - Include data on coastal wetland soil carbon in Good Practice Guidelines
 - Strengthen GEF mechanism for Sustainable Forestry Management/REDD+



Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- International treaty formed in 1992 with the goals of the conservation of the world's biological diversity and the sustainable use of resources
- Recognized importance of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation/adaptation
- Recognized *blue carbon* and *soil carbon* as valuable ecosystem services
- Opportunities to further incorporate blue carbon:
 - More clearly identify the value of blue carbon, including the soils component
 - Encourage signatory countries to do more research on blue carbon ecosystem services
 - Consider a formal agreement on the protection and conservation of blue carbon ecosystems

