

UN-REDD Programme 2021-2030

Enabling forest solutions to the climate emergency

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The UN-REDD Programme is the UN knowledge and advisory platform on forests and climate, with a focus on advancing Articles 5 and 6 of the Paris Agreement. UN-REDD supports countries to implement policies and strategies, access climate finance and forge partnerships to halt deforestation, protect and restore forests, and thus address climate, biodiversity, and livelihoods goals simultaneously. A partnership of three UN agencies, 65 REDD+ countries and over 10 donors, UN-REDD is now looking to drastically elevate its ambition, extend its reach and concurrently diversify its funding base¹ for the coming decade's challenges.

Context

1. **Accelerating and scaling up climate action, to achieve necessary and urgent carbon emission reductions by 2030, is a paramount global need to avert the climate crisis.** Projected pathways, consistent with limiting average global warming to 1.5°C, send a clear message: we need to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050².
2. To address this challenge, **nature-based solutions (NBS) have received significant political attention as major response options** that could generate about a third of the additional mitigation needed in the short term. NBS implies climate smart management of forests, agriculture and bioenergy, including diets and demand-side management.
3. **Forests have a massive mitigation potential of 4.1 – 6.5 GtCO₂e by 2030³.** This potential can only be fully realised by reducing emissions through halting deforestation and forest degradation, as well as removing massive amounts of carbon from the atmosphere through sustainable forest management, forest conservation and forest ecosystem restoration.
4. **Ecosystem services provided by forests are a cornerstone of human well-being.** The negative impacts of climate change on forest goods and services will have far-reaching social and economic consequences. Investment in resilient forests will yield a two-fold return of mitigating and adapting to a changing climate.
5. **Current commitments in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement are inadequate to bridge the emissions gap by 2030⁴.** For a 1.5-degree limit to warming, the total emissions gap from current unconditional and

¹ An outline of the Programme's multi-donor resource mobilisation strategy is given in Annex 2.

² The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C](#).

³ Page 186 of the IPCC [Special Report on Climate Change and Land](#).

⁴ UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2018.

conditional NDCs is 32 and 29 GtCO₂e by 2030, respectively. Despite the potential of forests as the prime nature-based solution to closing the emissions gap, few countries have considered REDD+ actions as part of their NDCs⁵. Accelerated and effective integration of forests and REDD+ is essential to increase the needed NDC ambition.

6. **Despite its potential, climate action and investment in land-based mitigation, including implementation of REDD+, has received only about 2% of climate finance⁶.** While many countries have been preparing themselves for REDD+ since 2008, mobilization of finance from public and private sources has been chronically limited, resulting in failure to operationalize REDD+ actions at scale and stifling REDD+ results. In addition, while high potential countries have advanced in REDD+, more countries need to fully implement REDD and achieve results.
7. **High-potential countries have advanced in REDD+, but more countries need to fully implement REDD+ and achieve results.** In order to expand robust mitigation action through REDD+, a significant number of countries need to accelerate their implementation of REDD+ actions in the next few years.
8. **The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration offers an important opportunity to scale up action beyond avoiding deforestation and forest degradation.** Declared in March 2019 by the UN General Assembly, it aims to accelerate and scale up the prevention, halting and reversing of ecosystems degradation, thus contributing to climate mitigation⁷ and adaptation, enhanced food security, secured water supply and biodiversity conservation.
9. **The emerging nature-based solution movement, which gained a critical mass of political support at the 2019 Climate Action Summit, provides the broader context for renewed efforts to deliver on REDD+ 's original promise.** Indeed, this is an unprecedented opportunity to catalyse the multitude of fragmented actors and initiatives striving to realise the full potential of nature's contribution to the climate emergency. Forests offer the biggest and, through a decade of REDD+, the most immediate nature-based solution that can drive the whole movement forward.

Theory of Change

The international community has engaged in increasing commitments and ambition worldwide in the response to the climate crisis, with a major focus on nature-based solutions (in which forests are pivotal), as confirmed at the recent UN Climate Action Summit (2019). In order to realise this engagement, the international community has two major instruments: NDCs and a set of financial instruments. The latter include the GCF, bilateral pledges for REDD+ investments and results, new REDD+ financing platforms like

⁵ 16% of Asian and African and 32% of Latin American NDCs make explicit reference to forest-related mitigation actions, and forests and REDD+ are largely missing from all NDC targets.

⁶ See table A.2 of the Climate Policy Initiative's [Global Climate Finance: An Updated View 2018](#).

⁷ In 2001–2010, emissions from forest degradation were one fourth of those from deforestation, increasing to one-third in 2011–2015 ([Federici et al., 2015](#)).

ART, and forthcoming REDD+ market mechanisms under negotiation and design in the framework of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. For these policy and finance instruments to function and deliver ambitious and lasting transformations in land and forest sector, countries will need qualitative, independent and trusted advice to be able to navigate their complex technical, stakeholder and policy dimensions. UN-REDD, with a decade of expertise and country-level experience, is uniquely placed to provide such advice and support, in a continued way, so countries can be fully equipped to effectively implement policy commitments, participate in financing mechanisms that already exist as well as those that are emerging - thus underpinning such commitments - and finally monitor the progress and their compliance with high quality technical, social and environmental standards.

