TOOL 5
PROBLEM TREE

FROM THE TREE
OF PRACTICES
TO THE FOREST
OF KNOWLEDGE

A guide to identifying, capturing, sharing and communicating REDD+ Inspiring Practices

PURPOSE
The problem tree is a graphical tool that is used to identify and prioritize problems, quickly displaying the relationship between the causes and the effects of a REDD+ practice—a type of situational analysis. Breaking down a problem into more manageable and definable proportions allows us to clearly prioritize what is important, to better focus objectives and to define actions to be taken to reverse the problem.

DESCRIPTION
A diagram in the form of a tree, in which the main problem is represented as the trunk, the causes as roots and the effects as branches.

- Invite people and groups involved in diverse aspects the project. The contributions of various stakeholders are important for a clear view of the causes, consequences and possible solutions.
- Ask the group to think about the biggest problems or challenges related to the project.
- Make a list of all the problems as they are mentioned, and define, as a group, one central problem on which to focus. Some questions that can help define the central problem include: What visible and quantifiable facts prove that this is a problem? What are the consequences of not solving the problem?
- Once the central problem is defined, draw a picture of a tree, with the problem written in the trunk.
- In the roots, include the factors that may be causing the problem. Some questions that can help define the causes include: Why has this problem arisen? What are the facts, situations or factors that cause this problem?
- Identify the consequences of this problem, and draw them into the branches of the tree. Consider what events or situations are brought about by the problem?
- The validity and integrity of the drawn tree can be reviewed as many times as necessary, as some situations that appeared as causes at first, become consequences as debates develop.
- Once an overview of the tree of challenges is finalized and agreed upon by the group, discuss the possible solutions. One approach to this is through analyzing each of the causes and imagining how they could have been (or can be) reversed.

PARTICIPANTS
- Group of people who share the same problem or challenge
- Coordinator

WHEN TO USE IT
- In the first phase of a planning process
- As an assessment to check whether project activities were effective

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- Comfortable space for group work
- Panel and posters
- Cards
- Markers