Earth systems to the rescue

How to lock in carbon without depending on blue sky technologies

Please join us at this event:

Friday 7 December
11:00 – 13:30

Venue: Rio Conventions Pavilion, hosted at GEF Partnership Pavilion; Exhibits Area, COP25 Venue (located next to the UNFCCC Momentum for Change Pavilion)

Speakers:

- **Carl Pendragon, *CEO, Skymining***
- **Patrick Worms, *President, European Agroforestry Federation***
- **Peter Akong Minang, *Leader, Greening Tree Crop Landscapes, World Agroforestry Centre***
- **Brittany Cole Bush, rancher and *Soil4Climate***
- **Martin Frick, *UNFCCC***

In its recent report, the IPCC concludes that limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C will almost certainly require the use of technologies to draw carbon away from the atmosphere and lock it into or under the ground. One such technology, known as BECCS, gives great cause for concern. No commercial scale carbon capture and storage projects have yet been launched, despite much public support. A reductionist approach risks destroying valuable ecosystems to establish plantations of fast-growing trees for use as biofuels. Most current BECCS calculations also fail to take soil carbon dynamics into account: transforming peatlands into tree plantations, for example, would unleash a pulse of carbon larger than the trees would sequestrate. Thus BECCS risks being a remedy that is worse than the disease.

Regenerating natural forests, by contrast, stores carbon both into trees and into the forest floor. Regenerating natural grasslands also produces food through ruminant meat and milk and, *pace* received wisdom, can be carbon negative once the full processes of grasslands ecology are taken into account. Turning monocrop farming into agroforestry systems increases both productivity and biodiversity while locking up yet more carbon into the soil. All these have the potential to lock gigatons of carbon into the world's agricultural soils every year, and do not depend on complicated, expensive and untried technologies.

The fact that these processes are largely unrecognised illustrates a wider problem, which is a widespread ignorance of the basic mechanisms of how the earth system function by decision makers. Greater ecological literacy can be the source of solutions that are not merely effective, but also highly profitable.

This side event will look at the processes needed to increase the ecological literacy of decision makers and discuss a real life example by showcasing an investor whose BECCS project has, turned into a multitiered agroforestry system that has generated commodity production and enhanced livelihoods.

Format

- 4 x 10 minute presentations
- 5 minute film
- 30 minute round table