UN-REDD will focus its efforts in the next decade through three interrelated approaches - **innovation, connection and action** - to support governments, private sector and other stakeholders to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and enhance removals, from forest and land-use sectors.

The Programme will advance global **innovation** around REDD+ implementation and climate financing for forests by operating as a 'spark hub', fostering innovative policies and partnerships to resolve global demand and supply challenges for REDD+. UN-REDD will accelerate learning and momentum for action by deploying the convening power of the UN system to create **connections** and bring together political leaders, private sector and civil society around forest mitigation and adaptation solutions. Lastly, the Programme will provide technical assistance and policy advice through a mix of tools and technologies, long-term commitments and targeted interventions to catalyse forest **action** at national and subnational scales. These approaches will be deployed throughout the implementation of the Programme's theory of change: from activities, outputs, outcomes, and overall goal.

About quality in forest-based mitigation

Persistent, and legitimate, concerns around the integrity of forest carbon emission reductions and enhanced removals will be addressed by the Programme through a stepwise drive for enhanced quality of REDD+ results:

1. **Robustness of forest reference emission levels (FRELs)**. UN-REDD will support countries in updating their FRELs as necessary, since some of the initial FREL submissions do not meet the requirements of RBP programmes (especially since several RBP programme elements are more restrictive post-2019). Updating FRELs applying technological advances and robust methodologies will increase the quality of REDD+ result submissions.
2. **Accuracy of results**. To meet requirements of RBPs programmes, countries will be assisted to produce unbiased estimates with quantified uncertainties. To reduce aggregate uncertainty in measuring, reporting and verifying results, UN-REDD will capitalize on technological advances made in the last decade to substantially increase

accuracy of measuring REDD+ results. The Programme will renew efforts to support countries in adopting MRV protocols and technologies that remove bias and diminish uncertainty as much as possible in results.

3. ***Strengthen the link between REDD+ strategies and results reporting.*** As more and more RBP programmes add requirements around the linkage between REDD+ implementation actions and the resulting emission reductions, UN-REDD will help countries to strengthen this link as appropriate.
4. ***Permanence of results.*** An inherent challenge to the longevity of forest-based mitigation results, as exemplified by the recent spike in forest fires worldwide, reversals will be tackled by the Programme through supporting the continuous implementation of REDD+ actions and policies, while establishing robust buffers accounts.
5. ***Good use of proceeds.*** UN-REDD will commit to supporting countries that promote a virtuous cycle of reinvesting RBPs in addressing key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the barriers to improved forest protection, restoration and sustainable forest management (SFM). Reinvestments that, in turn, yield further REDD+ results followed by corresponding payments, which are again reinvested in suppressing rates deforestation and forest degradation, enhancing forest restoration, and so on and so forth.

To achieve this stepwise drive for enhanced quality of REDD+ results the UN-REDD Programme will secure political traction, and public transparency, in each of the target countries identified for intervention. UN-REDD will work with the high-level, and cross-sectoral divisions of government, and policy structures, that can deliver on transformational commitments in the land-forest-commerce nexus, such as ministries of finance, development planning or economic policy. UN-REDD will also foster public-private partnerships, which are increasingly demonstrated as indispensable for NBS.

Political traction to drive enhanced quality of results will be achieved by accessing the new UN Resident Coordinator system at the country level. The UN Resident Coordinator system, as a central pivot of the ongoing UN reform process, is empowered to foster the high-level dialogue critical to achieve the Programme's ambition, and country commitments, on forest-based mitigation solutions as reflected in NDCs. UN-REDD as a cross-agency platform, that reflects the One UN spirit of the UN reform, is well positioned to promote and sustain such high-level, cross-sectoral traction, that is necessary to deliver ambitious and lasting REDD+ results.

Goal (2030)

The full climate change mitigation potential of forests to be realised through substantial reduction of deforestation and degradation, conservation of existing forests, restoration and low-carbon forest management - in ways that drive enhanced quality of emissions

***reductions by ensuring environmental integrity of emissions reductions and supporting non-carbon benefits*⁸.**

The UN-REDD Programme will support countries to enhance the ambition and implement the forest-related components in their climate change mitigation commitments (REDD+ strategies, forests and climate change action plans, NDCs) and, in doing so, advance various related Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDGs 1 (eliminate poverty), 2 (zero hunger) 5 (gender equality), SDG12 (sustainable production), 13 (climate action), 15 (life on land) and 17 (sustainable development partnerships).

Outcomes (2025)

The UN-REDD Programme will bring the best thought leadership, policy advice, technical know-how and convening power of the UN to deliver the following outcomes by 2025.

Outcome 1 Results demonstrated

Forest-based GHG emission reductions and enhanced removals, of increasing quality (accuracy, certainty and permanence), achieved at a level of 1 GtCO_{2e}.

