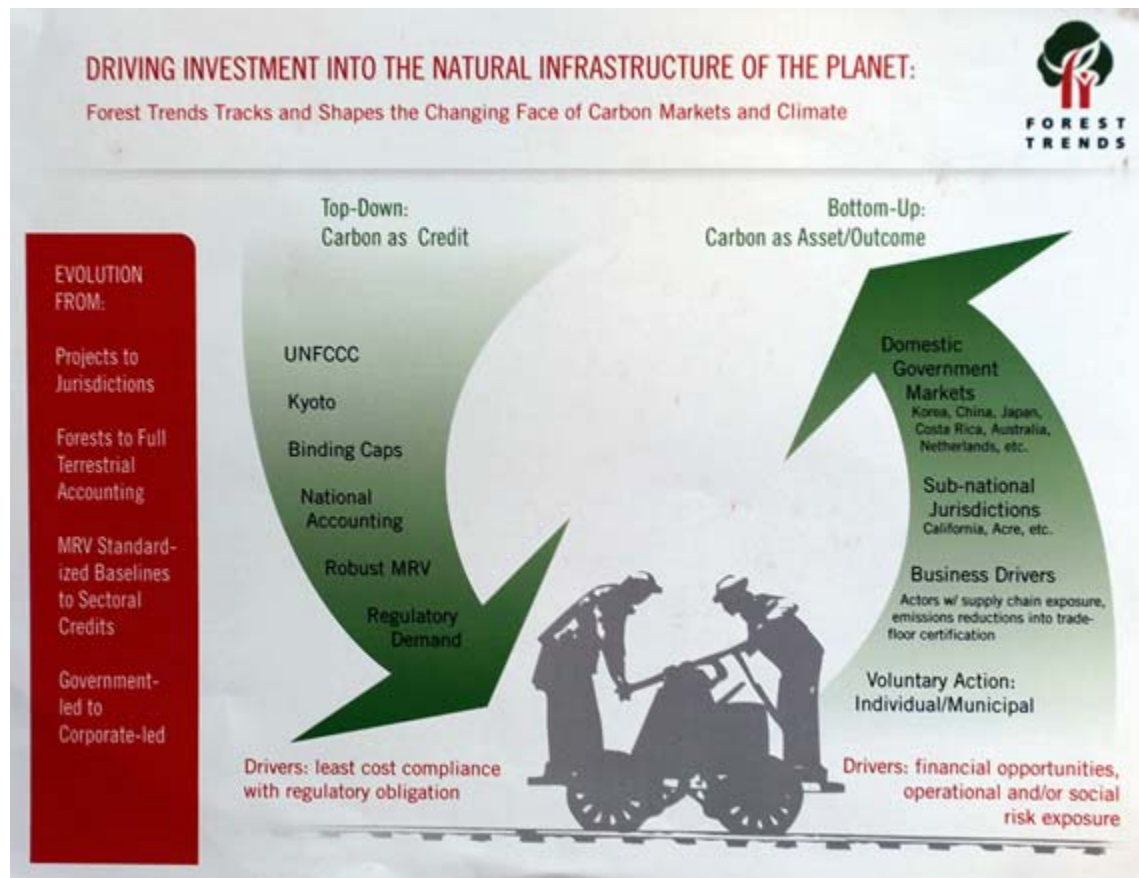




As world bodies dally, private sector, local governments forge ahead on valuing nature

mongabay.com
March 28, 2012



Shifts in the carbon market, according to Forest Trends. [Click image to enlarge](#)

Despite slow progress via the U.N. process and other intergovernmental bodies, national governments, municipalities, and the private sector are moving ahead with initiatives to measure and compensate the value of services afforded by ecosystems, said a leading forestry expert speaking on the sidelines of the Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship meeting this week in Oxford.

Michael Jenkins, President and CEO of Forest-Trends, said that although top-down approaches like a global regulatory market for carbon and other ecosystem services have not emerged, bottom-up approaches led by the private sector are showing promise and influencing national policies.

"People are discouraged about lack of progress top-down approaches, but what's sometimes overlooked are the countercurrents. There is patchwork of activity happening at national, municipal, and local levels with businesses," Jenkins told mongabay.com.

Jenkins pointed to initiatives in jurisdictions ranging from China to Oklahoma to Australia. More than a dozen case studies are highlighted in Ecosystem Marketplace's [Bringing it Home: Taking Stock of Government Engagement with the Voluntary Carbon Market](#).

"What's interesting is the interplay between regulatory markets at national and sub-national levels and their willingness to embrace tools -- like registries and standards -- that have been developed in the voluntary space," he added.

Through experimentation with different approaches, the voluntary sector effectively has built out the infrastructure that is now being adopted by the regulatory sector.

"In the patchwork there aren't 100 different systems because they are coming out of what's already been developed in the voluntary sector."

Jenkins added that while the regulatory market for carbon has stalled, the voluntary market is thriving and interest in environmental services has never been higher.

"Everyone now understands the term 'ecosystem services' -- that wasn't the case a few years ago."

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