

Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests

Programme specification / UK additional contribution

16 June 2023, revised 2 May 2025 – for UN-REDD Executive Board

Summary

The Accelerating Innovative Monitoring (AIM) for Forests programme will provide an important contribution to the UN-REDD Programme's **Outcome 1 "Forest Solutions Realized" under its Output 1.4 "Countries enabled to measure high-quality and accurate activity data, emission factors, emissions and emission reductions with policy-relevant monitoring systems"**. The funding related to this programme is earmarked and will be recorded in a separate Atlas account). The programme will leverage considerable financial and technical investments under UN-REDD Programme MRV technical assistance work.

AIM for Forests has a specific (initiative-level) Objective, fully aligned with the **UN-REDD Programme Outcome 1**: 20 countries with institutionalized NFMS informing domestic policy and decision-making and providing high-integrity MRV through modern monitoring technologies, novel learning approaches and innovation, enabling participation in emerging accounting standards and driving down global emissions from the forest sector and beyond, whilst strengthening AFOLU contribution in NDCs.

The Objective will be realised through six specific Outputs: (1) Technical innovation is advanced and tools and open-access learning programmes developed to accelerate NFMS and high-integrity MRV; (2) Methodological challenges are overcome to improve harmonisation and enable generation of high-quality forest data. (3) Targeted engagement and bespoke materials enable the participation of IPLC in forest monitoring and emerging carbon standards; (4) An end-to-end Country-Led Planning (CLP) process is designed and delivered in close consultation with GFOI partners; (5) Technical gaps within forest country NFMS and MRV systems are addressed; (6) Countries progress towards embedding NFMS and MRV in national institutions, ensuring results are transparent and accessible to all users.

Detailed activities and workplan are included in a more detailed inception document, which will be finalised during programme inception, and any further iterations will be agreed with the UK.

The AIM for Forests programme will be delivered through the United Nation's (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) as lead agency on forest monitoring/MRV within UN-REDD, with funding channelled through UN-REDD (through the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund) as an earmarked contribution.

The FAO Forestry Division, National Forest Monitoring Team will be responsible for delivering the programme. A project-level 'Steering Committee' will be set up – with participation of the donor – to oversee implementation with regular meetings and updates. The UK is also a member of the UN-REDD Executive Board.

Programme Activities

The Programme will achieve proposed aims and results through the following activities:

- Accelerated alignment, innovation, and deployment of technical solutions and novel blended learning approaches, collaborating with UK-based sectors) to leverage emerging R&D, strengthen and operationalise technical systems.
- Developing learning modules and platforms for international application and dissemination of tools, technology, and products, including through international access platforms (such as SEPAL, and GFOI Registry of Tools).
- Deploying innovative approaches to address methodological challenges in REDD+ MRV, such as sampling approaches and forest degradation.
- Targeted engagement and bespoke materials to enable the participation of IPLCs in forest monitoring and emerging carbon standards.
- Deploying a 'Country-Led Planning' process in 2 – 5 forest countries to identify critical gaps and embed MRV systems in national institutions for sustained implementation.
- Targeted workshops with at least 20 countries to share the replicable CLP model to incentivise its take-up, identifying where gaps can be addressed through blended learning and/or direct technical assistance.
- Providing direct country technical assistance to fill gaps and needs for high-integrity MRV within 20 countries, building on CLP, to enable participation in emerging carbon accounting standards.

Key indicators – the programme is intending to:

- Over the lifetime of the programme, it will: (a) support 20 countries with institutionalised National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) informing policy and decision-making, providing high-integrity MRV and enabling participation in emerging accounting standards; (b) deploy at least 10 modern monitoring technologies, novel learning approaches and innovation, with >1000 users; (c) strengthened AFOLU contribution in 5 countries NDCs; (d) support 500 IPLC users through learning materials.

Governance

The overall UN-REDD Programme governance structure remains unchanged. In addition, a project-level (implementation) Steering Committee will be established for AIM for Forests, which will include representation of the relevant teams within the FAO Forestry Division, UK and other relevant partners (as agreed between FAO and UK). The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to discuss progress, risks, finances, performance, lessons learned, and any other areas as agreed between the Participants for discussion.

Timeline & Budget

In line with the signed Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA), the AIM Programme will run until 31 December 2028, unless UK and FAO (and UN-REDD) agree to extend the end date¹.

An additional contribution of USD 8,935,071 (equalling the contribution of GBP 7,000,000 calculated using March 2025 UN Treasury rate of exchange, net of the 1% AA fee), is reflected in the revised total budget for the initiative of USD 39,170,550, presented in UNSDG Harmonized Categories in the table below.

UNDG Categories	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
1 Staff and other personnel costs	872,580.00	4,031,944.00	4,559,485.59	5,042,133.81	5,042,133.81	5,142,133.81	24,690,411.01
2 Supplies, Commodities, Materials	11,261.00	32,516.00					43,777.00
3 Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture	10,651.00	33,751.00					44,402.00
4 Contractual Services	25,023.00	37,744.00					62,767.00
5 Travel	178,412.00	1,002,231.00	855,936.84	938,793.92	968,793.92	938,793.92	4,882,961.61
6 Transfers & Grants Counterparts	199,876.00	816,805.00	959,027.04	808,685.40	849,027.04	1,304,027.04	4,937,447.52
7 Gen Operating & Other direct costs	17,168.00	330,364.00	307,923.16	316,923.16	316,923.16	656,923.16	1,946,224.65
8 Indirect costs	92,047.97	439,974.85	467,766.08	497,457.54	502,381.46	562,931.46	2,562,559.36
Grand Total	1,407,018.97	6,725,329.85	7,150,138.72	7,603,993.83	7,679,259.39	8,604,809.39	39,170,550.15

¹ The current UN-REDD MoU covers the period until December 2025 and will be extended accordingly, following standard administrative procedures.