The Programme will support key countries with highest emission reduction potential, in terms of both quantity and quality, and who are committed and willing to scale up REDD+ actions that yield rigorous results of unequivocal environmental integrity.

Indicative outputs and activities:

Output 1.1 Effective policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks to halt deforestation and forest degradation

- Support countries in ensuring policy coherence by identifying and implementing targeted reforms in climate change, agriculture, forestry, and other relevant policy arenas to align incentives and enhance effectiveness to deliver REDD+ results.
- Support countries in assessing the coherence of fiscal incentives, aligning taxes and subsidies in agriculture, forestry and other related sectors that affect land use, to meet transformational policy goals.
- Support countries in addressing the risks of emissions displacement through strengthened forest governance and law enforcement, and address forest crime.

⁸ So as to limit global atmospheric warming to 1.5°C by avoiding emissions and sequestering a total of up to 5.3 (4.1 – 6.5) GtCO_{2e}/year during the decade 2021-2030. UN-REDD will continue to employ, and look to enhance, socially inclusive, human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches, as well as optimising the carbon and non-carbon benefits of REDD+.

- Support countries, and empower vulnerable stakeholders, in the establishment of effective and transparent benefit sharing plans, carbon rights and related legal and policy instruments to ensure adequate incentives are aligned to REDD+ results.
- Assist countries in building institutional capacity for more effective implementation of REDD+, including, *inter alia*, targeted strengthening of agricultural research and extension services, integrated land-use planning and landscape-level management.
- Demonstrate proof-of-concept flagship interventions, of specific geographical and/or thematic focus. This will be done, for instance, in Myanmar on mangroves, in the Lower Mekong region on addressing forest crime through improved governance, and in a new phase of the Community-Based REDD+ (CBR+) Initiative.
- Support countries in establishing clear and secure forest and agricultural land tenure rights, particularly through empowering indigenous peoples and local communities, by providing legal and policy advisory support at various levels of governance.
- Support countries, local-level institutions and communities in developing, piloting and up-scaling of agroforestry, agro-ecology, restorative agriculture, silvo-pastoral production, and SFM to reduce land pressure on forests and carbon-rich

Output 1.2 Effective enabling environment for REDD+ at subnational, jurisdictional or project levels through a functioning nested approach

- Support integrated land-use planning at various levels, using frameworks, multi— stakeholder engagement processes and tools that integrate (carbon and non-carbon) REDD+ objectives into sustainable productive landscapes.
- Provide advice to countries on key design choices, necessary regulations, legal and administrative procedures to manage a nested approach by identifying carbon finance opportunities, including those of the private sector.
- Support the establishment of national REDD+ registries.

Output 1.3 Deforestation-free commodity supply chains

- Support countries in the management of agricultural investments to promote deforestation-free agricultural production, including through the integration of national forest-related goals in national agriculture sectoral development plans.
- Support implementation of actions (e.g. certification) to reduce consumption footprints and encourage the consumption of deforestation-free products.
- Provide evidence-based guidance to national and multilateral policy approaches on deforestation-free commodity sourcing and procurement in key importing countries and regions.
- Provide evidence-based inputs to industry and private sector initiatives on fiduciary environmental and social standards for deforestation-free commodity supply chains.
- Ensure integration and accounting of GHG emissions reductions, and enhanced removals, from deforestation-free commitments into national REDD+ MRV systems and NDC accounting.

- Promote redirecting of public and private capital to finance deforestation-free commodities including the establishment of a dedicated (e.g. blended finance) facilities and funds.
- Assist countries in identifying priority investment portfolios for (blended) finance and developing proof-of-concept pipelines of bankable deals to access novel financing streams.

Output 1.4 Accelerated forest restoration, carbon stock enhancement and low-carbon SFM practices, particularly carbon-rich ecosystems - mangroves and peatlands

- Support key countries and jurisdictions with technical assistance to accelerate and scale up restoration and SFM efforts, including identification of on-the-ground investments and mobilizing finance.
- Support adoption and sustained use of appropriate carbon accounting frameworks, procedures and tools for forest landscape restoration and forest carbon stock enhancement activities.
- Provide support to countries to review, plan and enhance governance of forest concessions with a view to facilitate legal forest businesses, control illegal and informal activities, and reduce emissions from forest management practices.
- Support the implementation of low-carbon wood energy solutions in areas dependent on charcoal and fuelwood, as well as promoting alternative energies for household consumption.
- Support the design and implementation of integrated fire management practices into forest management planning, monitoring and adaptive management.
- Provide support to countries to implement actions aimed at maintaining, restoring and sustainably using forests and biodiversity of carbon-rich ecosystems, such as mangroves and peatlands.
- Strengthen capacity for the implementation of restorative and regenerative agriculture in buffer zones around priority ecosystems including protected areas, mangroves and peatlands.

Output 1.5 REDD+ investment choices, performance, transparency and accountability informed by multipurpose monitoring systems with robust measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) capabilities

- Support countries to improve the reliability and accuracy of MRV functions of monitoring systems by improving methodologies, utilising high-resolution imagery, and supporting review processes.
- Enhance the user base of information from MRV functions of monitoring systems by launching multi-stakeholder forest monitoring roundtables to identify opportunities for innovation and broader use of these systems, making forest monitoring results more accessible.

- Strengthen capacity of relevant national institutions, and regional partners and networks, to deliver on MRV commitments.
- Make forest monitoring results relevant to policy-making by expanding their thematic scope, increasing the frequency and spatial disaggregation of results, including by drivers of change.

Outcome 2 Results rewarded

USD 5 bn/year mobilized for REDD+ from result-based payments, carbon markets, Article 6 transactions and private sector investments in REDD+ implementation.

The Programme will focus attention on advising and supporting countries and jurisdictions to access and use three distinctive types of financial flows into REDD+ that are emerging and expanding, namely: results-based payments (RBPs – with no transfer of title of emission reductions/enhanced removals), access to markets (with transfer of title), and private sector investments (payments for forest carbon offsets). For all types of financing listed above, the Programme will assist countries in making key choices on their effective finance options, ensuring policy and technical coherence, as well as high social and environmental standards. The Programme will facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues to decide on the optimal share of emission reductions/enhanced removals offered through RBPs, market transactions and private sector offsetting. For countries interested in receiving investments from the private sector, UN-REDD will provide technical assistance to ensure transactions are fully aligned with requirements under Article 6 and demands for additionality reflected in NDCs.

Indicative outputs and activities:

Output 2.1 Countries gain access to RBPs with measured, reported and verified results.

- Support countries in meeting entry level conditions for RBPs of the UNFCCC (complying with all pillars of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ and submitting technical annexes on REDD+ results) and complete all required documentation to access the RBP window of the Green Climate Fund.
- Support countries with existing bilateral agreements for RBPs to complete requirements and related documentation for accessing forest carbon payments for results under such agreements.
- Support countries and relevant jurisdictions to access the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Carbon Fund, through provision of technical expertise to complete all requirements and documentation necessary for RBPs.
- Support the programming of the proceeds from RBPs into strengthened implementation of all relevant REDD+ activities in line with requirements of those entities making the payments.

- Support countries in addressing and respecting REDD+ safeguards and mainstreaming gender throughout the implementation of REDD+ actions, as well as use of RBP proceeds.

Output 2.2 Countries participate effectively in carbon markets for REDD+

- Support national/jurisdictional REDD+ programmes to meet requirements and complete all required documentation to qualify as eligible under the [Architecture for REDD+ Transactions'](#) The REDD+ Environmental Excellency Standard.
- Support national/jurisdictional REDD+ programmes to meet requirements and complete all required documentation to access the [California Tropical Forest Standard](#).
- Support national/jurisdictional REDD+ programmes to meet eligibility criteria and complete all required documentation for accessing the forthcoming [Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation](#) (CORSIA);
- Assist developing countries in meeting conditions for transactions with other countries under future provisions of Article 6 and provide support in structuring such transactions.
- Provide evidence-based inputs to standard-setting initiatives, and evolving markets, to facilitate inclusion and further promotion of REDD+ country results.

Output 2.3 Private sector mobilised to provide large-scale forest carbon offsetting investments as part of a transitional strategy to decarbonised business models and to protect the world's forests

- Identify, on a yearly basis, private companies that, as part of transitional corporate mitigation strategies, are committed to invest in forest-based offsets as potential opportunities for UN-REDD and facilitate transactions with REDD+ countries.
- Provide tailored information on opportunities for investment in forest-based offsets to stimulate private sector investment that have high monitoring, safeguards, and accounting integrity under Article 6.
- Initiate innovative partnerships with private sector actors into scale up investment to targeted REDD+ programmes, particularly those that include forest restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks as part of their REDD+ activities.

Outcome 3 Ambition enhanced

At least 15 partner countries enhance the forest component of their NDCs (plus LTS and NAPs), including quantitative assessments to support integration or enhancement of measurable targets and/or actions.

The first round of NDCs already acknowledged the importance of nature-based solutions - with forests at the forefront - as critical for climate change mitigation and adaptation⁹. Only 30% of NDCs, however, includes quantitative mitigation (or adaptation) targets, and an even smaller proportion puts forward GHG targets for the forest and land-use sectors (with or without the “REDD+” label). It is apparent that there is a need to: a) better articulate and quantify the role that forests can play in meeting global climate goals through the NDCs; b) better integrate the national processes in place to develop REDD+ strategies and NDCs; and c) define, update and raise forest contributions and ambitions in NDCs across the board. This component will support the process to formulate and define the [UNFCCC NDC submission and review processes](#), ensuring that successively more ambitious NDCs fully incorporate and accelerate national REDD+ implementation.

Indicative outputs and activities:

Output 3.1 NDC ambition in the forest and land-use sectors enhanced and REDD+ implementation accelerated

- *Provide technical analyses* of existing forest action in national legal and institutional frameworks to inform review of the forest-related targets and actions in current NDCs (informed by Output 1.1).
- Support countries to estimate the climate change mitigation and adaptation potential of the existing forest-related actions in national plans, strategies and commitments to inform review, alignment and revision of targets, policies and measures in the NDC (informed by Outcome 1 outputs).
- Ensure dynamic alignment between REDD+ strategies and NDCs, with growing ambition on both fronts.
- Evaluate existing measurable forest actions and identify opportunities for enhancing NDC actions, based on analyses of the mitigation and adaptation potential, such as incorporating new GHGs and afforestation, forestry and other land uses (AFOLU) and land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) categories.
- Strategically advise and provide technical assistance to countries to analyse national-level AFOLU/LULUCF accounting options.
- Managing issues of permanence and assessing the performance of REDD+ policies and measures leading to results.

Output 3.2 Enabling conditions to support integration of enhanced forest action into the NDCs improved or created

- Through NDC revision, and overarching SDG processes, create the momentum and conditions for transformational policy interventions and reforms that will permit enhanced climate ambition and action for forests and other land-use sectors.

⁹ 77% of current NDCs refer to land-use, land-use change and forests.

- Connect institutions to strengthen how long-term low-carbon development strategies, spatial planning, national development plans and business plans are reflected in the NDCs.
- Engage stakeholders, and forge partnerships, to build societal ownership of the NDC enhancement process and NDC implementation of forest actions in the forest and land-use sector.

Outcome 4 Actors connected

The transformative global forest-based solutions movement catalysed through advocacy and convening stakeholders to increase ambition and action for accelerated and exponentially growing scale of mitigation impact.

Harnessing the vast knowledge and experience gained through REDD+, through the Programme’s unique understanding of on-the-ground challenges and opportunities, will be central to its role as a catalytic convener of a global response to place forests’ mitigation potential and results – i.e. REDD+ - at the heart of the nature-based solution movement. This will entail defragmenting the fractured landscape of global actors and initiatives contributing to nature-based solutions through promotion of innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Partnerships with member state champions, the private sector, civil society, and other partners will identify, and engage in, new opportunities¹⁰ in advancing REDD+ implementation, the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the broader SDGs. A comprehensive and systematic identification of global convening opportunities under this outcome, will be identified during inception as outlined in Annex 2.

Indicative outputs and activities:

Output 4.1 Transformational change, driven through the convening power of the UN, for collective political traction on nature-based solutions that prevent, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation.

- Convene and support strategic, cross-sectoral policy dialogues for sustainable development by informing the global dialogue on how to make REDD+ work at scale and, in doing so, drive a growing scale of mitigation impact.

¹⁰ Immediate examples of key global convening opportunities include: UNFCCC COPs 26 (2020), Convention on Biological Diversity COPs 15 (2020), IUCN World Conservation Congress (2020), UN Food Systems Summit (2021), XV World Forestry Congress (2021), and relevant youth conferences on climate change.

- Convene and promote partnerships for regional and global level dialogues, relevant to Outcomes 1-3¹¹, to strengthen country level delivery and contribute to global policy dialogues.
- Promote partnerships, collaboration and synergies within and among academia, research institutions, and knowledge-led, evidence-based actors contributing to nature-based solutions, with an immediate focus on forest's contributions.
- Initiate new, innovative partnerships with public and private actors with the aim to scale up investments in REDD+ implementation and elevate price of forest carbon for RBPs.

Output 4.2 Knowledge on how to accelerate REDD+ implementation at scale, ensuring that no REDD+ country is left behind, is harvested, managed and shared

- Manage knowledge to accelerate replication at scale, creating synergies to help partners find common ground, with an increased support for South-South knowledge exchange and cooperation on targeted issues, such as carbon offsetting, REDD+ investments and increasing forest and land use ambitions in NDCs.
- Communicate country-level challenges, opportunities and lessons from the Programme's work on ramping up NDC ambition, creating momentum on forest mitigation potential and mainstreaming REDD+ into domestic development agendas.
- Disseminate knowledge, based on country-level lessons and successes, and promote accelerated replication of proven REDD+ actions at scale that yield significant emission reductions/enhanced removals, together with country specific non-carbon benefits.
- Focus on innovations across all areas of the Programme to ensure strategic, new learning models, develop knowledge agendas and enhance scaling up of REDD+ implementation through thematic networks and communities of practice.
- Facilitate knowledge flow using a variety of existing approaches and platforms, including web-based events, bi-/multilateral South-South cooperation and the direct use of staff in country visits, to accelerate learning and policy diffusion.
- Communicate challenges, opportunities, successes, failures and lessons from the Programme's work on securing payments, market transactions, and private sector investments for REDD+ results in target countries.

¹¹ e.g. NDC stocktaking 2020 and 2024, UNFCCC technical meetings, Global Landscapes Forum, Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, Green Climate Fund regional dialogues, Oslo REDD Exchange, UN-led events and platforms, etc.

How UN-REDD will work post-2020

With over a decade of engagement with, and support to, 65 partner countries, as well as engaging in international agreements and policy dialogues, the UN-REDD Programme has amassed unparalleled experience and knowledge on how to advance the climate and forest agenda. These lessons have informed the design of the new Programme, 2021-2025. Accordingly, UN-REDD, in the coming phase of operations, will adhere to the following principles of intervention: scale, speed and flexibility (Box 1). Principles of intervention are further elaborated in operational detail as Protocols of Engagement in Annex 1.

Box 1 Principles of intervention

- **Scale.** The Programme will focus on forest-based solutions that are commensurate to the climate emergency. This means that technical assistance, innovation, policy advice and knowledge management will be planned and delivered in ways that are catalytic and yield impacts at scale. This includes UN-REDD playing the role of convener between “supply” and “demand” of REDD+ results. The Programme will thus work with different policy avenues, finance mechanisms and partners to foster ambition in climate action.
- **Speed.** UN-REDD is already positioned as a pivot to accelerate action at scale. By becoming faster in its own delivery, and catalytic in stimulating acceleration in others, the Programme aims to make a significant contribution to fully realising the role of forests as the prime natural solution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Greater speed in delivery will be based on (i) mainstreaming a step-wise approach to delivery, as recommended by the UNFCCC; (ii) a greater standardization of products that can be deployed more rapidly, be adopted by countries with relatively simple adjustments, and allow them to seize emerging opportunities; and (iii) a more fungible budget allocation model, whereby funds can more easily be deployed based on needs.
- **Flexibility.** Achieving scale and speed of intervention will necessitate a different way of doing things and an overhaul of operational delivery modalities. Flexibility requires the capacity to rapidly re-deploy staff and resources to profit from opportunities as they emerge in different countries and sectors. UN-REDD will make greater use of a refined targeted support model to rapidly deliver short-term results while also maintaining a flexible presence in country to effectively support policy reform processes. UN-REDD will constantly scan the horizons for new opportunities for intervention in additional geographies and will maintain the flexibility to shift staff and resources to those new areas without compromising results and impacts from existing commitments.

An agile Programme, responsive to highly complex challenges and changing opportunities, as outlined here will benefit from a focused research and development phase prior to commencing implementation. UN-REDD proposes that 2020 serve as an inception year (Annex 2) for the new phase, centred on mapping opportunities and demand at country

and global levels, to build the Programme's pipelines under each of the four component outcomes. A multi-donor resource mobilisation strategy will be an integral part of the proposed 2020 inception year.

Governance arrangements

UN-REDD will retain the existing decision-making structure, composed of the Executive Board, the Strategy Group and the Management Group, but adjust it to respond to the principles of speed and flexibility in operations as described in Box 1 above. The Executive Board will provide strategic direction (including on the Results Framework), approve budgets and assess performance.

The Management Group, drawing on annual mapping and assessment of REDD+ opportunities and risk factors, will select priorities under each outcome, devise, monitor and review workplans accordingly, and ensure delivery. The Programme's results framework and work plans will place greater emphasis on attaining target outcomes (GtCO_{2e} results, USD in payments, for example) rather than enumerating detailed outputs or processes in specific countries.

The Management Group will report annually to the Executive Board on the status of delivery, and on the implementation and adjustments that may have been made to multi-year work plans and budgets, in order to achieve outcomes on an adaptive management basis. In taking decisions to adjust work plans/budgets and take on emerging opportunities, the Management Group will seek information and advice from inside and outside the UN-REDD team, as well as through its annual mapping of the operational landscapes in target countries and internationally. The governance structures will include the following:

- **Executive Board** – in line with the new focus of UN-REDD post 2020, the Board will benefit from a more diverse and expanded constituency representation, encompassing private sector and youth movement observers. Terms of Reference of the Board will be adjusted to reflect a more proactive role for Board members demanded by a more dynamic and responsive Programme.
- **Strategy Group** – remit will be expanded to include checks and balances on the Management Group's expanded executive flexibility, which is needed to ensure an agile Programme delivery that can keep pace with the fast-changing opportunities anticipated for the next decade.
- **Management Group** – composed of senior UN agencies staff (FAO, UNDP, UNEP and Secretariat) will act as the executive decision-making body and will administer resources according to the agreed work plans.
- **Secretariat** – as a highly valuable inter-agency hub for Programme operations, reporting, and evaluation, the Secretariat's capacity will need to be bolstered to support the more hands-on adaptive management role of the Management Group, whilst remaining within the thresholds established by the UN Director General for secretariat costs.

Operational modalities

The next decade will require new ideas and approaches to delivering REDD+. UN-REDD will, therefore, work in a way that encourages its teams to try new ways of doing things and take calculated risks. While current UN-REDD work plans focus on defining detailed outputs for specific countries, the new operational modality will focus on attaining the indicators of success with added flexibility, making work plans, country support and stakeholder engagement much more result oriented. The Programme will continue to be socially inclusive and demand-driven, yet with appropriately responsive financial, governance and management arrangements¹².

UN-REDD will continue to be demand-driven, tailoring interventions to national circumstances. The Programme will continue to recognize the importance of country ownership and work to ensure countries lead processes by, *inter alia*, adapting the support to the national and local contexts, supporting sufficient local capacity to undertake the necessary actions, and ensuring effective engagement of stakeholders at different levels.

While UN-REDD will continue to engage in situations that require a committed presence for an extended period, it will retain enough flexibility to be a catalyst for short-term opportunities. This is a lesson from the past decade of operations: work plans and budgets that lock-up teams and budgetary resources to specific outputs limit the Programme's ability to respond to events that are outside its control, or to timely seize opportunities for action or innovation. UN-REDD will continue to prioritize support to specific countries and regions but may choose to re-position resources to seize opportunities elsewhere.

UN-REDD will use built-in incentives that bring the best of the UN together for a common purpose at global, regional and national levels. Within the framework of the UN Reforms, UN-REDD constitutes a unique case of inter-agency collaboration towards the SDGs. By capitalizing on the respective strengths of the agencies, the Programme's joint vision represents a step forward to strengthening collaboration in support of Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Resource management

A more efficient deployment of technical assistance. A robust, yet flexible, results framework will allow the Programme to appraise opportunities, decide on resources to be allocated, monitor progress of delivery, and to decide on necessary adjustments to implementation.

The Management Group, guided by the Executive Board, the results framework and, ultimately, the inception mapping exercise (and annual updates thereafter) will consider opportunities for support and allocate resources, set time-bound work plans and organize inter-agency teams to deliver support services. For each country and situation, agency

¹² The Programme will explore application of a web-based interface where stakeholders, interested in receiving technical, policy or facilitatory advice from UN-REDD, can introduce and justify their demand for support. Such a platform could also transparently keep track of demand, disseminate results and knowledge, as well as enable beneficiaries to assess their satisfaction with the Programme's support and achievements.

comparative advantages and individual team member merits will inform inter-agency team selection.

Different products and technical assistance needs will require different team compositions, which may change as opportunities emerge (or wane) in countries or at the international level. In these instances, the UN-REDD Management Group may choose to re-deploy expertise and resources to provide, for example, short-term support to another country; or it may choose to re-assign staff to an alternative activity not previously envisaged in the original annual work plan.

Separate budget streams for core expenses and operations. In order to build in incentives for a more efficient and flexible use of resources, while at the same time confer accountability of resource-use decisions, UN-REDD should have a (biennial) *ex-ante* allocated “core budget” to maintain the Programme’s institutional capacity and technical expertise, and a separate (annual) “operational budget”, fungible across outcomes, outputs and activities, to directly finance long- and short- term global-, regional- and country level operations, as well as the international convening activities of Outcome 4.

The separation of budgets between core technical advisory expenses and field operations serves two objectives. First, it gives the Programme added certainty and stability. This, in turn, allows staff to direct attention to seek and implement priority responses in a flexible and agile way. Second, establishing a separate budget for operations fosters cooperation and a more efficient allocation of resources. UN-REDD should be allowed to roll-over budgets that may not be fully spent in a given calendar period to ensure they can be used strategically in line with country implementation timelines. This diminishes the incentives to rush the allocation of resources to sub-optimal interventions.

A budget envelope that maximizes existing capacities of UN-REDD. At present, the annual budget envelope is in the order to USD 10 million. Because the strategy of the last three-year cycle was to concentrate on the provision of policy advice and technical assistance, the envelope covers the “core” expenses of UN-REDD (personnel and basic operations). This model has proven effective in specific situations, for example, when a country has a technical gap to deliver a product that is already being financed by another source. In this case, UN-REDD has deployed staff to accompany the country in delivering the given output. This model, however, has limits to scale and is unable to seize on emerging opportunities whenever they require complementary funds. For example, a situation in which a country is approached by a private sector entity in search of emission reductions but the operation cannot go ahead without the existence of a registry; or a situation in which forest restoration cannot go ahead without an upgraded MRV system that can measure increases in carbon stocks. In the past three years, UN-REDD has seen a number of these opportunities go untapped.

The Programme proposes to complement the existing minimum core budget with an operational budget of at least USD 10 million annually. This budget would be allocated to a mix of catalytic long-term commitments and targeted interventions, focusing on countries, stakeholder engagement, south-south cooperation and knowledge management.

The total annual envelope of the UN-REDD Programme would thus be in the order of approximately USD 20 million.

Annex 1 Protocols of engagement

Country partners

1. Engage Resident Coordinator – through the network of decentralized offices of the three agencies, to ensure REDD+, forest and climate agenda and the Programme’s support are mainstreamed into the national development policy dialogue, as well as resources of wider UN interventions and other development partners are leveraged.
2. Map gaps and opportunities to delivering outcomes 1-3 – informed by global inception phase mapping, and subsequent annual updates, with a focus on the highest potential activities to achieve REDD+ results and/or secure payments for those results.
3. Engage line ministries and donor embassies in country – to collectively identify and prioritise country needs, matched to Programme competencies and available resources. Co-creation of outcome pipelines in this manner will enhance efficiency compared to past practice of Targeted Supported requests for proposals.
4. Establish inter-agency country teams – the Management Group, guided by the Executive Board, the results framework and, ultimately, the inception mapping exercise (and annual updates thereafter) will establish inter-agency teams to deliver support services and respond to emerging opportunities.
5. Prepare costed work plan – inter-agency teams will set time-bound work plans, based on comparative advantages of each agency, and calculate the proportion of resources to be allocated. The same teams will be responsible for executing implementation of these plans, monitoring progress of delivery, and proposing adjustments to the Management Group.
6. Engage responsible government agencies, other in-country UN agencies programmes and projects, as well as those of other development partners – to review and provide feedback on work plans prior to submission for Management Group for approval.

International partners

1. Map opportunities and partners - done during inception and annually thereafter by the Management Group to track latest developments in global, and partner country, policy dialogues around the forest and climate, and wider nature-based solutions, agendas
2. Select priority opportunities and partners – by Management Group, focusing on those catalytic convening opportunities that could: a) defragment the fractured operating landscape; b) stimulate REDD+ financing (investments and payments) at scale; and/or c) nurture a global movement and enhance ambition for nature-based solutions.
3. Establish inter-agency ‘policy labs’ – to respond to, and plan for engagement in, selected priority convening opportunities. Along similar lines to the country teams, policy labs will comprise a small number of inter-agency staff, including members of country teams from vanguard countries engaging in the selected policy issues.

4. Draft plan of engagement - developed by policy labs for global policy dialogue engagement through the Programme's convening role, much as the inter-agency country teams prepare (deliver and monitor) work plans for in-country engagement.
5. Engage heads of agencies/UN Secretariat – whereas the Resident Coordinator is the locus of in-country engagement, heads of agencies and the UN Secretariat, will be employed by the Programme to deploy the political capital and convening power that the UN can bring to bear on selected global policy engagements.
6. Engage identified priority international partners – as the country teams will engage line ministries and in-country development partners, policy lab teams will consult programme staff of target actors on international policy issues to obtain feedback on, and generate ownership of, any policy engagement plan, prior to execution.

Annex 2 Inception and Resource mobilisation

A phased approach to inception and resource mobilisation is proposed, commencing with a rapid appraisal in quarter one, to delineate the scope of each outcome's pipeline. The rapid appraisal is envisaged to be conducted as a desk-based exercise informed by UN-REDD programme insights gained in the current phase, country strategies, notably NDCs, national REDD+ strategies, and action plans. The immediate result of this phase of inception will be an indicative list of Programme partners - high-impact potential countries (outcomes 1-3), influential partners (outcome 4) and target audiences (for cross-cutting communications) – and a first cut of detailed activities and outputs under each outcome.

A full, comprehensive and systematic mapping exercise over quarters two and three, involving country fact-finding missions will be held for outcomes 1-3. The full mapping assessment will permit the Management Group to thoroughly assess theoretical mitigation potential of different country opportunities vis-à-vis the likely potential for results to be released once economic, political and social risks (as well as conducive factors) have been considered. Once target partners, and pipelines of priority activities for each partner have been identified, characterized and costed out, through the mapping exercise, a full results framework will be finalized.

In addition to being comprehensive and systematic, the inception mapping exercise will also be a consultative process engaging prospective country partners, international partners and key stakeholders. Paramount among stakeholders expected to be actively engaged in detailed co-creation and calibration exercise of inception will be those donors investing in the Programme. Consequently, a resource mobilization strategy will be integral part of inception.

Dedicated staff time from the three agencies will need to be assigned by the Management Group to ensure inception tasks are conducted thoroughly and timely, and ensure a robust Programme framing and design, acceptable to all stakeholders involved in Programme governance, as well as ultimate end-beneficiaries in countries and at the international level.

The 2020 inception year is critical, not only to allow an informed co-creation of the Programme's pipelines, detailing what activities will be done where and with whom, but is also to allow immediate implementation, and the Programme to hit the ground running, come 1 January 2021.

A lighter iteration of the opportunity-risk mapping exercise of inception will be repeated by the Management Group on an annual basis to update Programme intelligence and inform up-to-date adjustments to each outcome's pipeline of activities and corresponding resource allocations.

Resource mobilisation

The Programme is actively exploring and engaging with a number of donors and in the coming months it will continue to implement its resource mobilisation strategy, including with Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the European Union, the Gulf States and the UK.

The Programme's resources mobilization strategy is aimed to: a) broaden the base of resource partners as well as diversify the Programme's financial risk and burden while raising ambition; b) foster a shared vision of priorities and results with the broadest range of resource partners as a basis for strong, sustained, flexible and predictable funding; c) engage with traditional and emerging partners and explore innovative financing opportunities; d) ensure complementarity and cross fertilisation with other relevant programmes and initiatives; and e) undertake more robust results-based management and budgeting, strengthen quality reporting and recognize partners more systematically for their contributions.

The strategy prioritizes continuation of existing core funding as well as multi-year contributions to enhance funding predictability. In addition, the Programme is investing in articulating its case for support – laying out the key results to be achieved, supported by an explicit theory of change that includes a situational analysis, planned evidence-based solutions and the roles and areas of the Programme based on comparative advantages, lessons learned and mitigating measures.